

**BECOMING A BUSINESS JOURNALIST IN MALAWI: A CASE
STUDY OF *THE DAILY TIMES* AND *THE NATION* NEWSPAPERS**

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ABSTRACT

In the past few decades, the proportion of business news compared to general news has increased tremendously across all media platforms in Africa. While the critical role played by business journalism is recognised, little is known about the people who write and report such news. Most studies on business reporting have tended to focus on analysing the content of business news, rather than the specific processes through which business journalists are socialized and trained. The findings of this study are drawn mainly from in-depth interviews with business reporters and editors at two leading newspapers in Malawi, *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*. Three major findings emerge from the study data. First, business journalists vary in their educational and professional backgrounds, as well as the reasons for working on this beat. Second, the majority of them have no prerequisite formal education and training in business journalism and, therefore, have little knowledge and skills about what constitute good business journalism. Third, professionalism in the sub-field is constrained by a host of factors, influence of advertisers being the critical one. The study recommends that business reporting become an integral component of journalism education and training programmes to adequately prepare future generations of business journalists. In addition there is need for media houses to devise strategies to counter obstacles that business journalists face for them to effectively contribute to political economy debate.

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**Pencil, ink marks and
highlighting ruin books
for other readers.**

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction to the study.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background and context of the study.....	1
1.2 Theoretical framework of the study.....	4
1.3 Choice and motivation for the thesis.....	4
1.4 Statement and justification of the problem.....	5
1.5 Goal of the study and research questions.....	6
1.6 Methods of study.....	6
1.7 Structure of the thesis.....	7
1.8 Conclusion.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter Two: Journalism and Media context of Malawi.....	9
2.1 Journalism practice in Malawi.....	9
2.2.1 The colonial media system.....	9
2.2.2 Media in independent Malawi.....	10
2.2.3 Media during Malawi's political transition.....	11
2.2.4. Media in democratic Malawi.....	11
2.2.4.1 Print media.....	11
2.2.4.2 Broadcast media.....	12
2. 5 Journalism education and training in Malawi.....	13
2.6 Journalists in Malawi.....	14
2.7 Professional journalism in Malawi.....	14
2.8 Code of ethics and professional conduct.....	15
2. 9 Newsroom practice.....	16
2. 10 Obstacles to journalistic freedom and independence in Malawi.....	16
2.11 Business journalism in Malawi.....	17

2.12 Dynamics of business journalism in Malawi.....	17
2.13 Business journalists in Malawi	18
2.14 Business Journalism at <i>The Daily Times</i> and <i>The Nation</i> newspapers	19
Chapter Three: Literature Review.....	20
3.0 Introduction.....	20
3.1 Journalism as a Profession.....	20
3.2 Journalism education and training	21
3.3 Business journalism in Africa.....	23
3.4 Role of business journalism in Africa	24
3.5 Critique of African business journalism.....	24
3.6 Becoming a business journalist.....	26
3.7 Training of business reporters in Africa.....	27
Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework	29
4.0 Introduction.....	29
4.1 Subfields and specialisation in journalism	29
4.2 Sociology of journalism	30
4.3 Hierarchy of influences approach	32
4.3.1 Individual level	32
4.3.2 Routines level.....	33
4.3.3 Organisational level.....	33
4.3.4 Extra media level.....	33
4.3.5 Ideological level	34
4.4 Conclusion	34
5.0 Introduction.....	35
5.1 Research design and procedure.....	35
5.2 Case study approach.....	35
5.3 Sampling.....	36

5.4 Access and consent	37
5.5 Research methods.....	38
5.5.1 Questionnaire	38
5.5.2 In-depth face-to-face interviews	39
5.5.3. Focus group interviews.....	40
5.5.4 Document analysis	40
5.6 Data analysis procedure.....	41
5.7 Conclusion	42
Chapter Six: Study findings and analysis.....	43
6.0 Introduction.....	43
6.1 Age	43
6.2 Gender	44
6.3 Career profile and work experience	44
6.4 Motivation for becoming a business journalist.....	45
6.5 Hiring business reporters	47
6.5.1 Recruitment for business reporting	47
6.5.2 Re-deployment to the business desk	49
6.6 Mentoring newly recruited business reporters.....	50
6.7 Education and professional training of business reporters	51
6.8 Importance of professional training	54
6.9 Education and training needed.....	54
6.10 Membership to professional organisations	55
6.11 Role perceptions.....	56
6.12 News values	57
6.13 Professional values and beliefs	57
6.14 Job perceptions.....	59
6.15 Ethics of professional practice	59

6.16 Institutional factors enabling or constraining business reporting	62
6.16.1 Pressure of advertisers	62
6.16.2 Limited operational resources.....	65
6.16.3 Inadequate ICT infrastructure	66
6.16.4 Problem of access to information.....	66
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	69
7.0 Introduction.....	69
7.1 Reflection on findings	70
7.2 Recommendations.....	72
7.3. Areas for further research.....	73
7.4 Conclusion	74
REFERENCES.....	75
Appendix 1: Questionnaire for reporters.....	83
Appendix 2: Interview guide for business reporters	84
Appendix 3: Interview guide for editors	86
Appendix 4 A: Thematic content analysis of business stories	87
Appendix 4B: Thematic content analysis of business stories	88
Appendix 5A Code of ethics and Editorial Policy for The Daily Times	89
Appendix 5 B Code of practice for The Nation.....	92

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is a general background of the study describing its context, laying out the theoretical framework, the choice and motivation for the thesis, justification of the research problem, the aims of the study and research questions, and the methods of research. It ends with an outline of the contents of each of the other chapters of the thesis.

1.1 Background and context of the study

The study examines the professional socialisation of business reporters in the Malawi context. It seeks to explore the process by which people become specialised business journalists within a broad group of news reporters.

Business journalism refers to all reporting that is written not only about businesses but also about the economy (Roush 2006: 8). Three closely related forms of journalistic endeavour; business, economics and financial journalism are often used interchangeably, even though there are distinctions between them (Kariithi 2003:153). Economics journalism refers to the coverage of national and international economic events and issues. Examples of economics journalism include reporting national budgets, economic indicators, economic development policies, trends, and issues in international trade. Business journalism comprises the coverage of local economic issues in an in depth fashion. It emphasizes the impact of economic or business organisations and events on communities and the contribution of specific industries and sectors to national development. Traditional examples under this include company profiles, local trade events, new products and processes, marketing moves and corporate performance. Financial journalism provides a micro level perspective into financial markets-the institutional structures through which savers, borrowers and regulators interact. In this study the term business journalism is used to refer to all the three.

Two features are said to define the historical foundations of business journalism, namely the evolution of a global economy and the development of communication technologies. Kariithi (2003: 154) explains that:

‘The evolution of global economy-globalisation is the culmination of increased economic interaction and interdependence around the world, through such avenues as international trade, capital funds movement, communications, and cross cultural interaction. The growth of communications technologies has expanded the realm of

the economics and business coverage across cultures, class and national borders. These features are cyclical in nature, but their impact on economics and business journalism is cumulative so that new surges in global economic performance or major technological innovation serve as positive shocks in the development of economics journalism. Whenever such shocks are felt, economics journalism has leapt forward'.

The phenomenal growth in business and economics reporting was in response to a rising public demand for news and information about finance, business and the economy (Kariithi 2002:156).

This genre of journalism has acquired special status, as manifested in special newspaper sections, television and radio programmes as well as specialised publications and special editorial teams tailored to business (Welles: 2001:18). Reed and Lewin (2005:8) note that business is an undercurrent of nearly every major civic and political debate. It is said that there is no more important work in today's media than that of a business reporter and as such vibrant business reporting is being encouraged in emerging democracies and emerging economies (Roush, 2004:2). The task of explaining, comprehending and stating clearly what business is doing and the ramifications of its actions, falls to the journalist who cover business (Reed and Lewin, 2005: 9).

This thesis concerns itself with the way in which business journalism has established itself within a particular African context. Over the past two decades, in many African countries such journalism has become one of the most vibrant sectors of the media. The wave of democratisation and the emergence of multi-party politics in the 1990s which coincided with economic liberalisation prompted business reporting to serve as a medium of information and a forum for economic debate and enquiry (Kariithi 1995:382). Business reporting is relatively more developed in countries where the private enterprise is flourishing, for example South Africa and Kenya where a highly developed private sector has fuelled and buttressed the growth of financial and business newspapers and magazines (Kariithi 2002:16). A similar claim cannot be made about the business press in most countries in Africa. The thesis, therefore, explores the evolution of the specialised journalism within a resource-poor economic context. In such an environment, journalists face unique challenges in applying to the local context models of business journalism that have developed elsewhere. Whereas in Western Europe and North America there are well trained and accomplished business reporters, the situation is different in Africa. Few countries have a track record of substantial business reporting, given that most journalists who report business are not properly educated

and trained for the job and that it is generally a recent addition to regular newsroom beats in media organisations (Kariithi 2008:1). Mogekwu (2005:63) observes that business news reporting requires specialised knowledge and reporting skills. As such, media scholars agree that many media houses in Africa are unprepared to tackle this journalistic genre as there is a shortage of journalists with the knowledge and training to report competently on business (Thomas 1978:4; Lewin 2002:21). Because of the increasing demand for business news, reporters with experience in covering other types of stories are just thrown into the beat (Roush, 2004: 3). Hiring and crafting a business reporting team becomes a tricky task and most editorial managers have conceded it is the toughest part of their job (Reed and Lewin, 2005:13). There are, therefore, challenges for business journalism in resource-poor environments like much of Africa both in terms of the journalists' access to knowledge about good business journalism, and in terms of reporting in those particular kinds of local economic contexts.

Malawi offers a valuable context in which to explore the way in which African business journalists engage with those challenges. In that country, the prominence of business reporting emerged following the adoption of liberal politics in 1994. Since the end of one-party rule, issues of the economy and people's welfare have dominated debate in political and social circles. The political context stimulated public involvement in matters of the economy. Even in national elections, sound economic management and improvement of people's living standards become dominant campaign themes of various political parties and their candidates (Ott 2004:35). The creation of space for public debate on the national economy has thus become an integral part of good governance. Manda and Chirwa (2007:2) observe that involvement of citizens in matters of formulating, implementing and monitoring of the national budget have become central pillars of democratic governance and national economic development. Besides the national budget, business reporting is equally concerned with matters of public accounting, corporate governance and economic performance of the private sector among other issues.

But just like many other African countries, Malawi lacks a well developed business journalism regime. This development can be attributed to two major factors. Firstly, the one-party rule which prevailed for 30 years after independence did not allow any journalism schools to operate (Chimombo and Chimombo 1996:6). Formal journalism education and training was only introduced after the adoption of multi-party politics in 1994. Secondly, the

existing journalism education models emphasise training of general reporters (Jamieson 2005: 29). Since there has been no formal training and education for business reporting, general reporters routinely mutate into business journalists. This situation calls for an investigation into the process of becoming a business reporter considering that business journalism presents its own unique and complex challenges. The study therefore analyses the professional socialisation of business journalists within the local economic context and institutional structures of Malawi.

1.2 Theoretical framework of the study

The research draws from scholarly debates that deal with the phenomenon of specialisation in journalism. It is argued that an important organising distinction in an increasingly fragmented media environment is thematic specialisation into what is usually called a “beat” which has structured the journalism field between a “generalist” pole and a “specialised” pole (Marchette 2005:64). The study also engages with the theories such as sociology of journalism that explain the constraints of daily journalism practice. This theoretical approach examines the social determinants of journalistic output as well as the features of social life and organisation which shape, influence and constrain its form and content (McNair 2001: 3).

There are three perspectives to the study of news production: political economy, social organisation of news work and cultural approaches (Schudson 2000:177). Political economy approach relates the outcome of news process to the structure of the state and economy and to the economic foundation of a particular news organisation (McNair 2001:13). Social organisation of news work theory examines how the work of journalists is constrained by organisational and occupational demands (McNair 2001: 62, Dunwoody 1997: 156). The cultural approach emphasizes the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems regardless of the structure of economic organisation of the character of occupational routines (Schudson 2000: 177). The study will be anchored on these two theoretical approaches.

1.3 Choice and motivation for the thesis

The role of business reporters has become prevalent in Malawi since the dawn of plural politics in 1994. From the time the country adopted a multi-party system of government, the Malawi society became more interested in matters of the economy. People began comparing their standard of living in the one party regime to that of the multi-party era and in the

process questioned government's economic policies. Business reporters have over the years played a crucial role in contributing to the larger political economy debate in Malawi hence this group of journalists as opposed to other journalists were worth of study.

In addition, my personal observations of the practice of business journalism in Malawi and professional experience motivated my interest in this thesis. Firstly, I observed that business journalism as a genre of news reporting has gained popularity in the country although it is often taken for granted in newspapers, radio and television stations and magazines. It has now become apparent that the audience for business news cuts across social classes to include even those in the lower echelons of society. Secondly, my personal professional experience with business journalism cultivated in me a conscious desire to investigate the people who write and report such specialised news. As this interest grew, it became a habit of mine to observe and take keen interest in business reporters. In one incident, a bank manager accused business reporters of distorting facts due to their ignorance, misunderstanding and lack of technical knowledge of business, finance and economics concepts. This incident triggered a number of questions for me. Why and how do people become business reporters? What type of professional socialisation do they undergo from general reporting to the specialised field? Also during my seven years as a news producer at the public broadcaster, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), I noticed how business reporters struggled to cover local and international business. Most of them had certificates, diplomas and bachelors degrees in various fields. But with no background training and knowledge in business or economics, it was an uphill task to report on the business beat. During the entire progression of my career, I kept thinking about what it takes to become a business journalist. As my career transformed into journalism education, I thought even more about the professional socialisation of a business reporter. This inspired me to undertake this study to examine the process of becoming a business journalist in the Malawi media context.

1.4 Statement and justification of the problem

Important studies on business journalists have been conducted elsewhere. In Australia for example, Shultz and Matolesy (1993) examined educational backgrounds and attitudes of business journalists to economic policy, and in another study in the same country Henningham (1997) investigated occupational characteristics and professional values of business reporters. In Africa, most media research undertaken in this field has often been content analysis aimed at examining how the press report specific business issues and events.

In South Africa, Kariithi and Kareithi (2007) did a critical discourse analysis of media coverage of the anti-privatisation strike of 2002 and Kula (2004) investigated the coverage of inflation news by the South African print media.

In Malawi, Manda and Chirwa (2007) did a study on budget reporting trends in that country's media. Minimal scholarly attention has been devoted to investigating how business journalists become what they are. It is on this basis that this study seeks to make a contribution by focussing on the process of becoming a business reporter in the localised context of Malawi particularly at this time in the country's history when business and economics issues dominate public opinion and discourse. This research hopefully fills that knowledge gap through contributing to the ongoing debate about business journalism in Malawi.

1.5 Goal of the study and research questions

The main goal of this study is to explore the process of becoming a business journalist in Malawi. The key question that the study addresses is why and how do journalists become specialised business reporters in the Malawian context? Related questions that the study endeavours to address are: What motivates journalists to venture into business reporting? What process do they follow? What values and role perceptions do business reporters associate with? What are their professional attitudes and beliefs? What organisational and institutional factors enable or constrain the work of business journalists?

1.6 Methods of study

This was a qualitative study because through such enquiry, researchers attempt to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:2). Such an approach was appropriate for this study as it sought to gain an understanding from the perspective of journalists themselves about how they changed-and the constraints they encountered-from generalists to specialist business reporters. The study adopted a case study approach. Cases are chosen and studied because they are thought to be instrumentally useful in furthering understanding of a particular problem, issue, or concept (Stake 1995). The study targeted business journalists of two leading daily newspapers in Malawi namely *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*. The two newspapers were unique and theoretically appropriate because they covered more business issues and in greater detail than other media organisations. Furthermore, they were significant as they had set up separate fixed business desks alongside

other regular news beats such as politics, entertainment and sports. They also enjoyed the highest circulation and readership in Malawi at the time of the study (Chitsulo 2006: 34, MISA 2007:47). This, therefore, made their business reporters useful and attractive respondents for this research. Initially, a short structured questionnaire was employed to gather basic bio-data of the business reporters. Data from the questionnaire formed the bedrock of face-to-face in-depth interviews with individual business reporters, which was the main data collection method. In-depth interviews are conducted with the aim soliciting detailed information about specific aspects as it allows the interviewer to form follow-up questions based on the respondent's answers (Wimmer and Dominick 1991: 45). Additional information was gathered through in-depth interviews with editors of the two newspapers. This served not only to complement data from business reporters but also to get data from a different perspective. In addition, newsroom documentation that had a bearing on business reporting such as editorial policy and code of ethics and professional conduct were also examined.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. This chapter introduces what the study is all about and what it seeks to achieve. It puts the context of the study, the general and personal background to the study, as well as its objectives and significance. It also presents the theoretical and methodological framework pertinent to the study.

Chapter two is about journalism and media context of Malawi. This chapter provides a historical and socio-political and institutional context of the study in question. It sets the local context of the study explaining the journalism practice in Malawi and why business journalism study of this particular type was carried out.

Chapter three is literature review. This chapter is on what has been written about the socialisation of journalists in general and business reporters in particular. This chapter is a linkage between chapter two on context and chapter four on the theoretical approach to the research problem under investigation.

Chapter four sets the theoretical framework of the study. It looks at two theoretical approaches; specialisation in journalism and sociology of journalism. Specialisation in journalism denotes the thematic structuring of the journalism field into beats. Sociology of

journalism explains the way in which journalists are constrained or enabled in their daily work by the structures in which they operate.

Chapter five situates the study within its methodological framework. It presents the methodology used for generating, collecting and analysing data. It highlights the sampling procedures employed and examines case study approach as a qualitative approach employed in the study. The focus is also on the justification for use of specific methods. The value of the methodology chapter is that it provides a guide for a similar research to test reliability of findings.

Chapter six presents the major findings from field work as well as an analysis of the results. This chapter is the core of the thesis as it presents the findings of the research in a narrative form. The analysis of the findings will be made with reference to issues raised in the context, literature review and theoretical framework chapters.

Chapter seven concludes the study. It draws conclusions and inferences based on the literature review and theoretical framework, and reflected in the research questions. The chapter also gives recommendations based on the results and an indication of possible future research to be conducted. Finally the last section provides a list of references and appendix of other material used in the study.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the broad foundations of the thesis. It briefly introduced the context of the study, its theoretical underpinning, research problem and its significance, then the research questions were presented and the methodology employed. Finally it outlined the structure of the thesis. On this basis, the thesis now proceeds with journalism and media context of the study, literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology which form the basis of the forthcoming chapters.

Chapter Two: Journalism and Media context of Malawi

2.0 Introduction

Having outlined the general background to the study, this chapter is about journalism and media landscape in Malawi. In order to fully understand the socialisation of Malawian journalists in general and business reporters in particular it is essential to understand the country's media history and landscape and how it has impacted the journalism practice. This background will help situate the journalism context from which this business reporting study is placed.

2.1 Journalism practice in Malawi

Journalism practice in Malawi can be analysed based on the operation of the media during four distinct phases of the country's political history; colonial period (1891-1964), the independence one-party era (1964-1992), political transition phase (1992-1994) and the multi-party democracy period (1994 to date). Banda (2005: 79) observes that the context within which media in Malawi operate is influenced by its past and present political environment.

2.2.1 The colonial media system

Malawi's media as that of many other African countries is a legacy of the colonial past. According to Banda (2005) the development of the media system in Malawi (then Nyasaland) was directly or indirectly linked to the colonial objectives of the British Empire. The colonial period in Malawi dates from 1891 to 1964 when Malawi became independent from colonial rule. During that time there was one newspaper *The Central African Planter* and one radio station under the Central African Broadcasting Services (CABS). The station based in Lusaka (now capital of Zambia) was useful in galvanising moral support for the war effort during the Second World War from both settler and indigenous communities (Banda 2005: 80). It was also used to campaign for the political integration of the three territories of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi). During the colonial period the operation of the media was in the grip of colonial authoritarian legality. The colonial powers instituted many laws, for example Article 67 of the Malawian Penal Code which refers to the publication of 'false news' and makes it an offence to publish any statement, rumour or report that is likely to cause fear and alarm to the public.

2.2.2 Media in independent Malawi

One thing of note during the post-colonial period was that many colonial laws controlling the media were retained after independence and used ironically by the victims of the same legislation in the interests of the new governments which they constituted. Banda (2005: 79) argues that based on assumptions that national unity and development required the full and uniform agreement of the populations, post-independent governments proposed that a pluralistic media, like pluralistic political situation including opposition and dissenting voices, would impede progress and invite rancour and disunity. The logic was to have one voice to drive the nation building projects. To compel compliance, the new governments had already-made legal resources of colonial legislation to fall back on (Karikari 2005: 18).

Upon Malawi's independence from British colonialism, the structure of media ownership changed. What used to be privately owned media was nationalised. To an extent it meant the ruling party became a key player in the ownership of the media. The colonial *Central African Planter* was renamed *The Nyasaland Times* (later becoming *The Daily Times*) and its publishers the Blantyre Print and Publishing Company also came under the control of Dr Kamuzu Banda and his then ruling Malawi Congress Party. The stage was then set for state ownership and control of the media industry. The integration of the media into the structure of the MCP and Banda's government resulted in complete control of the media by the political elite and the stifling of independent media. This period marked the beginning of repression and suppression of dissent in the media in an effort to bring them into line. In part this process was re-enforced by repressive laws inherited from the British. There was one radio station, one newspaper and one magazine. Television was not allowed. No other radio station was allowed to operate except the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, MBC. The MBC Act of 1964 incorporated the functions and powers of the body establishing the monopoly and control of the radio by the state. The Act also sanctioned direct government interference with editorial content of broadcast. The 1968 Censorship and Control of Entertainment Act made it an offence to publish anything likely to undermine the authority of or public confidence in the government (Patel 2000: 161). The gross denial of freedom of expression was carried out under the pretext of preservation of social morality (Chimombo & Chimombo 1996:1) No independent press was allowed. Journalism was strictly controlled by the state and those known for pursuing objective journalism were jailed and harassed. Freedom of expression and the media was totally absent (Kanyongolo 2004: 16)

2.2.3 Media during Malawi's political transition

The turning point in the history and development of the media in Malawi came with the political change that took place between 1992 and 1994 (Patel 2000: 164). This period was significant because it was during this time that the country moved towards multiparty democracy due to among other factors pressure by the donor community, lobbying by Christian churches and campaign by political pressure groups. After a referendum in 1993, the nation adopted multiparty system of governance. A new constitution was adopted in 1994 which introduced issues of human rights like freedom of the media and freedom of expression (Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung 2003:13).

Before and around the transition period, Malawians relied mostly on foreign radio stations such as Channel Africa of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and BBC World Service for Africa for information on some political developments happening within the country. In the absence of independent print media then, these radio broadcasts were very strategic in providing alternative views on events unfolding during the transition to multiparty democracy. The two years of democratic transition (1992-994) were therefore auspicious because after 28 years of muzzling, harassment, intimidation, detention and even murder of journalists in Malawi, the country witnessed free press. With this, pressmen, writers and in fact all Malawians competed to find out whose tongue and pen was freer if not mightier (Chimombo and Chimombo 1996:26). During this period, more than 20 independent newspapers were registered. Before that there had been only two pro-government newspapers, *The Daily Times* and *Malawi News*.

2.2.4. Media in democratic Malawi

2.2.4.1 Print media

Media in democratic Malawi is dominated by the print media which is concentrated in the main urban areas of Blantyre, Lilongwe, Zomba and Mzuzu. Currently, Malawi has two dailies, *The Nation* published by the Nation Publications Limited and *The Daily Times* published by Blantyre Newspapers Limited. Both publishers also circulate weekend editions *Saturday Nation* and *Malawi News* as well as Sunday editions, *Nation on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times*. Besides, there are other half a dozen newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The News*, and others which are either published irregularly or are on the brink of extinction.

2.2.4.2 Broadcast media

Radio has for a long time been the main source of information for the majority of Malawians due to its affordability and ease of use among the majority who are illiterate. Though radio came much later than print, it became the mass medium. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the radio industry dates back to the British post-war public broadcasting system which later on led to the establishment of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in 1964 at independence. It remained the only public broadcaster for 30 years. In 1997, the public broadcaster, MBC introduced a second channel called Radio 2 FM. The establishment of the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) in 1998 to regulate functions of the communications sector opened room for many developments in the radio industry, and by end of 1999 three private radio stations had been allowed to operate. As of 2008, there were 21 FM outlets of radio stations in Malawi and more new stations in the offing (MACRA website). Licence to radio broadcast falls into four categories: public, private, private religious and community. Private FM radios broadcast more musical programmes and have more English programming than local languages. Some radio stations relay programming from foreign broadcasters like the BBC, Voice of America (VOA), Deutsche Welle of Germany, and SABC.

In terms of television, Malawi was one of the last few countries not only in Southern Africa but also in the world to start television broadcasting. Television Malawi (TVM) opened in April 1999. Its broadcasts initially reached Malawi's main urban areas and have only gradually grown in coverage but still not with total national coverage (Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung 2003). Apart from its own programmes in English and Chichewa, TVM relies on programming from other outlets such as BBC, VOA and Al Jazeera. So three other Television stations have been allowed to operate by MACRA and these are Luntha TV owned by the Catholic church, CFC TV of the Cavalry Family Church and AFJ TV belonging to the All For Jesus Ministries. In 2007 a private television station, Joy TV, was taken off air by MACRA after it began broadcasting due to legal wrangles surrounding its licence and issues of dual ownership. The case seemed complicated by the fact that under the MACRA Act, no politician or political party can own a radio or television station. Former President Bakili Muluzi, then chairman of the opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) and an active politician, and his son, Atupele, a serving member of Malawi Parliament, were both listed as owners of Joy TV.

2. 5 Journalism education and training in Malawi

During the one-party system of government there was no journalism training school in Malawi. Formal journalism training was introduced years after 1994. The only training writers or journalists got was either on the job, or at occasional workshops, or if they were lucky from abroad (Chimombo and Chimombo 1996: 6). This meant that those who practised journalism in Malawi during the one party state joined the profession 'straight from the streets'.

Apart from the private journalism training institutions which have mushroomed with the coming of political pluralism, two institutions have played a major role in the training of journalists in Malawi. These are the University of Malawi's Department of Journalism and Media Studies at the Polytechnic and the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ). MIJ was established in 1995 and has campuses in the cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. MIJ provides short courses tailor-made to meet market needs but also runs certificate and diploma in journalism programmes. Since 1999 the Polytechnic has been offering a four year Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism and a three-year diploma in journalism. A one-year certificate and two-year diploma in journalism courses are also offered at the Polytechnic Centre for Continuing Education examined by external bodies in the United Kingdom. Chancellor College, another constituent college of the University of Malawi (in Zomba), recently introduced a degree course in media and communications. The Africa Bible College in the capital Lilongwe offers a minor in Communication as well as courses in broadcast and print journalism as part of its Bachelor of Arts degree programme. Many smaller training institutions have also arisen in the past few years, although accreditation for many of them is a major problem. Over the past ten years or so, many graduates from the institutions above have entered the media market and helped to professionalise the industry (Chitsulo 2006: 43).

A considerable number of senior journalists have also undertaken short and long journalism courses within and outside Malawi, especially in South Africa, Europe and the US (Ibelema et al 2004:336). In addition, practising journalists in Malawi have also benefited from short courses offered by the Nordic-SADC Journalism Centre (NSJ). The NSJ was launched in 1993 in Maputo, Mozambique to offer journalism courses. Over the years, scores of Malawian journalists, editors, media managers, and trainers have gained from NSJ's training. According to Mukela (2005: 132), the NSJ was effectively the only bright light for mid career training in media in Southern Africa. One Malawian journalist quoted in an NSJ impact

assessment report said that “NSJ, more than any other local, regional and international media training institution, has played a very dominant and crucial role in orienting Malawian journalists towards good journalism.” (NSJ report,1998). To many practising reporters in Malawi, it is the only journalism training institution they have been to. If there is any semblance of sober journalism in democratic Malawi, more than 60 percent of that can be attributed to NSJ (Mukela 2005: 134).

2.6 Journalists in Malawi

No official survey has been conducted to determine the number of journalists in Malawi. In 2006, a local journalists association The Lilongwe Press Club developed a media directory in which it listed names of journalists from almost all media houses. It estimated that there were about 500 journalists in Malawi at that time. Although this figure can be contested, the press club attempted to provide a picture of the number of journalists practicing in Malawi, and it was the first time such an exercise was carried out (Kaonga 2008: 32). Many of these journalists are working for the major print and electronic media, while others are trainers at the University of Malawi’s department of journalism at the Polytechnic and Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) in Blantyre, or freelancers for local and international newspapers and radio stations (Chitsulo 2006: 43).

2.7 Professional journalism in Malawi

What can be called professionalism among journalists in Malawi came with the changing political environment in Malawi. During the one-party state, the professional role of journalists was not well-defined. As no independent press was allowed, journalists working for the one newspaper and radio then were practising their trade in conformity with the dictates of the state and the ruling party. It was only in the multi-party era that issues of professional journalism and strong code of conduct have been identified as essential requirements to strengthen the role of the press in a democracy (Patel 2000:158). The new focus was necessary since Malawi, as a nation, was in the process of media transition; from media that had been securing support and loyalty for the state to media that was diverse. This was particularly important because in the excitement of free press and expression that came with democracy, the press side-tracked the objective of fairness in its reporting. Democracy and freedom brought to the media the liberty that to a large extent ignored all the fundamental principles of ethical and responsible behaviour by practitioners (Jamieson 2001:

116). In the run-up to the 1994 multi-party elections, the press developed a culture of character assassination, mudslinging, propaganda and opinionated reporting. (Patel 2000: 164).

A number of reasons could be cited for this state of affairs, one of which was the fact that most, if not all, independent newspapers mushroomed during a period of political transition. Behind many newspapers were political figures belonging to opposition parties. As the opposition parties were barred from using the state media, they sponsored, created and owned their own outlets. Political affiliation and ownership of newspapers influenced the editorial policies. The reporting in these publications was partisan flexing their freedom muscles to the extent of reporting what had been a taboo in the newspapers before. The idea of reporting the unreportable, the unseen, or the secret was declared in the subtitles or slogans that the papers carried (Chimombo and Chimombo 1996: 28). The other reason was lack of education and training among the journalists. As explained earlier, before 1994 there was no school of journalism in Malawi and therefore most people writing for the emerging independent press had no formal journalism training or education at all.

2.8 Code of ethics and professional conduct

All over the world codes of conduct have been developed for journalists. In fact, ethics is inseparable from journalism (Kasoma 1994, Nyamnjoh 2005). In order to rectify the poor image of the media profession, a representative group of experienced journalist, met in 1994 and came up with the 'code of ethics and professional conduct' as it was felt that the one party regime had left journalists inadequately prepared to function in a multi-party set up (KAS 2003: 26). This code which was adopted in 1995 laid down standards for ethical and professional conduct of journalists and was intended to govern the activities of journalists operating in Malawi in both the print and broadcasting sectors. Among the key provisions of the journalism code was one requiring all material produced by journalists to be credible, balanced and fair to all sides, to report events in a manner that is accurate and objective and to distinguish comments and opinions clearly from statements of fact (KAS 2003: 27).

Apart from coming up with the code, a self regulatory body known as the Media Council of Malawi was formed with a mission to promote professionalism in the industry through setting standards and upholding values of accountability, integrity and excellence. Recently, the media council extended its functions to include the enforcement of accreditation policy,

issuance of press cards to accredited journalists and the lodging of public complaints against the media. This was done to flush out impersonators and pretenders who had besieged the profession masquerading as media practitioners.

2.9 Newsroom practice

The adoption of a journalism code of ethics and professional conduct had not translated into similar journalistic practice. Although there have been positive strides being made by private media houses such as Zodiak Radio, Capital Radio, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*, public broadcasters such as MBC and TVM, and some private stations such as Joy Radio and Radio Islam are failing in terms of professionalism. Much of the information on MBC and TVM still remains 'protocol news' about the activities of the president and government ministers. The work of journalists working for the government owned media institutions is constrained by political structures ranging from official laws to direct political interference. Their news content is biased in favour of the government and the ruling party.

To show their dissatisfaction with how government and ruling party authorities use the state media, Malawi Parliament dominated by the opposition approved a token one Malawi kwacha (less than one US cent) each to the two institutions in the 2008/2009 national budget.

There is also a disturbing widespread practice among journalists in Malawi of being paid by a news source to facilitate information gathering process despite this not being officially approved by editors and media managers. For example, organisations that want their events to appear on the news are often required to pay transport and other allowances to journalists. Some will argue that it is understandable considering that the journalists earn very little and are not adequately supported by their organisations, but other quarters believe there is a danger that sources would end up unduly influencing the news content.

2. 10 Obstacles to journalistic freedom and independence in Malawi

Despite striving to maintain professional standards, journalists also face obstacles in their work. The Malawi Constitution enshrines freedom of opinion and expression and the right for the media to report and publish freely (Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, 1995).

However, the country's statute books are also replete with laws that go against the spirit of the Constitution. There are no fewer than 40 such laws which deal with collection, processing

and dissemination of information and they have been carried over from government to government since the colonial period to give the state powers to curtail pluralism and diversity in the press in the name of preserving national security, protecting public order and safeguarding moral and other grounds (Kanyongolo 1994: 28). The most notable of these restrictive laws are the Preservation of Public Security Act which makes it a criminal offence to publish anything that the state may consider prejudicial to public security; the Penal Code which criminalises the publication of material thought to cause public alarm, and the Censorship and Control of Entertainment Act (Chitsulo 2006:37).

The Access to Information Bill yet to be tabled in Malawi Parliament is considered a crucial piece of legislation enabling media people to get hold of information necessary for their work but which officials would normally want to keep under wraps (MISA 2007: 45). In the final analysis, although Malawi, according to the International Press Institute, operates in a relatively free environment which fosters independent and objective journalism, other media watch dog organisations like Media Institute of Southern Africa-MISA report that, occasionally, journalists are intimidated, threatened and restricted from getting information and arrested on various allegations (Chipale 2004: 39)

2.11 Business journalism in Malawi

Although the media in Malawi has for many years been featuring business news, the institutionalisation of business reporting as a specialist area of journalism is a relatively new development. Even the defunct *The Malawi Financial Post* and *The Malawi Financial Observer* which emerged in the early 1990's contained more political than financial news (Chimombo and Chimombo 1996: 28). It is worth noting that to date Malawi does not have a free-standing business newspaper. Business news is carried as a section in a general newspaper or as a supplement.

2.12 Dynamics of business journalism in Malawi

In order to understand the dynamics of business reporting in Malawi, there is need to look at the nature of the country's economy. The economy of Malawi is based on agriculture which accounts for more than 90 percent of the country's export earnings. It is an exporter of primary produce and net importer of industrial goods (CIA World Fact book 2007). The other major sectors are manufacturing, utilities, construction, transport, distribution and communications as well as government services. It has few exploitable mineral resources.

The economy depends on substantial inflows of economic assistance from the IMF, the World Bank, and individual donor nations. The financial sector is small and less sophisticated. Foreign direct and portfolio investment levels are very low. (World Bank report 2008). Business reporting in Malawi by and large captures government economic activity and policy as well as that of a small private and financial sector.

2.13 Business journalists in Malawi

Thomas (1977: 4) argues that there is a shortage of people in the media with the knowledge and training to report competently on business matters. This is equally true for the Malawi situation. As stated in chapter two, this development is a product of two factors namely the one party dictatorial system of government that prevailed for 30 years which did not allow any journalism schools to operate and the existing journalism education and training model which emphasises general reporting. Training institutions such as the constituent colleges of the University of Malawi (Polytechnic and Chancellor College), the MIJ and other private institutions do not offer specialised business reporting programs. No deliberate policy has been put in place to cater for long term needs in business coverage.

However, in 2005 the Canadian International Development Agency-CIDA under its Economic Governance Project funded a review exercise for the Polytechnic's Department of Journalism and Media Studies to increase economics and business content in the curriculum. According to the curriculum review document, this need was in line with local and worldwide market trends that put emphasis on economic development. The emphasis in the new curriculum on business and economics news was also a reflection of current trends in national policies in which there was a major shift towards economic governance and accountability, hence a well articulated curriculum that includes business and economics reporting would assist promote such ideals.

In practical terms, those practising as business writers have largely been subjected to ad hoc and short term training interventions. So far training for business reporting has been provided by multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and CIDA, as well as local financial institutions such as the Reserve Bank of Malawi, Standard Bank and National Bank of Malawi. In addition journalists have also benefited from courses organised by international institutions such as the Reuters Foundation and NSJ.

2.14 Business Journalism at *The Daily Times* and *The Nation* newspapers

The Daily Times is the oldest newspaper in Malawi formed in the early 1960's and is owned by the family of the country's first post-independence president late Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda. *The Nation* owned by veteran politician Aleke Banda was established in 1993 during the transition from single party to multi party political dispensation.

The Daily Times and *The Nation* being the only daily papers define and dominate business reporting in Malawi. As explained in the introduction chapter, these two have the largest circulation and readership. In addition they have institutionalised business news coverage through establishment of business desks along-side other regular beats like politics, entertainment and sports. The business desk at *The Nation* was set up in 1995 and *The Daily Times* followed suit in 1996. The papers have deployed full time staff for the business desks both at their main offices as well as regional bureaus. *The Daily Times* carries four pages of business news daily except Saturday and on Wednesday it has an eight-page supplement. *The Nation* on its part has four pages of business news daily except on Sunday and publishes its eight-page supplement on Thursday.

As one way of establishing the type of stories that the papers cover, the researcher gathered theme-based data from previous business news reported in the two newspapers over a two-week period. Over 100 business articles were collected to identify the scope and nature of business news reported. The business pages of these papers mainly feature government economic activity and policy as well as a financial, company and industrial news. There is very little coverage of regional and international business news (See Appendix 4A and 4B).

2.15. Conclusion

This chapter has spelt out the media context of Malawi, tracing media developments in the various phases of the country's political history and also at the evolution and practice of business reporting in Malawi. The next chapter of literature review will present what other authors have written about the socialisation of journalists generally and of specifically business reporters.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a historical background of journalism practice and evolution of business reporting in Malawi. This chapter establishes the literature available on journalism as a profession and socialisation of journalists, business journalism and socialisation of business reporters.

3.1 Journalism as a Profession

There is debate among scholars and practitioners on whether journalism is a profession or not. The bone of contention is around the fact that unlike established professions such as medicine and law that follow a specific course of study to practice, journalists enter the industry through various routes (Dates 2006: 144). As such there is little agreement on how specifically one should go about becoming a journalist. The journalism field has no single set of procedures or requirements for certifying its practitioners, no specific credentials, licences or certificates necessary to enter the field (Johnstone et al 1976: 31, Weaver and Wilhoit 1986: 46).

The problem of looking at journalism as a profession is that while lawyers can be disbarred; and doctors' licences taken away for unethical conduct, sanction is not that straight forward for the journalist. That is why most people argue that it is not a profession. Therefore to be to be accepted as a professional group, journalists like doctors and lawyers must be seen to work to a code of conduct which guarantees their integrity and their trustworthiness and thus, their status as reporters of "truth" (McNair 2001:64). Thus, journalism ethics can be seen as a device to facilitate the social construction of legitimacy, to mobilise the trust of the readers in what they are reading, hearing or seeing (McNair 2001:65).

However, the constructivist approach to the study of journalism profession maintains that the examination of functionalist concepts needs to be contextualised in the power relations that determine their definition and practice. Constructivists, therefore, examine the various complex forces that are brought to bear on journalists and on which they practice. This means the idea of professional autonomy in journalism becomes questionable and the label of professional in the sense of being public service oriented is compromised (Maugham 2004). Functionalist concepts of professionalism that espouse objectivity, fairness and the promotion

of pluralism as the core values that govern “professional identity” disregard the organisational and social forces that impact on how journalists are either enabled or restricted in their practice as “autonomous professionals”(Gallagher 1982:153).

3.2 Journalism education and training

Journalism education and training has typically been defined as the means to teach people the norms and processes of news work in order to provide them with the skills they need to succeed within the industry (Hochheimer 2001:101). However, as observed earlier in this chapter, unlike the established professions, journalism has no single set of procedures or requirements for certifying its practitioners.

Nevertheless, Joseph Pulitzer writing in 1904 was optimistic that ‘before the century closes schools of journalism will generally be accepted as a feature of specialised higher education like schools of law and medicine’ (cited in Stuart-Adam. 2001: 315). Despite this optimism, scholars such as Stuart Adams have critiqued what Pulitzer predicted arguing it is still short off the mark as the project of journalism education across the world has not produced a professional discipline of great prestige and the field does not possess the levels of legitimacy marking schools of law, medicine, engineering, or even business (Stuart-Adams 2001: 315). The content and even the existence of journalism education has been a source of debate amongst journalism educators and practitioners for over a century (Macdonald 2006: 746). The old tradition that journalists are born and not created prevails leading to resistance in some official circles to the idea of educating and training journalists (Kariithi 1995:376).

But Nyamnjoh (2005: 94) blames much of the bad journalism on lack of professional education and training among most journalists, a factor which has affected the capabilities for the messenger, the nature of the message and how it is received, and which has made quality, prestige and credibility of journalism to suffer. The problem of journalism education has often been posed in terms of a choice between formal school education and training on the job. In most countries where the two systems co-exist, the school system has not been able to impose itself as the only approach that can turn out qualified and competent professionals, since many renowned journalists have often never been to any training school or centre (Nyamnjoh 2005:97). Those who favour on-the-job training believe that journalism requires the wisdom that comes from practice and experience and not books or lectures. To them formal education matters little in a successful journalism career. Glasser (2006:148) posits

that even with the proliferation of books, journals, and other literature devoted to every conceivable topic of the field, there exist no specialised body of knowledge which precedes the practice of journalism. No one needs a degree in journalism or any degree at all, to excel as a reporter. What journalists need to learn is that the knowledge they must master comes mostly from the field (Cole 2003:58).

For proponents of formal training, practical skills are not enough, formal education and training matters and succeeds as it engenders among journalists a certain quality of thinking about journalism and a state of preparedness for the task (De Burgh 2003: 110). It is also not entirely clear what a higher, formal education really means to the practice of journalism. This confusion arises from disagreements among practitioners as to whether journalism education should be offered by colleges as a form of vocational training or by universities as a degree programme. Phillips (2003:71) argues institutes of journalism training should offer vocational courses combining practical experience with journalistic theory. The practical work should include basic and traditional journalistic skills like writing, reporting and editing while the theory part should cover areas such as the organisation of the media and the profession of journalism, what constitutes news values, media law and regulation as well as ethics.

On the other hand, De Burgh (2003: 95) maintains that journalism should be taught as and be regarded as a serious academic discipline and not vocational training arguing that journalists need an unusually broad array of skills and knowledge if they are to perform effectively the tasks of reporting, analysing and investigating the world around them. That thinking assumes that if law and medicine are taught as first degrees then journalism is equally appropriate as a university programme. Journalism is becoming a graduate occupation, and university degree programmes must be more than just training courses, degrees are about learning to think and analyse and develop critical faculties. More than ever before, journalism requires scepticism and intelligence, the ability to challenge conventional wisdom and the assertions of those in power (Hynes 2001: 289)). Hynes further states that journalism education has changed from a skill-focussed curriculum to one infused with conceptual and theoretical courses and therefore journalists need to study traditional and basic subjects in the liberal arts so that they have a strong foundation of substantial knowledge.

In Africa, journalism schools and departments of mass communication have been established in many countries to offer journalism training and education. However, most training institutions are not well equipped to provide adequate and proper training for journalism

work. Economic difficulties, lack of resources and dilapidated equipment have rendered these institutions increasingly theoretical in approach (Nyamnjoh, 2005: 95). In South Africa, journalism education has been dominated by the technikons-career based tertiary institutions which emphasize practical skills while the Universities stress theory over practice (Megwa 2001: 283).

3.3 Business journalism in Africa

Business journalism is one of the most vibrant sectors of the African media. Although it had existed in some African countries for nearly half a century, its roots can be traced to the economic crises of the late 1970's and early 1980's. The failure of the World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programs and the subsequent search for alternatives catapulted economics into public discourse in many African countries (Kariithi 2002: 26). Debate then centred on whether World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored ideas were appropriate for Africa and whether to adopt alternatives proposed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

It was the wave of democratisation and the emergence of multi-party politics in many Africa countries in the 1990's, however, that added impetus to the growth and development of business journalism. It is widely acknowledged that there was a strong political dimension to business and economics reporting, not least because governments were generally seen as responsible for the health and stewardship of the economy (Goodard et al cited in Doyle, 2006: 444). This assertion is supported by Kareithi (2005: 121) who observes:

“There was appreciation in African societies of the crucial role a free press has to play in the survival of a democracy in any country. African journalists, in turn, have become more aware in their pressing responsibility to regularly monitor and scrutinize the government to ensure its performance matches its promise. Nowhere is that scrutiny more critical than in the management of the nation's business, economic and financial affairs. The evolution of an enlightened economics and business press is, therefore, a matter of survival for African democracies.”

Business journalism is relatively more developed in those African countries where the private enterprise is flourishing like South Africa and Kenya which led to the growth of financial publications for more than four decades (Kariithi 2002: 26). In the rest of Africa the business press was still underdeveloped.

3.4 Role of business journalism in Africa

Business journalism plays a crucial role in society although particular role varies from one economic one context to another. The financial media play an indispensable role in the market mechanism by providing information for market participants, investors and corporations (Parsons, 1990). It is also widely accepted that while some economic and business information may be consumed for news sake, many people are constantly making economic decisions which are to an extent inspired by the aggregate economic information received. Business coverage offers information that people need and use (Welles 2001: 3). (Reed and Lewin 2005: 8) explains that business journalism is not only for the executive or the investor, it affects everybody. Some commentators go as far as to say no journalism has had a bigger impact on lives or will have a big impact on future society as business journalism (Roush 2006:8). Readers and viewers now depend on business journalism to explain how business works and provide advice about a range of topics. It also influences policy as the business press would be a link between the government policy making institutions and the economic elite on one hand, and the public for whom the policies are made and the unfolding economic change are meant, on the other (Kariithi 1995: 382 see also MacDougal 1981: 140). In addition it is argued that the most important role a business journalist plays is that of watchdog, holding to account society's rule makers (Lewin 2000: 1; Kariithi 1995: 374). It is for this reason that Brand (2009:5) drawing from the scenario in South Africa explains that the financial media play a political role in addition to its economic role.

3.5 Critique of African business journalism

Unlike the Western model of business journalism, the African model (with the exception of South Africa and Kenya) had not fully evolved. The bizarre scenario surrounding this form of journalism in Africa has had profound effects on news values and news selection process as economics issues had been forcefully married into development news (Kariithi 1995: 380). Because of this approach business journalism in Africa fails to challenge government policies. Since government dominate business and economic activity in most African countries, stories about the national economy dominate the news. For many business reporters, reporting such stories involves contacting government sources, speeches of government officials, use of government documents, sifting through government data or visiting government projects. Business journalism is thus used as a channel for promoting

government development agenda. In the same vein of fostering national development, the African business reporters rely on World Bank and IMF representatives as important sources of news and the journalists uncritically report policies from these international financial institutions.

Secondly, African business journalism lacked the critical approach when dealing with companies and this has negatively affected on its watch dog role. This made business reporting fail to investigate activities of companies in a local economy. The business media is generally seen as too sympathetic and close to business and corporate entities. The loss of the punching room between the financial media and the corporate world is blamed for some of the biggest omissions in media coverage in recent years (Kariithi 2003: 159). Business journalism should not only serve industry but need to adopt a critical stance. It has been stated that:

“Business is as powerful and influential in our lives as government is. It is an institution which needs unpacking, analysing and criticising in the same way we do government. Whatever it does needs to be analysed and criticised (business editor Jabulani Sikhakhane quoted in Rumney 2008: 18)

Thirdly, the African business journalism had copied the elitist orientation and approach of the western Europe and US model. Contemporary African economics journalism is widely practiced and marketed as an elite communication as opposed to mass communication (Kariithi 2003: 57). There appears to be a conviction among journalists that business and economics news is not meant for the masses and many business journalists share the perception that the only meaningful way to reports events of an economic nature is to display figures, statistics and graphs (Mogekwu 2005: 63). The perception and orientation towards the audience of such news ought to be different from that of European or US journalists. European and African audiences had different levels of economic awareness, of enlightenment and relationship with the business domains (Mogekwu 2005: 65). This restricted and continued to tighten the circle of those who were confident enough to engage with such information. Business news was thus understood by a continuously diminishing percentage of the population. This exclusionist character contradicted the theoretical premise of media and society and the popular participation premise underpinning modern democracies. Business news need to be simplified to accommodate all citizens as it was for everyone.

As Breed and Lewin (2005:8) put it, gone are the days when only the corporate executives devoured the business, financial and economics press, now it was everyone in the pool. Business news segments in the mainstream media should be intended to be accessible and appealing to non specialist audiences, and stories should capture and sustain the attention of a broad, lay readership (Doyle 2006: 436).

3.6 Becoming a business journalist in Africa

What appears to be a constraining factor in the growth of business reporting in African countries is the shortage of competent journalists in this specialised reporting (Masanilo 1991: 15). Reporting business to a large extent depends on the ability of journalists to do it effectively.

However, this genre of reporting is considered difficult journalism. Business journalism needs specialised knowledge and reporting skills. Ludwig (2002: 129) argues that the complexity of business, finance and economics requires sophistication not typically taught in journalism schools. Although people joining the journalism profession today were better educated and prepared, unfortunately few had the basic understanding of economics, accounting, mathematics, statistics, the capital markets or capitalism itself. They generally possessed poor media skills in comprehending and reporting business and economics. Media scholars agree that media houses were unprepared to tackle this journalistic genre. Most journalists joining the business beat knew little about economics, business or finance. This lack of knowledge rendered them unprepared as business journalists (McNair 2001:13, Lewin 2002:21).

Because of the rapid demand for business coverage, reporters who had experience covering other types of stories were just thrown into the business beat. Hiring and deployment of an economics reporting team became a tricky task. In fact, most editorial managers conceded recruiting the right people for the business desk was the toughest part of their job (Reed and Lewin 2005: 13). Since journalism education and training emphasizes general reporting, the preference for business reporting has always been for general experience and competence rather than specialised knowledge (Turnstall 1970:25).

However, a business news desk of every newspaper was different. Those with lots of resources had the luxury of picking and choosing their staff; either from the news organisation's existing pool of talent or by going outside the organisation to lure experienced

people. Those with little resources do not have the clout to add or attract staff, so often they hired and mentored younger, less experienced journalists (Reed and Lewin 2005: 13). Upon deployment to the business desk they underwent a process of socialisation to be exposed to the demands of the new form of reporting. Editors staffing business sections realised that to cover the field effectively, reporters needed specialised knowledge, experience and training since business coverage required more background knowledge than other fields. Gradually fading was the old notion that any good general assignment reporter could turn out a quick authoritative story in any subject (Welles 2003: 14).

3.7 Training of business reporters in Africa

The shortage of skilled and competent business reporters stemmed from the fact that the focus of training in most journalism education institutions had, by and large, been on general reporting hence very little attention was given to reporting in such specialised areas as business and finance (Masanilo 1991: 16).

One major intervention to enable business journalists produce better work was to expose them to the training and education that makes them understand the significance of events and of what they are writing about. Business reporters needed classes or training in business and economics to provide them with the tools necessary for their work. (Roush 2004: 3). There was no consensus on the specific type of training a business reporters had to undergo.

However, studies by Ludwig (2003) and Roush (2006) revealed some of the important topics business journalists must have knowledge of and these included the following: the way the economy works, accounting, mathematics, statistics, money and numbers, how to read a budget, how to read, understand and interpret financial statements and annual reports, how capital markets operate, global economics and business. It was for this reason that more and more journalists were pursuing business and economics degrees as the field is more demanding than any other news reporting speciality.

Since there were few (if any) formal institutions for specialised training of business journalists, media organisations and academic institutions had taken up the task of improving the quality of business reporting. Conferences and seminars were organised for business reporters to learn more about their jobs and write with better understanding of the topics they encountered. Some universities realised the need for more training in business journalism and began offering majors in the field (Roush 2006: 230). Other initiatives in this regard are

undertaken by the World Bank Institute, Reuters Foundation, Standard Bank Group and *The Financial Times* of London through offering introductory courses in economics journalism, but as Kariithi (2005: 27) observes long term training strategy was critical for substantive progress to be made.

One giant initiative to promote business and economics journalism in Africa was the formation in 1999 of the African Economics Editors Network by the then Pearson Chair of Economics Journalism at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa. This network was a forum where journalists used to meet annually to brainstorm on ways to improve economics and business coverage as a long term strategy to institutionalise economics journalism on the continent. The network made great strides of trying to improve skills of African business reporters through increased resource sharing, training and interaction.

Individual countries had also made efforts to improve and promote business reporting. In Zambia, for example, the Zambian Institute of Mass Communication ran occasional short programs on business reporting. But it was the Bank of Zambia that had been the leader in attempting to address the paucity of financial skills among journalists by offering an annual residential course in financial reporting. The Central Bank availed some of its economists to explain the basic principles and language that would help journalists have a better understanding when reporting economics and other matters pertaining to banking (Kariithi 2005: 147).

Professional business journalism associations had also been formed in many African countries such as Niger, Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Namibia. These business writers associations were helping journalists improve coverage as well as develop general work guidelines (Kariithi 2005: 28)

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the available literature on journalism as a profession and socialisation of journalists with particular reference to business reporters. The next chapter is a theoretical framework on which this study is anchored.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

4.0 Introduction

This chapter maps out the theoretical terrain of the study. Since it is concerned with business journalism as a subfield of news reporting, the research draws from scholarly debates that deal with the phenomenon of specialisation in journalism. Some scholars have argued that the roles and values of specialist reporters, just like those of other reporters are to a large extent influenced by the larger structure within which they work. For this reason, the study also engages with the theories such as sociology of journalism that explain the way in which journalists are constrained or enabled in their daily work by structure and agency.

4.1 Subfields and specialisation in journalism

One of the earliest writers on the journalistic specialisation argued that journalists were becoming subject to a compulsion to respect and observe the intellectual disciplines and the organised body of knowledge which the specialist in any field possesses at the time (Turnstall (1971:1). For this reason it has been argued that an important organising distinction in an increasingly fragmented media environment is thematic specialisation into what is usually called a “beat”.

As a result the journalism field has been structured between a “generalist” pole and a “specialised” pole (Marchette 2005:64). It is noteworthy to highlight that journalistic specialisation was obviously not compatible to academic disciplines, not least because there were no formal entry requirements. The articulation of the journalistic field around the two poles of generalist and specialist reflects the characteristics of the publics to whom media outlets were addressed, and the outlets as well as the journalists themselves (Marchette 2005: 65). The world was bureaucratically organised for journalists, and that their view of society as bureaucratically structured was the very basis upon which they were able to detect events. The beat provides a way in which news organisations limit production costs thereby defining the world of possible news (Fishman 1980:51).

In an effort to deal with the uncertainties of news breaks, media houses go for the most easily available news coverage through establishment of routines in news beats (Ettema et al 1997, Soloski 1997). The routine procedures allow media houses to allocate resources in a manner that ensures a regular output is produced. In each of these arguments there is an assumption

that journalists on a particular beat adhere to the routines of the news sources which exposes them to dependence not only on facilities provided for their conveniences such as travel arrangements but also the timing of disclosures of news by the sources (Napori 1997). The reinforcement of the specialised pole in the journalistic field is shown by the ceaseless growth of specialised magazine outlets addressed to a professional or specialised public.

To meet this demand, both university communications programmes and post graduate journalism schools had established thematic options in politics, science, agriculture, environment, sports, business, and so on. All journalists operating in a particular journalistic sub-field shared norms, values and practices specific to that field. In this regard, business journalism was a distinct and legitimate news reporting sub-field and had developed a number of specific practices and norms of its own (Kjaer and Slaata 2007:38)

4.2 Sociology of journalism

Sociology of journalism examines the social determinants of journalistic output; the features of social life and organisation which shape, influence and constrain its form and content (McNair 2001: 3). The journalistic text is viewed as a product of a wide variety of social, cultural, technological, political and economic forces, especially to a particular society at a particular time. News is not an objective reflection of reality (Tuchman 1978). It is a product of interaction between news workers, news organisations and other institutions in society. Understanding the content, meaning, role and impact of journalism therefore requires description and analysis of the broader social context within which it is produced and the factors of production which determine that context (McNair 2001: 4).

The sociology of journalism, therefore, describes the context and analyses the social relationships and interactions which define the journalists' parameters of vision, constrain their autonomy and shape, and dictate the form and content of what they write and speak (McQuail 1994: 210). It has been argued that:

Journalists in modern capitalist societies aspire to independence, and most have it to varying degrees, but they can never be entirely "free" from the circumstances within which their work is organised, regulated, marketed and consumed (McNair 2001: 12).

Several studies in sociology of news reveal that a number of factors are involved in processes that shape news. Broadly, there are three approaches to the study of news production-

political economy, social organisation of news work and cultural approach (Schudson 2000: 177).

Political economy perspective relates the outcome of news to the structure of the state and economy and to the economic foundation of the news organisation. This approach highlights the influence of economics, particularly ownership and control (McNair 2001). Scholars of the political economy of the media argue that media serve to mobilise support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity. This view holds that there is a conspiracy as the media are owned and operated by the dominant class and that the media serve an ideological function—a vehicle through which the capitalist system legitimates and sustains itself. Economic domination of media organisations is widely assumed to translate into power and influence over organisational features such as editorial bias (McQuail 1994:206).

Another economic factor is the influence of evolving media and information markets on the content of journalism. Journalism is a commodity which must be sold to sophisticated and demanding consumers in an increasingly competitive market place. The economic dimension has a major impact on the form, content and style of journalism (McNair 2001: 13).

The social organisation of news work comes primarily from the field of sociology, especially the study of social organisations, occupations and professions, and the social construction of ideology (Schudson 2000:177). This perspective analyses how the efforts of journalists on the job are constrained by organisational and occupational demands. The social organisation of news-work appreciates that journalism is a social construction, the result of a production process centred on the newsroom which defines people's activity in terms of its routines and limitations (McNair 2001:62). Few journalists are free to cover what they wish; they are limited by set deadlines and competitive pressures (Dunwoody 1997: 156).

Also underpinning the work of a journalist is the professional status to work to an ethical code of conduct. Professional norms of a journalist are of two types; technical norms which deal with news gathering and reporting, and ethical norms which embrace the newsman's obligations to the craft and include such ideals as responsibility, impartiality, accuracy, fair play and objectivity (Breed 1997:108). Additionally, every newspaper has a policy which is followed by the editorial staff and manifests in slanting as well as whether to feature or bury a story (McQuail 1994: 206).

It is for this reason that McNair (2001: 63) argues that those who criticise journalistic output from an ideological vintage point, often overestimate the extent to which journalists are free agents since a journalist is like a clog in a wheel over whose speed and direction he or she may have little or no control.

The cultural approach emphasises the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems regardless of the structure of economic organisation or the character of occupational routines (Schudson 2000: 177). A cultural account of news is relevant in understanding journalists' renderings of how they know "news" when they see it. It helps to explain generalised images and stereo-types in the news media (Schudson 2000: 189).

Although the three approaches have greatly advanced understanding of the media by focussing on the specific institutions and the specific processes in those institutions responsible for creating news, none of the three perspectives by itself can account for all that we might want to know, they are not to be viewed as mutually exclusive, they give a fuller account when viewed together (Schudson 2000: 195).

4.3 Hierarchy of influences approach

Reese's (2001) hierarchy of influences model cuts across Schudson's three perspectives by studying news production from five levels. These range from the most micro to the most macro; individual, routines, organisational, extra media and ideological with each successive level viewed as subsuming the one(s) prior. This hierarchy of influences model looks at individual journalists within organisational and ideological constraints. It provides a multi-perspectival approach that helps examine individual journalists, practices and the system. The hierarchical aspect draws attention to the idea that the forces operate simultaneously at different levels of strength in any shaping of media content (Reese 2001: 179).

4.3.1 Individual level

The individual level looks at the extent to which individual news workers are responsible for selection and passing of news items and the role the news worker plays in shaping news. At this level, attention is paid to describe the individual characteristics such as training, background, values, attitudes and how they influence content. The point is to understand to what extent their characteristics impact in shaping news. The analysis is aimed at uncovering the subjectivity of journalists.

4.3.2 Routines level

This level looks at the selection of news as determined by impartial rules or routine. It considers the constraining influences of journalistic practises. 'Routines' are patterned practices that work to organise how people perceive and function within the social world. Individuals do not have complete freedom to act on their beliefs and attitudes, but must operate within a multitude of limits imposed by technology, times, space and norms (Reese 2001: 180). This level is important because it illustrates the extent to which individual news worker acts as a gate keeper or merely carries out a set of routine procedures. They are viewed in negative light as constraints on individual agency, but they can just as appropriately be viewed as inevitable features of any human activity. Much of what journalists provide as reasons for their behaviour are actually justifications for what they have been obliged to do by forces outside their control.

4.3.3 Organisational level

Organisational level analysis looks at how the organisation, its structure and culture influence and shape news selection. This analysis pays special attention to organisational goals and policies. Major questions addressed at this level are suggested by organisational chart, which maps the key roles and their occupants and how those roles are related to each other in formal lines of authority. Breed (1997) has observed that at the organisational level, power is not overtly expressed over the news product because it would violate the notion of objectivity. A journalist anticipates organisational boundaries the power which manifests in self-censorship by its members. Thus the journalist may actually state that no one told him or her to suppress a story; this self-policing is more effective than direct censorship. One has to understand organisational structure and its control mechanisms in order to make an accurate assessment of how news is shaped (Reese 2001: 182).

4.3.4 Extra media level

These are influences that originate from individuals and organisations which are themselves not part of the media (Mc Quail 2001: 15). Power to shape content is not in the media alone, but is shared with a variety of institutions in society including the government, advertisers, public relations, influential news sources, interest groups and even other media organisations (Reese 2001: 182). This influence draws attention to the way media are subordinated to elite interests in the larger system. It assumes that the media operate in a structured relationship

with other institutions that function to shape media content. These other actors seek to have their views journalistically represented in the most positive manner possible from their self-interested perspectives (McQuail 2001: 16).

4.3.5 Ideological level

Ideology maps the entire social system and how it shapes news selection and presentation. As Reese (2001:183) has observed, concern here is how the media's symbolic content is connected with larger social interest, and how meaning is constructed in the service of power. Media owners and managers are committed to the continuance and maintenance of capitalist system of private property ownership (Gitlin 1980). These media elites support the political-economic system as their power and prestige is supported by it. Gitlin argues that hegemonic forces are operating within the media. Socialisation of reporters plays a role in assimilating news workers to the dominant ideology which result in a shared out look and approach to issues.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the two theoretical frameworks which influences the study in question. It has looked at scholarly works on specialisation in journalism and sociology of journalism. The next chapter is on the methodology employed to collect data for the study.

Chapter Five: Research methodology

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the theoretical framework that informs the study. This chapter is about the methodology employed to generate data for the study. The chapter describes and discusses the research design and procedures. This is done by addressing methodological issues such as the case study approach, techniques applied in sampling, data collection methods employed and data analysis methods. The value of this chapter is also to give a guide for similar or comparative research to be conducted.

5.1 Research design and procedure

A research design is concerned with key issues involved in planning what will be done in conducting a research. These issues are not limited to data collection but also establishing research relationships with those to study, selecting sites and participants and analysing data that is collected (Maxwell 2005:79). A research design is essentially a blue print or set of plans for collecting information and as such all research designs incorporate the steps in the process of collecting and analysing data (Wimmer and Dominick 1991: 25).

The research design, therefore, sets out the logic of the enquiry and as such should include the logistical arrangements that one proposes to undertake, the measurement procedures, the sampling strategy and the frame of analysis. For any investigation, the selection of an appropriate research design is crucial in enabling one to arrive at valid findings and conclusions (Kumar 2005: 47). Planning how the data will be used once it has been collected is an important part of any research design. Knowing how data will be processed is essential to deciding on only what data to collect but also in what form the data can be collected.

5.2 Case study approach

As explained in the introduction, this research adopted a case study approach. Case studies are in-depth investigations of particular events, circumstances or situations which offer the prospect of revealing understanding of a kind which might escape broader surveys (Stake 1995: 14). Stake further adds that often a large scale survey will not provide the in-depth understanding required. It then becomes necessary to look into detail at what is happening in a smaller number of instances or cases. This provides a greater depth at the expense of

breadth. Wisker (2001: 190) observes that case study as a method offers an opportunity to consider a situation, individual, event, group, organisation or whatever is appropriate as an object of study. One of the advantages of using case study methodology and methods is that an in-depth situation, individual or phenomenon can be explored fully. Case studies are used when it is necessary to develop a detailed understanding of what is happening in complex circumstances (Moore 2006: 13).

The choice of case studies is critical; they should be selected so that they broadly represent the total population being surveyed. They can never be representative in a statistical sense. Rather they reflect the main characteristics of the whole population. One of the issues is that one cannot generalise from one case, so the case needs to be contextualised and carefully described for others to consider its usefulness in other contexts. Some researchers find it useful to work with a single case study and others select several cases. The use of several cases helps to establish a range and increase the likelihood of generalisability. In this study, the two daily newspapers *The Daily Times* and *The Nation* were chosen as case studies as it was deemed they were representative of other media institutions in Malawi.

Upon establishing the case studies, the research procedure concentrated on four main components; sampling, the research relationship that is established with the study subjects, data collection and data analysis.

5.3 Sampling

Decisions about who to include in a study (traditionally called sampling) is an essential part of research methods. In qualitative research, a typical way of selecting settings and individuals falls under purposive sampling or purposeful selection or criterion-based selection (Creswell 2003: 46). This is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that cannot be gotten as well from other choices (Maxwell 2005: 88). Selecting those settings and individuals that can provide the information needed to answer one's research question is one of the most important considerations.

This study adopted a purposive sampling procedure which allows the researcher to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which he or she is interested. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) put it that many qualitative researchers employ purposive sampling and not random sampling, they seek out groups, settings and individuals where the process being

studied is most likely to occur. Purposive sampling demands that one thinks critically about parameters of the population one is interested in and to choose the sample carefully on that basis (Silverman 2000: 104).

As explained in the introduction chapter, this study was about investigating the process of becoming a business reporter in Malawi. This was a qualitative study which sought to gain understanding from the perspective of journalists themselves about how they changed—and the constraints they encountered—from generalists to specialist business reporters. In pursuit of this focus, the researcher targeted two leading daily newspapers in Malawi, *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*. These newspapers were chosen because they covered more business issues and in greater detail than other newspapers and radio and television stations. Furthermore, the two daily papers were significant as they had set up separate business desks alongside other regular beats such as politics, entertainment and sports. The two newspapers were also important as they enjoyed a high circulation and readership in Malawi. *The Daily Times* and *The Nation* have a circulation of 16,000 and 20,000 respectively (Chitsulo 2006: 34, MISA 2007:47). Apart from the reporters, additional information was also collected from editors of the two newspapers. This served not only to complement data from business reporters but also to get data from a different perspective.

5.4 Access and consent

Hansen et al (1998) suggest that the success of any research depends on forming useful and informative relationship with subjects under study. The relationship created with participants in a research (who can facilitate or interfere with the study) is an important part of one's methods and how to initiate and negotiate these relationships is a key design decision (Maxwell 2005: 80). These relationships are conceptualised as “gaining access” to the setting or “negotiating entry.” The research relationship that one establishes can facilitate or hinder other components of the research design such as participant selection and data collection. It was necessary to gain the trust of both the editors and the business reporters.

At the onset, the researcher contacted editors of the two newspapers to brief them on the study and to seek permission for journalists in their newsrooms to participate in the study. On 12 October, 2009, the researcher had an appointment with the editors of the *Daily Times* and *The Nation* newspapers to negotiate research at the institutions. The editors granted permission upon reading a letter of introduction from the Rhodes University appointed

supervisor. The editors introduced the researcher to the business editor through whom the researcher was able to meet the business reporters. The researcher used this opportunity to build a cordial relationship with them by explaining the purpose of the study and established their availability for the interviews. The researcher met business journalists individually and explained what was expected of them. As a result interviewees were more frank and open in their responses to the interview questions that might otherwise have been difficult if access and consent was not well negotiated. During the period of the research, the business desk at *The Daily Times* had four reporters, three at the head office in Blantyre and one based at the regional office in the capital, Lilongwe. Likewise *The Nation* had four business reporters with one also based at its regional bureau in Lilongwe. In total 10 people participated in the study (eight business reporters and two editors).

5.5 Research methods

Although the methodological approach in this study was principally qualitative, a short structured questionnaire was initially employed at a preliminary stage of data collection. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather basic demographic and bio-data from the business reporters. The qualitative methods employed were in-depth face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, and documentary analysis. The sections below discuss each of these methods in turn.

5.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents or by the researcher. In a questionnaire, respondents read questions and then write down the answers (Leedy and Ormond 2005:28). The questionnaire is advantageous in that it is less expensive as it saves time and human and financial resources. It also offers greater anonymity as there is no face to face interaction between the respondents and interviewer, for example in situations when sensitive questions are asked it helps to increase the likelihood of obtaining accurate information (Wisker 2001: 24). In this study a short structured self administered questionnaire with seven items was used that required the respondents to provide closed answers (Refer Appendix 1). Completed questionnaires were returned by the reporters within two days.

5.5.2 In-depth face-to-face interviews

Information gathered from the short structured questionnaire with the business reporters reporters formed the basis of subsequent in-depth face to face interviews. The in-depth interview was the main data collection method in the study. This method was selected because it was considered appropriate to yield optimum answers to the study question. Since the study was interested in getting independent perspectives of journalists, in-depth interviews were deemed appropriate for the study as Bower cited in Jensen (1982: 240) states that "the best way to find out what people think about something is to ask them."

Moreover, in-depth interviews allow a substantial room for respondents to express themselves more openly and for the researcher to be able to probe explanations. It has to be pointed out that the interviews were conducted by following guidelines which focussed on certain themes that presented themselves as issues worth investigating in the research. This type of interview is conducted with the aim of soliciting detailed information about specific aspects as it allows the interviewer to formulate questions based on the respondent's answers (Wimmer and Dominick 1991: 45). In-depth interview is a useful technique for collecting information which would unlikely with techniques such as questionnaire. What distinguishes the interview from survey questionnaire is the researcher's flexibility to explore interesting things that come up during the interview (Priest 1996: 108). The theoretical roots of the in-depth interview are in what is known as the interpretive tradition. These are face to face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives of their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (Creswell 2003: 144). Walliman (2005: 285) notes that the structuring of the interview depends on the type of information one wishes to elicit. For very precise answers to questions used in quantitative and statistical analysis, a tightly structured interview is required with closed questions formulated in a method similar to a questionnaire. According to Fontana and Frey (1994:363) structured interviews refer to a situation in which the interviewer asks each respondent a series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories. Structured interviews use a pre-conceived interview schedule which the interviewer should follow closely.

In this study a semi-structured interview format was adopted to ensure as much information as possible was obtained through probing people's responses. The interviews with the reporters were done in the newsroom library. The location was appropriate for this purpose as

it was quiet which ensured no interference and disruption. Similar semi-structured in-depth interviews were also conducted with editors of the two newspapers and these were conducted in their offices. While it is common practice to make notes during an in depth interview, the researcher recorded the interviews with the business reporters and the editors which were later transcribed. (Refer to Appendix 2 and 3 for interview guides used for reporters and editors)

5.5.3. Focus group interviews

Focus groups are small groups brought together specifically to focus on certain issues which enable close scrutiny and lengthy discussions (Wisker 2001: 141). They are very useful in capturing people's responses and feelings. With several people present in a focus group, ideas and issues tend to shape themselves as people speak, and the subjects start to form an understanding of participants' debate certain points. Focus groups have some advantages over individual in depth interviews. While in depth interviews allow people to talk in detail about their beliefs and feelings, focus groups force people to consider how they feel about issues in the light of other people's feelings (Lunt 1996: 82). They create an opportunity for the energy and momentum of the group interaction to open up wider range of responses than is possible in an individual interview. The essence is interaction between members of the group, seeing how people moderate their views, react to different perspectives and manage their disagreements (Moore 2006: 144). While most issues were dealt with during the in-depth interviews with individual reporters, the focus group interviews concentrated on only those issues and aspects of the study that emerged critical and controversial during in-depth interviews. Two focus group interviews were conducted, one for reporters at *The Daily Times* and the other for reporters at *The Nation*. Since many business reporters were stationed at the main office, these were purposely targeted for the focus group interviews. As a moderator of the focus group interviews, the researcher's task was to ensure that the conversation did not stray from the key issues under investigation. Just like indepth interviews, the two focus group interviews were also recorded.

5.5.4 Document analysis

Atkinson and Coffey (2004:57) observe that qualitative field research should pay careful attention to analysis of documentary realities. Document analysis can be used either to supplement the data collected or as a primary focus of research (Deacon et al 2007). In this

study, document analysis was employed to supplement data collected through questionnaire, semi structured interviews and focus group interviews. To this effect the researcher collected documents at the two newspapers. These documents were code of ethics and editorial policy. At *The Daily Times*, the journalists' code of ethics and editorial policy was incorporated within the company's general conditions of service while *The Nation* had an editorial policy and code of practice as one document (refer to Appendix 5). In conducting the document analysis, the researcher took a close reading of the documents and identified those sections that related to the professional socialisation and work of the business reporters. There was need to approach documents for what they are and what they are used to accomplish, examining their place in the organisational setting (Atkinson and Coffey 2004: 73). The documents were thus treated and analysed with a critical eye and information obtained from them formed the basis of some questions put across to the reporters and editors.

5.6 Data analysis procedure

Analysis of data is an ongoing process which may occur throughout the research process, with earlier analysis informing later data collection (Blaxter et al 1996: 173). Analysis should not start when the data had been collected. As the data is being collected, one should be refining ideas, questioning things and trying to see the underlying reasons and causes. Collection and analysis became integrated so that one can see what to deduce to inform the next step of the research (Moore 2006: 74). All the recorded interviews were transcribed. The data was interpreted and analysed further because in-depth interviews are not considered finished accounts of the respondents' experience (Jensen 1982:4). Given that the interviews produced data in form of verbatim transcripts, it was the researcher's task to interpret the meaning of these data and present their most salient features in critical and coherent form. Thematic coding was used as a mode of analysis. As Jensen (1982: 247) explains, the approach is:

“A loosely inductive categorisation of interview extracts with reference to various concepts, headings or themes. The process comprises the comparing, contrasting and abstracting of the constitutive elements of meaning.”

The researcher's focus was therefore to report those sections of the interviews that shed most light on the research question at hand. Using the research questions, the interview protocol and the initial readings of the transcripts as a guide, themes were developed to apply to the data. Each of these themes was also broken down into sub themes and in some cases into sub-

sub themes. The data was then written in narrative form with pertinent quotations used to illustrate major findings of the study.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design, procedure and sampling adopted in the study. It has also discussed the case study approach adopted in this study as well as the main methodological approach chosen for the study which was principally qualitative. However, a questionnaire was initially used as basis for conducting in depth interviews with the business reporters. The in-depth interviews were also done with editors. In addition focus group interviews with business reporters and documentary analysis were also conducted. The next chapter presents and analyses the key findings of the study in relation to the literature review and theoretical framework expounded in chapters three and four.

Chapter Six: Study findings and analysis

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents key findings and analysis of a study that sets out to investigate evidence on the situation on the ground regarding becoming a business reporter in Malawian. This is an important chapter as it exposes what the whole research was about as it provides proof of motivation and process of transforming into a business journalist in the local context. The value of this chapter is to achieve the goal and purpose of this study. The findings and analysis will be rooted in the objectives of the study and are informed by the literature review and theoretical framework. This chapter combines findings from questionnaires, individual in-depth interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. Due to the qualitative nature of the methodology in this study, findings from the in-depth and focus group interviews are presented and discussed concurrently under various sections in a narrative form based on major thematic concerns hinged on the objectives of the study. Although these themes are in practice inter-twined, they are treated separately for analytical reasons and for clarity of analysis and discussion. These findings will be presented, illustrated and collaborated with quotations arising from in-depth interviews

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the identity of the reporters, they will be identified as *The Daily Times* Reporter 1, 2, 3 and 4 and as *The Nation* Reporter 1, 2, 3 and 4. Similarly, *The Daily Times* editor will be identified as Editor 1 and that of *The Nation* newspaper as Editor 2. The chapter unfolds by way of presenting data from the questionnaire, followed by the findings from in-depth and focus group interviews as well as document analysis.

6.1 Age

Age was the first basic demographic information the business reporters were asked to provide in the questionnaire. Findings revealed that business reporters at *The Daily Times* and *The Nation* were aged between 25 and 35 years. The researcher had expected the reporters to be of younger age considering that business reporting was a relatively new field of reporting. *The Nation* Reporter 3 put it that:

“age goes with experience, it is unusual to have starters coming straight to business journalism hence business reporting is rarely undertaken by young and in-experienced reporters due to its complexity” (*The Nation* reporter 3 interview, October, 2009)

6.2 Gender

In terms of gender, it became apparent that business reporting at the two daily newspapers was dominated by men. All reporters interviewed were male except one. *The Nation* Reporter 2 explained that men dominate business reporting because women considered it a tough beat as they were scared of the technical language, jargon, figures and numbers used. Perhaps this fits well into the assertion made by Johnstone et al (1976: 24) that:

Men and women tend to have very different journalistic functions within the media. There are sharp differences in the types of work they perform and the types of subject with which they deal. Many females prefer dealing with news traditionally defined as of interest to women -the society page, fashion, home and family life topics.

In view of these considerations, it would be essentially correct to label business reporting at the two newspapers as a “man’s” field. As Reese (2001: 179) explains when looking at the individual level of the hierarchy-of- influences model, the attitudes, training and background of the journalist is influential. In this respect it can be said that most female journalists are socialised in such a way that they view business reporting as very demanding and hence beyond their capability.

6.3 Career profile and work experience

The reporters indicated a journalism career experience of several years as general reporters, with four years for the least experienced and 15 years for the most experienced. On the other hand, their work experience as business reporters ranged from three years for the least experienced to 10 years for the most experienced. There was thus a direct correlation between one’s overall experience in journalism and tenure in business reporting, with those most experienced in news reporting having a longer stint on the business desk and those with few years experience also been in business reporting for a shorter period. The career profile and work experience tallied with the ages of business journalists. As *The Daily Times* Reporter 2 explained:

“In the absence of formal specialised business journalism training, business reporting has become a beat for experienced journalists who have been in the profession for some time. It also requires seasoned hands since it is perceived tough and complicated requiring maturity to explain technical jargon and interpret figures and numbers” (*The Daily Times* Reporter 2 interview, October 2009).

This holds true to the observation by Reed and Lewin (2005) that the toughest part of editorial managers job is hiring the right people for the business desk arguing that hiring and deployment of an economics reporting team has become a tricky task reporters such that those who have experience covering other types of stories were just thrown into the business beat. Since journalism education and training emphasises general reporting, the preference for specialised reporting like business has always been for general experience and competence rather than knowledge in specialised field (Turnstall 1970: 25). But as will be evident later in the chapter, considering journalistic experience alone as a pre-requisite for business reporting had its own problems since to cover the field effectively, reporters need specialised knowledge and training (Ludwig 2002). On this Welles (2003) observes gradually fading is the old notion that any experienced general assignment reporter can turn out a quick authoritative story in a specialised subject. Table 1 below summarises age, gender, and work experience of the business reporters at *Daily Times* and *The Nation*.

Table 1: Age, gender and work experience of business reporters

Age	
Age Range	Number of respondents
20-24	1
25-29	4
30+	3
Gender	
Gender	Number of respondents
Women	1
Men	7
Experience	
Number of Years	Number of respondents
1-4	2
5-9	3
10+	3

6.4 Motivation for becoming a business journalist

The question of motivation was posed to the reporters to determine why and how they became specialised reporters. From the responses of the reporters, no clear pattern emerged

for choosing business journalism as a career option. As a result reasons for changing from general journalist to specialised business reporter were rather varied. It was clear that most had chanced upon business reporting as a career. Three patterns emerged; those who became business journalists out of passion for the beat, those who joined the business desk just for the sake of reporting something different, and those who were forced by circumstances.

The Daily Times Reporter 3 belonged to the few that had the initial passion to report business as he put it:

“The field was un-chattered and so wanted to do something unique in Malawi journalism, to take up the challenge to help bring awareness among people on various business policies being introduced and implemented and how they affected the country’s development agenda. Also it was the idea to associate with the cream of the world. Economists, business and financial experts are regarded as the top ranks of decision making on issues of the economy. Issues of the economy are regarded as tough and difficult. For belonging to the business desk, one is seen as belonging to unique and special class of journalist. Many reporters would refuse to be on the business desk because they think it is difficult. To be a business reporter is special, one interacts and associates with top notch intelligentsia, people with big brains.” (*Daily Times* Reporter 1 interview, October 2009)

For *The Nation* Reporters 2 and 3, and 4 and *The Daily Times* Reporter 1 it was out of desire to report on something different to break away from the usual routine mainly the emphasis on political reporting. And for *The Daily Times* Reporter 2 and 4 it was not out of their choice but were forced by circumstances as were ordered to move to the beat due to shortage of staff on the business desk. These findings revealed various and divergent reasons why the reporters became business journalists. From this it can be said that for many reporters there was no initial motivation to venture into business reporting. Only a few had considered it in the first place. This showed that many journalists were to say the least dragged into the field for various reasons.

This situation of few reporters having the motivation and passion could be explained from the perspective of the nature of business reporting. This genre of news reporting to a large extent depends on the ability of journalists to do it effectively as it was considered difficult. Business journalism needs specialised knowledge and reporting skills. AS Ludwig (2002) argues that the complexity of business, finance and economics requires sophistication not typically taught in journalism schools. Media scholars agree that most media houses were unprepared to tackle this journalistic genre. To many journalists, the lack of knowledge of business or economics renders them unfit and unprepared for business reporting (McNair 2001:13, Lewin 2002:21).

The reasons cited by the reporters above for their choice and motivation for venturing into business reporting highlights the observation by Marchette (2005) that journalistic specialisation was not compatible to academic disciplines, not least because there are no formal entry requirements. For the journalists at the two newspapers there was no specific academic qualification or any other conditions for them to become business reporters.

6.5 Hiring business reporters

The question of the process and procedure followed to put together a business desk was put to the newspaper editors.

6.5.1 Recruitment for business reporting

The basic question asked was “what was the pre-requisite education and training for business reporting? In other words, what criterion was used by the editors for recruiting and re-deploying staff on the business desk?” Their responses revealed that experience in journalism rather than background knowledge in business or economics was the most important factor considered when media institutions hire business reporters. The Editor 1 explained that:

“Recruiting staff for the business desk is a challenge because most of the media training institutions do not offer specialised training for business reporting. So usually most of the people that we have hired are those that got basic training in journalism then probably had chances later on for further studies specifically in business and economics news coverage. Most of the time we target those who have had training outside their normal or basic journalism training, and also had opportunities to do short courses in business and economics reporting. In addition we usually also look for some work experience, those who have been on the business desk before.”(Editor 1 interview, October, 2009)

On the other hand the Editor 2 said for business reporting the paper usually targeted people with a relevant first degree and at least with some economics knowledge. Editor 1 said his organisation had tried the approach of recruiting economics or business studies graduates since it would have been the best option. But he pointed out that such graduates were usually not settled enough because they could get more competitive salaries elsewhere. He said economics and business studies graduates seemed to find lucrative jobs elsewhere rather than in the media arguing that when they came to the media, it was because they had nowhere to go at that particular time. The editor observed that unless remuneration and work conditions in the media improved to become competitive as those offered by the corporate and financial

sector, chances of maintaining economics and business studies graduates were minimal. Editor 2 observed that it was ideal to target those with an economics degree in economics because this knowledge was vital, citing an example of one of the paper's business reporters who was an economics graduate from Chancellor College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi. He agreed with his counterpart at *The Daily Times* that it was not achievable as many such graduates were unwilling to work in the newsroom but preferred the corporate world where salaries and conditions were higher than those of media institutions. He said it has to be understood that these people were not actual journalists but just happened to be suited to journalism, hence their primary target as economists or business studies graduates was the financial, business and corporate sector.

The position of the two editors advocating for economics or business graduates as the most ideal for business reporting was contradicted by a very experienced business Reporter 3 at *The Daily Times* who argued that he would give priority to an experienced reporter to learn on the job over a graduate economist turned business reporter. To him, the graduate economist would fail in his responsibilities to communicate business information to the masses. He added that the experienced journalist would look at issues with the eye of an ordinary individual in the street unlike an economist who coming straight from the university with a lot of theories in the head would face problems to lower himself down to the level of an ordinary individual. *The Nation* Reporter 1 was also against the opinion that economists or business studies graduates were best suited for business reporting noting:

"It is true that some who are economists have ended up being good business journalists. But you also have got cases around where you find people who have never been trained as economists ending up being good business journalists. I think we should first understand who a journalist is; a journalist is a communicator whether it be in science or politics. So in the case of business reporting, it is anybody else who is interested in reporting business news, what is important is to equip them to understand the issues. To me, it is better to have an experienced journalist rather than a graduate economist to report on business. I think what you find is that journalism is a calling, so even if you may not have a background in economics or business studies but if you have an interest in that particular sector then you can turn into a good communicator of those issues. And the big advantage journalists have is that although they may not be experts in each and every field but what is important is to be good communicators and interpreters of the issues."(*The Nation* Reporter 1 interview, October, 2009)

From the sentiments above, it can be argued that the position of the editor 2 on recruiting business and economics graduates for business reporting was more of an ideal situation. The

real situation on ground was totally different. What was more practical and manifested on the ground was that experience in journalism surpasses all other considerations. This seemed to fit in with the career profile and work experience of business journalists which showed that many had a stint in general news reporting before turning to business reporting. Out of the eight business reporters interviewed only one (with a degree in economics) began business reporting without any previous journalism working experience and another had been recruited after graduating with a diploma in journalism. This indicated that while economics qualification was the to be the preferred pre-requisite qualification and the ideal, it was not attainable and that journalism experience was the most used criterion for recruiting staff for business reporting. This situation at the two Malawian newspapers seem to chime well with Reed and Lewin (2005: 14) who note that it helps if the reporters have experience covering other types of stories before moving over to business, as experienced reporters need less direction while greener reporters require more mentoring. Turnstall (1970:24) also supports this stand observing that in specialist reporting preference had always been on general experience and competence rather than specialised knowledge.

6.5.2 Re-deployment to the business desk

Re-deployment in this context refers to shifting of existing newsroom staff from beats like politics, health, sports to the business desk. Editors at the two newspapers said they considered the reporter's interest in business reporting for one to be redeployed to the business desk. Editor 1 gave an example of a Reporter 2 at his newspaper who was initially on the current or national news desk but moved to the business desk because she seemed to have the passion for business reporting. Reporter 3 of the same news paper concurred with this approach:

"In order to become a good business journalist, one must have an interest in business and economic issues. You come to the newsroom as an ordinary journalist, what people do in order to specialise in business is to be on the desk that is involved in business news, understudy those who are already on the desk, take up assignments from the business editor, and by and by they begin to like business news, and are able to understand more. First of all be on the desk, understand your colleagues, take assignments, have a look at your story after it has been edited." (*The Daily Times* Reporter 3 interview, October 2009).

But migration to the business desk out of interest could not be taken to be the norm. As observed earlier in this chapter, *The Nation* Reporter 2 explained that he moved to the

business desk not out of personal interest in the beat but was forced by circumstances as he was just asked to move due to shortage of staff on the business desk.

6.6 Mentoring newly recruited business reporters

The two editors at the newspapers under study explained that mentoring was required when new people had been recruited on the business or any other desk in order for them to be briefed on the expectations and the mode of operations on that particular desk. Editor 1 however observed that sometimes formal mentoring was not possible especially when the new person came to the desk when more experienced reporters were busy. In that situation de-briefing and mentoring was sometimes overlooked. He said in those cases, the person would be left to swim on his or her own. He said what was done instead was to constantly give feedback to the person, for example if he or she wrote something which could have been improved, they would be advised accordingly. The editor said the responsibility of mentoring was left to the business editor because he was one with specialised knowledge in this particular field. Editor 2 said the process of mentoring on the business desk was the same for reporters on that desks, the only difference was that as part of the mentoring process they were encouraged to read widely literature on business, economics and finance to keep themselves abreast and up to date with latest developments in those fields.

However, most reporters expressed concern over lack of mentoring and socialisation when they joined the business desk. *The Nation* Reporter 3 mentioned that he was not mentored or inducted in any way on the operations of the business desk as the experienced reporters were then not available to do so. *The Daily Times* Reporter 4 said in the absence of formal mentoring, in the early days he familiarised himself with business reporting through reading books and other literature on business and economics as well as business articles in international newspapers and magazines. For a few like *The Daily Times* Reporters 1 and 3 who had the privilege of being inducted and mentored by experienced business reporters, they admitted it was a useful process as it helped them develop a basic understanding of business and economics, determine newsworthy stories and nurtured and sharpened in their skills in the new area of reporting. The editors admitted that induction and mentoring of new recruits was compromised because there were not governed by any written rules and that they were just carried out as routine practices when it was felt necessary.

The findings above reveal that while mentoring was an important process in the professional socialisation of business reporters, it had not been carried out to the expected levels or in some cases not at all at the two newspapers. Most reporters interviewed lamented how they struggled to cope with demands of the business desk and ended up making mistakes in their writing which could have been avoided if they were formally and properly inducted and mentored. Newly recruited reporters on the business desk had been left on their own to find a way of knowing how to do things. This contradicts Turnstall (1970:35) observation that the process of occupational socialisation is supposed to be intense for journalism recruits in a specialised field, they are supposed to learn the house style to internalise news values and become themselves news oriented.

6.7 Education and professional training of business reporters

In this study, formal education refers to academic qualification that emphasise theoretical aspects while training denotes professional qualification that focus on the practical side. Within professional training, a distinction was also made between short term courses pursued at training workshops, conferences and seminars, and long-term courses leading to award of certificate, diploma or degree. In terms of their formal education, findings revealed that the highest academic qualification for *The Nation* Reporters 1 and 3, and *The Daily Times* Reporters 2 and 3 was The Malawi School Certificate of Education (an equivalent of British GSCE O-level certificate). *The Daily Times* Reporter 1 had a diploma in communication and journalism, *The Nation* Reporter 4 possessed a bachelors degree in economics while *The Daily Times* Reporter 4 and *The Nation* Reporter 2 had a bachelors degree in journalism. Refer to Table 2 for distribution of academic qualifications among the reporters.

Table 2: Academic Qualifications

Qualification	Number of people
(a) M.S.C.E. (British GSCE O- level equivalent)	4
(b) Diploma	1
(c) Bachelors degree in journalism	2
(d) Bachelors degree in economics	1
(e) Masters degree	0

The table above shows that none of the reporters except one with a bachelors degree in economics had attended a business reporting course or having any prior knowledge in business, finance or economics. The state of affairs alludes to the assertion that most business editors find business reporters unprepared (Pardue 2004). In a US survey of more than 800 journalists and 80 journalism schools whose goal was to illustrate the need for improved journalism education, especially in the area of business reporting, it was found that most staff lacked necessary skills to cover complex corporate financial skills and that the public's need for informed coverage of economic and business matters that dominated civic and political affairs remained measurably and markedly unfilled (Pardue 2004: 57).

6.8 Professional Qualifications in economics and business

Only one journalist indicated having attended long term professional courses in economics, the rest had general journalism professional qualifications ranging from certificate, diploma and bachelors degree in journalism (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3: Professional Qualifications

Qualification	Number of people
Certificate in business/economics	0
Diploma in business/economics	0
Bachelors degree in business/economics	1
Masters degree in business/economics	0

The table above shows that only one was initially exposed to business, economics and finance. It was because of skills and knowledge gap in business, economics and finance that the reporters mentioned that professional business reporting courses were essential for them to meet the demands of the beat.

All reporters interviewed indicated that they had attended short-term professional training at either a conference, workshop, or seminar. Topics covered during such training included the following: reporting corruption, corporate governance, budget reporting, reporting business news, globalisation, understanding the global financial crisis, reporting the national economy,

and reporting consumer issues. Most of these conferences, workshops and seminars either took place locally and organised by institutions such as the University of Malawi, the Reserve Bank of Malawi, National Bank of Malawi, Malawi Revenue Authority, Office of the Director of Public Procurement, Economics Association of Malawi, Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Malawi Economic Justice Network and Institute of Internal auditors, and the local offices of international institutions such as the World Bank, Canadian International Development Agency and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Some reporters indicated to have attended such short term courses outside the country organised by international institutions like as the Reuters Foundation, the Nordic SADC Journalism Centre, Reserve Bank of South Africa, Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the African Economic Editors Network, among others.

The two editors admitted that due to cash flow problems in most cases it became difficult for their media institutions to fund or sponsor business reporters or any other reporter for professional training in Malawi or outside the country. Instead they encouraged reporters to seize opportunities of institutions that offer fully-funded training. They said in some rare cases their companies would meet part of the costs in form of providing means of transport when the tuition and other costs were paid for. But they emphasized that the initiative had to be with the reporter to identify and apply for a course of his or her interest and where necessary inform newsroom management should there be need for support from the institution. Editor 1 added that apart from training (internal and external) organised by other institutions, in-house training was organised and usually involved inviting officials of business, economics and financial and institutions who would make presentations to the business reporters. He said such presentations supplemented the mentoring and socialisation that took place on the desk and had proved very useful. He explained how it was organised in this way:

“We have in the past tried to call people and organisations to come and make presentations on particular areas of business and economics as one way of improving the performance of our business reporters. For example the economics association of Malawi would do some training for journalists on specifically how they want people to cover economics issues, the Bankers Association of Malawi would give a briefing on how to handle issues concerning banks, the Malawi Stock Exchange would also hold a training session specifically on how best they could be covered. So business reporters benefit from such presentations ” (Editor I interview, October 2009)

The above explanation showed that the media organisations also made effort to get involved in the professional training of business reporters rather than leaving everything to other external institutions.

6.8 Importance of professional training

All the reporters were unanimous in acknowledging the importance of long and short term professional courses to their business reporting career. *The Nation* Reporter 3 put it that:

“When I was going into business reporting I did not have the much needed knowledge and experience, therefore these trainings have been like eye openers because they helped me understand issues in business and I think they have helped to shape me to where I am now” (*The Nation* Reporter 3 interview, October 2009)

Most said the courses exposed them to new business knowledge, and gave them new insight and helped gain confidence in business reporting. They also said the training assisted in understanding difficult jargon and technical business and economics terms. In one unique case, as part of professional training *The Daily Times* Reporter 3 said he had benefited from a six month internship at the business desk of *The Chicago Tribune* in the United States of America.

6.9 Education and training needed

Despite having benefited from several short and long term professional courses, the reporters indicated wished they could undergo more training in order to enhance consolidate their business reporting skills. It was noted during the interviews that choice of further training depended on one's current academic and professional qualifications. For those with lower qualifications such as certificate and diploma, a degree in economics or business studies or business journalism was the desired and preferred program. Those with higher qualifications like a bachelors degree aspired for courses like a masters degree in economics, business journalism or business administration. In addition, the reporters also indicated that they faced problems understanding and covering some topics and wished they could undergo some short term professional training to consolidate their knowledge in those particular topics. The topics mentioned among others included: monetary policy, international financial market systems, economics of oil, globalisation, interpreting national budget, bond and commodity market, derivatives, interpreting statistics, analysing company financial statements, fiscal policy and budget monitoring, and development economics. This showed that while the

business reporters had undergone some professional training, there was still a gap in their knowledge and skills base in as far as topics in business journalism were concerned and they needed more exposure and training. The need for more specialised business, finance and economics training among business reporters cannot be over emphasized.

In a study of 18 West Coast Newspaper editors and reporters in the US, nearly all agreed that business journalists need classes or training in business and economics to do their jobs well (Ludwig 2002:129). This also holds true to the Malawi business reporting scenario as articulated by the reporters that their exposure to different forms of professional training had significantly helped to improve their capacity to cover business. Their responses were unanimous that they needed to take classes in business and economics to provide them with tools necessary to do their work properly although they were mixed on what form the courses should take and the specific areas or topics. Editor 1 was emphatic on the need for business reporters to acquire specialised knowledge in the field noting:

“Business and economics news is a specialised area; the journalists are not economists or business experts to cover those issues. Most of their sources are somewhat specialised in terms of their language and presentation. So it needs someone to have a deeper understanding of those issues.” (Editor 1 interview, October 2009)

6.10 Membership to professional organisations

The reporters mentioned that another intervention for their socialisation and training had been the formation of a professional body called the Association of business journalists in Malawi. In the words of *The Nation* Reporter 2 who claimed was a founding member of the grouping, it had contributed tremendously to the improvement of business reporting:

“The association had done an incredible job to enhance the professionalization of business journalists through exchange of ideas and public talks where professionals in economics, business and financial sectors present working papers and discuss issues. In addition members have benefited from the association was a forum for networking, interaction, knowledge sharing and discussion of issues to develop business journalism profession, lobbying and negotiating with organisations for training.” (*The Nation* Reporter 2 interview, October 2009)

In addition to the local organisation, other reporters said they were also members of international professional bodies such as the African Economics Editors Network through which they had benefited in form of training, networking and sharing knowledge and skills with other reporters across the African continent.

6.11 Role perceptions

The most extensive research on journalists' perceptions of their roles has been by first Weaver who surveyed professionals from 21 countries and territories (Weaver 1998). The most conclusive result from the study was that there was no consensus with regard to roles. However, surveys modelled and similar to that of Weaver and conducted in Africa by Mwesige (2004) in Uganda, Ramaprasad (2001) in Tanzania, Kirat (1998) in Algeria and Ramaprasad and Hamdy (2006) in Egypt showed that providing timely information was the most important role by the journalists. Other roles that journalists strongly identified with were investigating government claims, analysis and interpretation of information. Beyond this agreement, the studies showed that the journalists' perception of their role was shaped by their countries' development imperatives of educating citizens (Joseph 2009: 149).

The question of the role of business journalists in the Malawian society overlapped with the one on what they thought was the main purpose of business journalism compared to other forms of news reporting at the newspaper they worked for. On the purpose of business journalism, some reporters explained that business journalism was aimed at explaining and interpreting economics and business issues in relation to people's daily life so that the public make right economic decisions. This was very close to what Rumney (2008: 16) calls the "utility" theory of economics journalism, i.e. a tool for readers to make money. Other reporters mentioned the watch dog role of business journalism; communicating economic policies of government and companies and scrutinizing them for positives and negatives. For others the role was to report business stories and how they impacted on the lives of local people, and yet others said the main role was to promote economic literacy among the masses. It can be said that the dominance of the idea of informing the public of government economic policies and of activities and operations of corporate and financial institutions could be explained by the nature and structure of the Malawi economy. As explained earlier, government activity dominated economic and business activity followed by corporate and financial sector. It was no wonder that business reporting by and large captured these two spheres. This was confirmed by a qualitative content analysis of theme-based data from previous 100 business news reported in the two newspapers the researcher collected over a two-week period to determine the scope and nature of stories reported (Refer to Appendix 4A and 4B). This fitted well with the political economy framework that informed this study.

which relates the outcome of news process to the structure of the state and economy (McNair, 2001, Mcquail, 1994)

6.12 News values

Closely related to the concept of role perception in business reporting were news values. Weaver and Wilhoit (1986:124) note that the basic commodity of journalistic professionalism is the determination of newsworthiness and nothing was more controversial and sensitive in the field as the decisions about what is and what is not worthy publication. Notions about what makes news are many but a certain element of newsworthiness however rests with journalists themselves and the news gathering context (McNair 2001:79). To get an idea about their news values, business journalists were asked what criteria they considered when determining what was worth coverage. Although some responses that came up pointed to the general elements of news such as relevance, timeliness and proximity, most observed that business stories were selected based on the economic impact they had on the life of a common man, society and country as a whole. It could equally be said that because in the local Malawi context people's well being was dominated by government activity and that of corporate and financial sector, hence these two sectors were perceived newsworthy for coverage. However, the obsession of these two sectors left business reporting losing sight of other equally important news taking place in other sectors. The impact of business journalism would be severely limited if restricted to largely functions of the state bureaucracy (Kareithi, 2005:99). Kareithi further argues that by expanding the range of coverage to the multiplicity of non state actors in society, we cannot only provide the state with a better understanding of the range of interests and needs it is expected to represent and respond to, we can also draw many of those non-state actors into the policy making process.

6.13 Professional values and beliefs

According to Corner (cited in Pasti 2005: 92) professionalism of journalists lies in the impartial, fair and accurate reporting. The international principles of journalists' organisations defines professional journalism as 'supported by the idea of a free and responsible press and call 'for professional autonomy of journalists as well as measure of accountability (Nordenstreng 1998 cited in Pasti 2005: 92). Western discourse on professional journalism focuses on the demands of certain occupational standards and conduct with the idea of establishing independent informational expertise. The professional is

supposed to have a sense of responsibility towards the public and at the same time to be an opponent of those in power (Pasti 2005: 92). Josephi (2009) observes that there is an assumption that journalists' professional values are an indication of the quality of the journalism they produce but such a reductive equation cannot be made. While journalists are the primary producers, their autonomy is limited by the larger structure within which they work and operate (Reese 2001, see also McNair 2001 and Schudson 2000). Situated practice is strongly influenced by political, economic and cultural setting which in turn influences the norms held high in journalism be it a vision of journalists as the fourth estate or as essential elements national development (Josephi 2009:148) This makes it impossible to ascertain any meaningful statement on professional values worldwide (Josephi, 2005: 584). Curran (2005) attributes it to the dominance in journalism scholarship that the "American model of fact based, neutral professionalism and the libertarian, market based model of organising journalism" has been widely regarded as the norm. Although no studies have explored the depth in variation between professional values held while at journalism school and those applied while working in the newsroom, Splichal and Sparks (1994) examined motivations, expectations, and professional tendencies among first year students of journalism whose norms and values had not been tested by day-to-day reporting. The most striking similarity that emerged was for the young people to "stress a desire for independence and autonomy of journalism" (Splichal and Sparks 1994: 179). These findings showed that the first year students were at the precise point in their development when one would expect to find the "idealistic" conception of journalism and concede that exposure to more realities of the occupational situation would lead to a moderation of these idealistic views. These findings were encouraging with regard to professional values taught in journalism schools but also highlight that organisational, political, and cultural settings have considerable influence on the professional values as practiced.

For most business journalists professionalism meant writing and reporting business news in an accurate, fair, objective and balanced manner. However, they explained that they were unable to attain this ideal because of forces internal and external to their media institutions to which they had little or no control. The general consensus among the reporters was that that it was difficult if not impossible to uphold professional values in business reporting. As will be explained in a later section in this chapter most of this was due to influence and pressure of advertisers.

6.14 Job perceptions

Most business journalists appeared satisfied with their jobs even though not happy with some aspects among them lack of professional autonomy as alluded to under the section dealing with professional values and beliefs. Many stated that there was no specific monetary reward for being a business journalist since most media organisations pay people according to qualification and experience regardless of the beat. However older journalists but with lower academic and professional qualifications were more satisfied with the job than younger reporters with higher educational and professional qualifications. Also older journalists tended to focus more on economic factors such as pay and fringe benefits while younger reporters emphasized on personal professional development. Despite this, most expressed satisfaction to be playing a crucial role of interpreting business and economic dynamics for the ordinary people to understand. They said that being a business reporter gave prestige as they interacted with economic policy makers and captains of industry and were able to report on the local and world economy. Job satisfaction was the key predictor of the reporters' intention to remain in the career. Those reporters satisfied with the job especially older ones (with lower academic and professional qualifications) were more likely to stay in the field. Those who said were not satisfied (younger reporters and possessing higher academic and professional qualifications) wanted to change careers as they commanded a more favourable position on the media job market. The migratory job mobility route the better qualified business newsmen would take was *inter* rather than *intra* organisational. Those reporters not satisfied with their job said they were using business reporting as a stepping stone for careers in public relations, marketing or communication in the corporate and financial sectors. An example was given of two seasoned reporters, who because of their experience in business reporting secured lucrative jobs, one as public relations officer for the ministry of finance and the other as communications consultant for an international mobile phone company, Zain.

6.15 Ethics of professional practice

According to Henningham (1998) adoption of ethical codes is generally seen as basic to the development of an occupation as a profession. Kasoma (1996) observes that two assumptions can be made about the need for journalism ethics in Africa. First, ethics are necessary for the media to retain respectability and credibility and for journalists to perform objectively in their roles in society. Second, that journalism ethics are not enforceable by law or codes but was an

attitude of mind, a conviction that manifests itself in behaviour-thus an ability to make moral decisions on journalism performance.

The most contentious ethical issue that emerged during interviews with reporters and editors was the practice of receiving bribes and gifts from news sources. The phenomenon, it was observed, had made people perceive business reporting as “gift journalism” and susceptible to corrupt practices which in the process influenced news output. The practice was said to be unavoidable because most media houses in Africa had limited resources and that news sources be it government, financial or corporate organisations provided transport and allowances to reporters for news coverage.

Many reporters interviewed conceded that the practice of receiving gifts from sources was unavoidable because their media organisations did not have enough resources such as vehicles to deploy reporters for news coverage. They said the allowance they received was a mere incentive for their subsistence while on the reporting duty. Although no reporter specifically accepted having received money or any gift from sources either to positively publish or kill a story, *The Nation* Reporter 2 hinted to the vulnerability of business reporters, thus:

“Chances of corruption are particularly high because many players in the business, finance and economic sectors have deep pockets. As such they can afford to bribe reporters to write positive stories only or avoid negative stories appearing in the newspaper. (*The Nation* Reporter 2 interview, October, 2009)

The Daily Times Reporter 3 concurred with the observation by *The Nation* reporter on bribes and corruption saying:

“The problem of taking bribes is quite wide-spread, almost every reporter does it. We are living in days when business competition is very stiff. Everyone who is in business wants to have coverage and as a result even when they don’t have a story at all they ask reporters to go and write whatever small story just to make sure they make noise and are seen to be in the public domain. Because even the sources of the story or the players in the industry know that some events are not newsworthy but end up giving reporters money just to ensure they had coverage. This is very common. So the issue of reporters taking bribes is quite rampant. Although the issue of desisting corruption is very much stressed in the code of conduct the reporters are human beings, the cost of living was high and they too need to survive” (*The Daily Times* reporter 3 interview, October 2009)

The Daily Times Reporter 2 was concerned with the code of ethics and professional conduct being used in African newsrooms which he said were just copied from the contexts of Western Europe and North America. He argued that the prevailing conditions faced by African journalists in general and those in Malawi in particular had to be put into consideration:

“If it were in USA, Britain or elsewhere in Europe, one can understand that it was unacceptable to take bribes because in those environments reporters are well paid and have good work conditions. But look at the desperate situation many African reporters live in. The monetary incentive from news sources is for survival and not out of choice or lacking ethics. So it becomes a problem when we copy the ethical codes without considering the local context and underlying problems.” (*The Daily Times* Reporter 2 interview, October, 2009)

While admitting cases of journalists soliciting bribes from sources, editor 2 said the practice was against the Code of Ethics which the reporters were expected to adhere to. He alluded to the fact that there had been rumours of reporters taking bribes from the corporate sector and where there was ample evidence disciplinary measures had been taken leading in some cases to dismissal because that practice was against the operational rules of the newspaper.

An analysis of Code of Conduct and professional Ethics of the two newspapers revealed they spelt out the need for reporters to desist from such a malpractice. For example Section 14 of the Code of Practice of *The Nation* stipulates that “journalists shall not accept bribes from sources or newsmakers or individuals or organisations, any gift received in the course of duty must be declared to the editor and other editorial staff and journalists shall not demand or receive any payment for news coverage from news sources.” Similarly, Section 5.18 of Journalists’ Code of Ethics of *The Daily Times* states that “journalists were not supposed to receive gifts, favours, privileges or anything of value that could compromise their integrity. It further points out that journalists were supposed to abide by it and that any breach of the code warranted a disciplinary action in accordance with the code.” (Refer to Appendix 5A and 5B for Editorial Policy and Code of Professional Conduct for the two newspapers)

Editor 1 disputed claims by some reporters to the effect that the practice was a result of the media institutions not providing enough subsistence to reporters for news coverage. He said if management felt the event to be covered would add value to the newspaper, then a vehicle would be made available and that it was not necessarily a question of resources but lack of morals among the reporters concerned.

The above shows that while not sanctioned by the media institutions, the issue of taking bribes from sources was common among business reporters. In addition, the reporters although aware of the code of ethics that prohibits such practice but justified it by blaming minimal pay and bad working conditions. This echoes the findings of a study on the practice of bribery and corruption among journalists in Cameroon. Writing about *Gombo*, a metaphor for various forms of kickbacks, tips, freebies and reward solicited by journalism practitioners in Cameroon and provided by various news actors to sources before, during and after events covered by them, Ndangam (2006: 180) observes that the phenomenon had evolved into a common way of practicing journalism in that country. Ndangam argues that the nature and development of *Gombo* demonstrates the extent to which universal ethical standards which the journalism profession demands and to which reporters are expected to aspire and subscribe to, are being subverted by unprofessional and unethical practices in an environment of economic hardship and rampant corruption. She adds that many journalists in Cameroon pay lip service to codes of ethics crafted by professional associations or internal rules designed by individual media houses, regardless of their awareness of such codes. Besides, the ineffectiveness of the codes was compounded by the absence of appropriate mechanism for their enforcement (Ndangam 2006: 182). The situation in Cameroon was similar to one prevailing among business journalists in Malawi who despite knowledge of code of ethics solicit bribes from news sources citing low pay and poor working conditions as the major reasons.

6.16 Institutional factors enabling or constraining business reporting

Institutional factors were worth exploring in this study because the power and role of mediated business news discourse can hardly be determined separately from the institutional context in which it appears (Parsons 1997, Slaata 2007). From the interviews with the reporters, four major factors emerged; pressure of advertisers, limited operational resources, inadequate ICT infrastructure and lack of access to information.

6.16.1 Pressure from advertisers

Roush (2006) observes that advertising and public relations probably had the biggest impact among the outside forces acting on the development of business journalism. For most media organisations (particularly in Africa) advertising generate the major part of their revenue and without it such institutions would struggle to survive and in some cases lack of advertising

from business had forced some media outlets to go out of business. As a result there had been an increase in advertising effect on news content particularly that advertisers demanded that their ads be placed in newspapers and look as if they were news stories, some expected free publicity in form of positive stories, still others wanted to influence and determine what stories newspapers would run and how certain stories would be portrayed (Roush 2006: 36).

Business establishments like to see stories in the media about themselves, particularly positive stories about their new products and new initiatives because they created a positive image about the company (Roush 2006: 71). It is for this reason that the business pages of many newspapers were often little more than extensions of corporate public relations departments and this constituted nothing less than an abrogation of editorial responsibility (Lewin 2002: 19). Advertisement-pulling by business firms was a common practice and certain industries seem particularly sensitive to negative coverage. Therefore friction arises between the media and business when business organisations use advertising as pressure to receive favours or positive stories from the media outlets.

Most business journalists said the major determinant for lack of autonomy and freedom to their reporting were not official laws, political interference or institutional laws but influence from advertisers. In the case of Malawi, the main advertiser was not the private sector but government since was the major player in the economy. The reporters said it was extremely difficult to balance demands of professional news reporting and those of advertisers. *The Daily Times* Reporter 3 put it that:

“It is a major challenge because there is a saying that you don’t bite a finger that feeds you. It is tragic that traditionally newspapers survive from advertising and we cannot run away from that. Newspapers make money through advertising; there are times when you are told that for you to receive a salary it is because of revenue from companies that advertise. So if those companies and institutions have done something wrong, it becomes difficult to write about them. If you are critical of a particular company which is a big advertiser, and if they withdraw their advertising, you lose your job, they can fire you, how can they keep you when they can’t pay because you have made a company withdraw its adverts.” (*The Daily Times* Reporter 3 interview, October, 2009)

Editors 1 corroborated with the sentiments of his reporter on the influence of advertisers on business reporting:

“It is very tricky when it comes to dealing with advertisers; usually we just offer them coverage even when there is nothing newsworthy. Because they are advertisers, they seem to have some kind of power and edge. So we are somehow obliged to cover

them whether it is newsworthy or not just to show some gratitude that these are our advertisers lets cover them whatever they are doing, kind of offering them support.” (Editor 1 interview, October, 2009)

However, the editor said the advertisers did not dictate the approach and angle of business stories. He, nonetheless, admitted that some companies would complain to say what they were doing was not what was focussed but this was usually after the story had already been published. He said companies and corporations had not dictated how they want their stories to come out because they were told to go through a paid advert for it to come out perfectly. He said there had been disagreements with advertisers, but they needed to be firm otherwise they would be carrying advertorials and not news. He added it was possible to convince an advertiser on a story but the paper’s advertising executive would promise something different because they did not have a good understanding of what constitutes news. He said there were differences in terms of how the newsroom and advertising department appreciated the role of advertisers. The editor said to the advertising personnel, everything coming from advertisers was news and had to be taken yet for the newsroom was interested in newsworthy issues. In addition, as observed by *The Daily Times* Reporter 2, orders to kill or soften the tone of stories might not come from the advertiser or advertising executives but even from the owners of the media houses for fear of losing advertising contracts worth lots of money.

Editor 1 said the other way of separating hard business news from advertising was through a business supplement. He said this was where the newspaper calls on the corporate world in a specific sector to pay for adverts in form of stories that promoted their companies. Editor 2 admitted that advertisers pulled strings and there was conflict between the advertising department and editorial on how to handle stories dealing with advertisers. He said this was as a result of heavy dependence of the newspaper on advertising revenue rather than on sale of copy. On the supplement arrangement, the editor explained his paper had set aside some space twice a week for paid up business and corporate news and that the idea was to take advertising and business public relations stories out of mainstream news.

Research showed that pressure from advertisers had led to the creation of new structures within media organisations which planned thematically driven surveys and supplements paid for by advertisers but which looked like normal editorial content. These developments which reflect a global trend have tended to blur the line between editorial content that was independently generated in traditional fashion and content that is paid for (Cowling and Hadland 2008: 124). The observations above show that business reporters tread carefully in

as far as reporting of issues concerning advertisers were concerned. Therefore advertisers tended to be a powerful influence on editorial decisions; they were the so called life blood of the media and the media have to pander to their every whim (MISA 2007: 48). This has implications for the credibility and quality of news output and for the journalistic professional and ethical practice (Cowling and Hadland 2008: 124). Most business journalists therefore had to exercise caution when writing stories concerning corporations which are major advertisers for fear of withdrawal of advertising revenue and this was major source of concern for the reporters.

The observation above is in line with the sociology of journalism theoretical framework which examines the social determinants of journalistic output; the features of social life and organisation which shape, influence and constrain its form and content (McNair 2001:3). The pressure and influence of advertisers on the business reporters define the journalists' parameters of vision, constrain their autonomy and shape, and dictate the form and content of what they write and speak (McQuail 1994: 210). The influence of advertisers could also be looked at from the perspective of what Reese (2001) calls extra-media level of the hierarchy-of-influences approach. According to the extra media level, power to shape content is not in the media alone, but is shared with a variety of institutions in society including the government, advertisers, public relations, influential news sources, and other interest groups (Reese 2001: 182). The influence of advertisers draws attention to the way media are subordinated to such interests in the larger system.

6.16.2 Limited operational resources

Most reporters lamented lack of adequate resources they needed for professional and objective reporting. As explained earlier, most media institutions rely on news sources to among other things ferry reporters to functions. This could be attributed to the perception of business reporting by news organisations. Many media organisations tend to treat some specialty areas as "adjuncts" of routine every day journalism, and as such news from such areas are always be sacrificed for the 'more important' news of politics, scandals, scoops and human interest stories that are perceived to sell newspapers (Mogekwu 2005: 72). *The Nation* Reporter 3 explained that:

"Business reporting was not seen as important since politics took centre stage, media houses do not place emphasis on the beat leading to editors not allocating sufficient resources to it. (*The Nation* Reporter 3 interview, October, 2009)

Most reporters said it would have been better if the news organisation made provisions to ensure total independence in the reporting. The dependence on resources from news sources lead to the news actors seeking to have their views journalistically represented in the most positive manner possible from their self-interested perspectives (McQuail 2001: 16)

6.16.3 Inadequate ICT infrastructure

Limited Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure was highlighted as one major setback to reporters for business news collection and dissemination. According to Kjaer and Slaata (2007), the new information technology has transformed the routines of business news production creating a more or less open and non-hierarchical space for accurate and immediate communication across distance, borders, cultures, countries and economies. Many reporters considered new media technologies such as the internet as useful for their job since it had become an increasingly important research tool for news and information that could be accessed on websites and using search engines. But just as is the case with other African journalists, the use of the internet as a reporting tool may be problematic because of lack of reliable service providers and the prohibitive cost of telephones. For the reporters at the two newspapers accessibility to the internet was a major as there were few connected computer terminals. In a study on the use of ICTs at *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*, Jongbloed (2005) found that journalists at these media organisations made limited and basic use of new media technology. The study also revealed lack of commitment by the newspaper owners with regard to better resources and the lack of money for the development of proper infrastructure were the major problems facing the journalists in the technological age. Kareithi (2005:99) posits that Africa trails other regions in the world in the development and use of new technologies which are crucial to the development of viable modern media. The reporters at the two newspapers said that the inadequate access to ICT has implications for their efficaciousness since they were missing out on an ever growing multitude of information that is part of the public realm for their colleagues in other parts of Africa and in other regions of the world.

6.16.4 Problem of access to information

The problem of access to information was linked to the undemocratic culture fostered by independent African governments in the last forty years and nurtured by repressive colonial administration for almost a century before that, and Kareithi (2005) posits that the culture

permeates in most, if not all, public institutions. Most damaging is the withholding of information, the “confidentiality syndrome” experienced in nearly all African countries, with journalists being told that some basic (economic) data and figures of interest to the public could not be released to the media because doing so would not be “in the national interest”, and in most instances the ridiculous excuse of “national security” was proffered (Mogekwu 2005: 69). The dearth of vital economic information had its roots in the poor information procession culture prevalent within many African governments where data collection and dissemination processes were often underdeveloped, and where economic data was collected, authoritarian governments, paranoid about their existence clamped down on information dissemination through state/official secrets, legislation or through direct censorship (Kariithi 1995: 380). According to Nyamnjoh (2005:37), administrators and bureaucrats had taken upon themselves the role of censors replacing editors of newspapers as final arbiters of what should or should not be published. On the other hand editors had been expected to play the role of administrators and bureaucrats deciding in favour of what would be palatable to the powers that be and against what could displease the authorities. For business reporters apart from state authorities there was the additional complication of the distrust that existed between the reporters and those that run commercial and industrial operations. (For details on how corporations prevent reporting see McNair 2001). This problem of access complicates the work of business reporters in as far as getting information from sources is concerned. *The Nation* Reporter 4 expressed how frustrating it had been to get vital information for stories:

“Public and private officers are skeptical to the media. Most do not know that they are just custodians of information on behalf of the people. It is unfortunate that till the Access to Information Bill is yet to be tabled and passed in Parliament.” (*The Nation* Reporter 4 interview, October, 2009)

The Access to Information Bill being referred to above is a piece of legislation in Malawi aimed at promoting access to information held by public officials in order to promote openness and accountability. This law would also be a tool in the fight against corruption and malpractices in public institutions because officials would be compelled to give out information. The Access to information bill formulated more than three years ago, was yet to be tabled in Parliament. Unless such a bill is passed into law, business journalists just like other reporters would continue to face obstacles soliciting information from sources both in the public and private sectors. The right of access to information for journalists was highlighted in the 2009 Media Sustainability Index Report for Malawi. The report observed that:

“Access to Information Bill still remained a concern to the media as the country lacked a legal provision and journalists faced challenges when searching for information. The media and other stake holders have been lobbying Parliament to enact the Access to Information Bill but nothing was done. Public officials, from time to time, denied the media access to information saying it was not meant for public consumption. The report says lack of access to information minimized media’s chances of holding public officials accountable (2009 Malawi MSI Report: 6)

The problem of access to information faced by business reporters in Malawi also highlights how the media operated in a structured relationship with other institutions such as government and how this relationship affected news collection.

6.17 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the main findings of the field work conducted with business reporters and editors at two leading newspapers in Malawi. It looked at what motivated journalists to venture into business reporting, the process that was followed, the values, roles perceptions, professional attitudes and beliefs of business reporters as well as the factors that constrained their work. The chapter has unveiled several key issues that emerged from the study findings. Firstly, business reporters were from different educational and professional backgrounds and joined business reporting for various reasons and motivations. Secondly, most of the journalists ventured into this specialised field without the requisite formal academic qualification and professional training. Thirdly, professional reporting in the sub-field was constrained by a host of factors with influence of advertisers being the most critical. In general the results of the study have shown that business reporters in Malawi face challenges both in terms of skills and knowledge about good business journalism, and in reporting in the local economic context. The next chapter which is the final one is the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This is the final and concluding chapter and sums up the key issues that arose out of the study that sought to examine the process of becoming a business journalist in a local context. It begins by presenting the main arguments of various chapters in the study. It also provides a re-cap of the main findings, implications of the findings and recommendations. Finally the chapter suggests of areas of future possible research in the field of business journalism in Malawi.

The purpose of the research was to deepen the understanding of how reporters venture into business reporting and thereby contributing to debates about this form of specialised journalism in Malawi. In order to explore this issue, the study drew primarily from qualitative research methodology with in-depth interviews constituting the main research tool. The interviews with the reporters and editors led to the appreciation of the way general journalists mutate to become business reporters. It is important to point out that the researcher was quite mindful of the fact that the sample of reporters in the study did not represent the full range of all business journalists in Malawi and hence liable to raise issues of how to generalise the study to the entire population of business reporters in that country. However, in line with the position taken by quantitative researchers, the critical issue in this study was the generalisability of the isolated cases to theoretical propositions rather than to populations (Hansen et al 1998: 242, see also Lindloff 1995 and Maxwell 2005).

Chapter two looked at journalism and media context of Malawi. This chapter traced and analysed trends in journalism practice in the different phases of Malawi's political history. It was argued that the present state of journalism in Malawi could be attributed to the one-party regime which prevailed for 30 years after independence did not allow any journalism schools to operate. It has also been explained that the undeveloped state of business journalism practice in the country was a product of the existing journalism education and training models which emphasised the training and education of general reporting. The chapter also looked at business journalism at the two Daily newspapers *The Daily Times* and *The Nation*. It was also indicated shown that despite business journalism being practiced in Malawi for over a decade, to date the country does not have a free-standing business, finance or economics publication.

Chapter Three was about literature review. It highlighted issues of journalism as a profession, training and education of journalists. It then moved to look at business journalism in Africa. The chapter showed how this form of news reportage has evolved in Africa and how the practice differs from those in developed economies of Western Europe and North America.

Chapter Four was the theoretical framework on which the study was anchored. Since the study was about business journalism, the theoretical framework focussed on scholarly debates that deal with specialisation in journalism. As Marchette (2005) puts it, an important organising distinction in an increasingly fragmented media environment is thematic specialisation whereby journalism is structured around a “generalist pole” and a “specialist pole.” This chapter also dealt with the theory of sociology of journalism that explains ways in which journalists are constrained or enabled by the structures in which they operate.

7.1 Reflection on findings

Chapter Six provided evidence based on results of field work about the situation on the ground as regards becoming a business reporter in Malawi. The results of the study have revealed that business journalists in Malawi faced challenges both in terms of access to knowledge and skills about good business journalism as developed in Western Europe and North America and also in terms of reporting in particular kinds of local economic contexts. Firstly the findings established that for most business journalists at the two daily newspapers, there was no initial motivation to venture into business reporting. Most of them began their careers as general reporters and few had even considered the choice of business journalism as a career option. For some it was just a matter of moving away from their usual routines especially political reporting while others were forced by circumstances, for example shortage of personnel on the desk. This showed that most of them were to say the least dragged into it for various reasons. This meant that for the majority, there was no initial passion and inspiration for business reporting.

The study also revealed that the business reporters had different educational and professional backgrounds and experiences. Although the editors of the two media houses under study said they preferred business or economics graduates for business reporting, most of their employees at that time did not possess those qualifications. The majority of the journalists working on the business desks of the two newspapers had a minimum understanding of

business or economics and had been exposed to business, economics and finance through short and long term professional training while on the job.

The study also revealed that most reporters associated with the watch-dog role of business journalism; communicating economic policies of government and private sector, as well as scrutinising these institutions to make them accountable.

It also emerged that the practice of soliciting bribes and gifts from news sources was rampant among business reporters despite codes of ethics and professional conduct regimes clearly spelling out clearly against the malpractice. Low pay and generally poor working conditions were the most common excuses.

In addition even as the reporters aspired for professionalism in their reporting, they were constrained by a host of institutional and structural factors among them influence of advertisers, limited operational resources and lack of access to vital economic information due in part to the failure of table and pass in parliament the access to information bill. Of paramount concern to both editors and journalists was the influence of advertisers on business reporting. The study showed that it had not been successful for the media outlets to separate the business from the editorial side of operation so that advertisers could not influence news coverage. The underlying factor for this development was that advertising provided a healthy chunk of the revenue for the media houses. So acute was the influence of advertisers on news content that it featured prominently in the 2009 Malawi Media Sustainability Index Report. The report among other things noted that:

The private media both print and electronic made a large chunk of their revenue from advertising and the disadvantage to it was that the advertiser became a threat to editorial independence. It was scaring that "the advertiser" was a major threat as journalists practised self censorship often on issues where "big" advertisers were concerned. Advertisers were exerting unnecessary pressure demanding that all their functions be covered even if they were not newsworthy and that nothing negative should be featured (2009 Malawi MSI Report:12-13).

The concern as expressed in report above clearly indicated that there was a serious challenge in balancing the need for an independent media and the need to survive in terms of business and finances for the media houses. Unless there was a paradigm shift on the side of the corporate and business sector to begin respecting the role and autonomy of the media (as in Western Europe and North America), editorial integrity of business journalists and their news out put would continue to be under threat from advertisers.

7.2 Implications of the findings and recommendations

An essential outcome of the study was the recognition that education and training was one of the greatest challenges to the professional socialisation of business reporters. Kariithi (1995:376) puts it that studies of how African journalists cope with demands of economic and business journalism have found that even without considering the impact of other factors, the writers lacked technical skills for comprehensive reporting and analysis of economic issues. The way the business reporters were socialised was reflected on the kind of content they produced. Since an understanding of business and economics issues is a pre-requisite to effectively disseminating information and interpreting such events to the public, business journalists ought to be trained in business, economics and finance. The study revealed that there were a handful of trained business reporters, hence the added need for tertiary education and training in the sub-field. However specialisation among journalists in Malawi had not fully taken root. It was noted that the lack of adequate specialised training in business journalism was particularly cardinal because of limited access to further training in media institutions. In addition, institutions that offer journalism education and training did not have specialised programmes that target business reporting, as a result most became business reporters by need other than by ability. To this effect, the department of journalism and Media Studies at the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi, as a key journalism education and training institution, needed to strengthen its curriculum to accommodate the training business reporters. The department's revised curriculum of 2008 which incorporated some business and economics journalism modules was a move in the right direction. But more could be done by the University of Malawi and other private journalism and media training institutions by introducing of a speciality programme in business and economics journalism. This would be in line with the world-wide trend where top journalism schools and colleges were reviewing their programmes to prepare students for the challenges of economics and business reporting. As Pardue (2004) observed, until specialised training in business reporting was integrated into journalism programs, a gap would remain between what editors need and what poorly prepared graduates delivered. Meanwhile, the two newspapers should continue to provide professional training opportunities at which their reporters can hone their skills. Also not to be underestimated was the value of what journalists learned on the job. The study showed that since most business journalists joined the beat without much previous knowledge, learning on the job was an essential ingredient of the socialisation and induction process. Interviews with reporters and

editors attested to the fact that on the job training was a neglected aspect at the two newspapers. Therefore on the job training through induction and mentoring need to be strengthened and encouraged at the two media houses. To further complement the recommendations and strategies cited above, media organisations should be prepared to hire economists or business studies graduates and train them as business journalists. Their in-depth training in economics, business and finance, coupled with an understanding of news reporting would combine to making business news more interesting to the public.

The other issue that featured prominently were the constraining factors that affected business journalisms. Influence of advertisers emerged as a major factor. As noted above, there was a serious challenge in balancing the need for independent and professional business reporting and that of advertisers as major sources of revenue for the newspapers. Such a situation leaves the business reporter vulnerable to the demands of the advertiser. In the process the content of the business news was compromised. In addition, there were institutional problems such as lack of operational resources and inadequate information communication technology infrastructure which affected the way the reporters conducted their work. There was also the external factor of lack of access to information from officials of both the public and private sectors. This has to a large extent been blamed on the failure by the Malawi parliament to table and pass the Access to Information Bill. The above cited constraining factors meant business journalism practice at the two newspapers was not a smooth operating field. Unless these limiting factors were removed, business reporting would continue to be underdeveloped.

7.3. Areas for further research

This study was an exploratory enquiry into the socialisation of business reporters in Malawi. Consequently, the interpretations presented here are only the beginning of an important area of study, one that is worth pursuing. A lot of questions still exist about business journalism in Malawi and these could be answered by embarking on further studies within the sub-field. While this study provided a good snapshot to understanding a group of specialist reporters at the two daily newspapers, it was narrow in scope. The topic is ripe for further academic research. Perhaps a larger sampling investigation would go a long way in helping gauge if findings of this research hold true to other media institutions. A broader enquiry could be undertaken nationwide targeting business reporters in other newspapers, radio and television stations, and magazines.

Also an audience reception study could be conducted on public engagement with business news output. Such an enquiry would seek answers to the following questions: how does the Malawi public understand and use business news and information that reaches it? How is business news evaluated by the audience? How much does it contribute to the formation and development of public opinion on business and the economy? How does it influence civic discussion on other issues in society?

7.4 Conclusion

A lot of academic studies have been conducted focussing on analysing the content of business media. But there is dearth of scholarly research targeting people responsible for writing and producing that particular type of specialised news. This study is but a small contribution in that regard as it examined the professional socialisation of business reporters at two daily newspapers in Malawi. Although it was a qualitative enquiry hence its findings could not be generalised to the entire population of business journalists in that country, a rich picture has nonetheless emerged of how such reporters became what they are, and the institutional and structural factors that affected their reporting. Findings of this study would be useful to newsroom editors in assessing their needs for hiring and training business reporters, and for journalism training institutions in preparing future generation of business journalists. It is also hoped that the study would contribute to a knowledge base from which media and journalism scholars can draw when trying to understand and further interrogate socialisation of business journalists in an African context in general and Malawi in particular.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire for reporters

1. Name of organisation:.....
2. Age:.....
3. Sex:.....
4. Number of years experience as (a) general reporter.....
(b) business journalist.....
5. Number of years in (a) Present organisation:.....
(b) Previous organisation:.....
6. Academic qualification(s).....
.....
.....
7. Professional qualification(s).....
.....
.....

Appendix 2: Interview guide for business reporters

1. Why did you become a business reporter?
2. Explain the circumstances/process by which you became a business journalist.
3. How were you inducted to the demands of the new job?
4. What did the induction involve?
5. How useful was the induction in your new job then?
6. What was not done in the induction which you felt could have assisted you at that point?
7. What professional business news writing training did you undergo before becoming a business reporter?
8. How useful was this training in your new role?
9. If no to 7, what problems did you face for lack of training?
10. What type of training have you attended since becoming a business reporter?
11. How useful has this training been?
12. What topics in business and economics that you feel incompetent in and need more training?
13. What professional business reporting organisation do you belong to?
14. How useful is this grouping in your career?
15. From your experience, what type of professional training would you recommend all business journalists to undergo?
16. What do you think is the ideal academic qualification for a business journalist? Why?
17. What do you regard as the main purpose of business journalism as opposed to other journalism or the main body of the newspaper which you work for?
18. What do you think is your role as a business journalist in Malawi?
19. How have you been able to fulfil that role?
20. What factors hinder you from fulfilling the role mentioned earlier?
21. What do you consider to be "professionalism" as far as business reporting is concerned?
22. How have you been able to fulfil that "professionalism"?

23. What are the obstacles in your organisation hindering your attainment of this “professionalism”?
24. What factors do you consider when selecting business stories for coverage?
25. What would you say is the influence of advertisers in your news coverage?
26. What form does this influence take? How do you deal with it?
27. What are the major factors that facilitate or constrain business journalism in Malawi?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for editors

1. What is the criterion for recruiting staff for the business desk?
2. What factors do you consider for re-deploying existing newsroom staff to the business desk?
3. What kind of induction programmes do you run for new recruits at the business desk to ensure they meet required standards?
4. Apart from mentoring or on the job training, what kind of off-job training programmes are business reporters exposed to enhance their competence?
5. What are the essential academic and professional qualifications for business reporting and why?
6. What do you think is the best preparation for one to become a business journalist?
7. What would you say about the influence of advertisers on business news of your paper?
8. How does your paper strive to balance business news editorial and demands of advertisers?
9. What would you comment on the practice of taking bribes from sources mainly among business reporters?
10. How do you deal with such a problem so that it does not influence output of content?
11. How do you ensure independent of reporters from demands of sources?
12. What other things do you do as editor to enhance business journalism practice among reporters?

Appendix 4 A: Thematic content analysis of business stories

Week 1	THE DAILY TIMES	THE NATION
Monday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activists demand fuel levy for education 2. Farmers union suspects foul play on cotton 3. NBS Bank to finance insurance premiums 4. MSE earnings increase 5. AXA in passenger promotions 6. NBS Bank showcases grand prize 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malawi's inflation rate eases to 8.4 % 2. Babies spared, Kandodo removes 30% import duty on infant formula 3. National Bank backs centralised lending 4. Farmers Union slams govt, ginners on cotton price 5. Agricultural economics in Malawi, elsewhere 6. Zim economy seen hostage to anti-reform lobby
Tuesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Players critique budget 2. govt advises credit and savings cooperatives 3. Inflation to drop further 4. Mulanje business community engages MPs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experts predict doom for commercial farmers 2. Tourism levy to push up service charges 3. Ovop gives in to group's demands 4. NBS unveils insurance financing facility 5. Pacific to build another hotel 6. Globe dates Blantyre customers
Wednesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local dairy farming receives US boost 2. Etisalat eyes majority in Kuwait's Zain 3. Sunbird, DStv team up for tourism treat 4. BBGL in bottle recall campaign 5. More response in Carlsberg promo 6. BWB engages consultant on dam construction 7. TNM cancels free calls promotion 8. MTL conducts 2nd draw in Load up & win promo 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ADMARC shocks ECAMA, Farmers 2. TNM cancels free calls promotion 3. Standard Bank offering bonus shares 4. MTL initiative to cut telecom costs by 50% 5. Vivend breaks Zain talks on Africa assets 6. UGI donates to Orphanage
Thursday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Banks queried over forex rates 2. 'Spy scandal' hits Deutsche Bank 3. G-Mobile in US\$90m network rollout deal 4. Nasfam, Kenyan scoop Yara awards 5. What it take to run a business in Africa 6. About Peter Munga, chairman of Equity Bank 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cotton Twist 2. Still no listing on Altex 3. Ethiopia earns \$1.5 billion from exports 4. Milk producers back duty U-turn on baby milk 5. Currency devaluation: A reaction 6. Changes to the Customs and Excise Tariffs
Friday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SMEs cry for protection 2. IMF disburses US\$80m to Malawi 3. National bank opens DStv pay points 4. East African currencies ease against the dollar 5. FDH Bank to finance Mabcata 6. Africa maize stocks rise 7. Nigerian woes make Angola No.1 African oil producer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why Malawian Businesses fail 2. FMB after tax profit drops 18% 3. Ministry closes 20 tourism units 4. CDH fears exchange rate regime could block interest cut 5. Long term plan for smallholder farmers

Appendix 4B: Thematic content analysis of business stories

Week 2	THE DAILY TIMES	THE NATION
Monday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Macra bitter with phone companies 2. MBS sees reduction in non trade scale use 3. Economic roadmap targets indigenous business growth 4. BBGL embarks on new squash countrywide testing campaign 5. National Bank pre tax profit up by 28 % 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National bank profits up 28percent 2. UNIMA faces Nigeria's Ibadan in Zain challenge 3. Lake shore road closure slows down business 4. G-mobile get mobile phone licence 5. Empowerment policy to narrow rich, poor gap 6. Commission wants debt collection extended to lay laymen
Tuesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malawi negotiates for more exports to Japan 2. TAMA woos farmers to invest in new firm 3. Regional trends favour MSE as sole market player 4. New Insurance company on the market 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too much...Blantyre city owed K1.2 billion 2. Malawi supports creation of vulnerability fund 3. Ex-Whitex workers in dark over benefits..govt yet to implement court order
Wednesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tobacco market discontent 2. BBGL hike beer prices.... consumers dry foul 3. New president of TAMA 4. Ilala back in business....Mtendere remains grounded 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lake shore road re-opens 2. UNISA to visit students in Malawi 3. Finance minister expresses reservations on G20 4. Tobacco farmers helpless....prices still on the lower side
Thursday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NBM sponsors masters program in commercial law 2. Minister hails G20 resolution 3. Old Mutual blames " global shocks" for low share price 4. RBM drums up support for Malawian firms 5. Dark shadow of Malawi gold 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National bank gives CHANCO K50m masters degree in commercial law 2. RBM hails Smile Life Insurance 3. MEDI vows to boost bakery industry 4. Old Mutual to brave global financial crisis. 5. Tackling socio-economic challenges through open and distance learning.
Friday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Govt cuts tobacco quota for TAMA 2. Tobacco sales fail to replenish forex reserves 3. Old Mutual speaks on severance pay package 4. Regional guns discuss challenges 5. Chinese tobacco buyers head for Malawi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEAR re-introduces Limbe-LL cargo train 2. MSE registers quite week 3. Technical capacity crucial in fighting financial meltdown 4. Standard bank appoints deputy group chief executives 5. MSB sees food availability easing inflation

Appendix 5A Code of ethics and Editorial Policy for The Daily Times

CODE OF ETHICS AND EDITORIAL POLICY FOR THE DAILY TIMES
EXTRACTED FROM 2006 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR
BLANTYRE PRINT AND PUBLISHING COMPANY

5.17 Long Service Award

5.17.1 Permanent members of staff (i.e. excluding contracted staff) who have given dedicated service to the Company of 10 years continuous service with the Company and more; qualify for a Long Service Award. The awards payable shall be at the discretion of Management.

5.17.2 Long Service Award will not be paid, in full or proportionately, on termination of employment for whatever reason, including on retirement.

5.17.3 Long Service Award categories will be according to the length of service determined at Management's discretion.

5.18 Journalist Code of Ethics

5.18.1 Journalists are supposed to abide by the Journalist Code of Ethics. Breach of the Journalist Code of Ethics by a Journalist will warrant a disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary code.

5.18.2 The following are the non – exhaustive examples of the Journalist Code of Ethics that Journalists are supposed to conform to:-

5.18.2.1 Journalists are not supposed to receive gifts, favours, privileges or anything of value that can compromise their integrity.

5.18.2.2 Secondary employment, political involvement, holding public office and service should be avoided if it compromises the integrity of Journalists and their employers.

5.18.2.3 So-called news communication from private sources should not be published without substantiation of their claims to news value.

5.18.2.4 Objectivity in reporting the news should be a Journalist's goal. There is no excuse for inaccuracy or lack of thoroughness.

5.18.2.5 Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany.

5.18.2.6 News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue. Partisanship in editorial comment, which knowingly departs from the truth, is a breach of the code of ethics.

- 5.18.2.7 Journalists are at all material times supposed to show respect for the dignity, privacy, rights and well being of people encountered in the course of gathering and presenting the news.
- 5.18.2.8 Journalists should always give the subject of a news article effecting his reputation and character a chance to reply.
- 5.18.2.9 Journalists must always guard against invading a person's right to privacy.
- 5.18.2.10 Journalists should always be responsible, accurate, objective and fair when reporting.
- 5.18.2.11 Journalists need to avoid using discriminatory language and slants involving racism, tribalism, religion etc.

5.18.3 Journalists shall be required to carry out their duties in conformity with editorial policy for Blantyre Newspapers Limited. The following is the editorial policy for the Company:-

- 5.18.3.1 Blantyre Newspapers Limited is a non-partisan Company, and not a mouthpiece for any political organisation.
- 5.18.3.2 The Company shall be run on the basis that it is a commercial organisation formed to make money for its shareholders, employees and other stakeholders.
- 5.18.3.3 In its publications, the Company shall seek to promote accountability, constitutionality, democracy, political and religious tolerance, the rule of law, transparency and the fact the Malawi is a secular and culturally diverse country.
- 5.18.3.4 The content and production of the publications shall reflect sound ethical judgement and high profession integrity on the part of editors and journalists concerned.
- 5.18.3.5 Any story to be published in any of the publications shall serve to educate, entertain or inform the leader and for that reason shall be

newsworthy, factually accurate, balanced, balanced and shall avoid sensationalism.

- 5.18.3.6 The publications shall not be used to campaign for the destruction or persecution of any individual or organisation or for the suppression of any opinion, view or idea.
- 5.18.3.7 The Managing Editor and Editors shall bear responsibility for the suitability of any material for printing in the publications.
- 5.18.3.8 In cases where editors and sub-editors are not sure of the suitability of any material, it shall be duty of the Managing Editor to seek appropriate clearance and clarification.
- 5.18.3.9 The Managing Director of Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company Limited may require the correction, withdrawal or the publication of an apology in respect, of any article, feature or story which is in bad taste, defamatory or otherwise in conflict with the objectives of the Company.
- 5.18.3.10 Sources of the material published in the newspapers shall be authentic and verifiable.
- 5.18.3.11 The Managing Editor shall be accountable to the Managing Director and the Board of Directors of Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company Limited or the observance and implementation of this editorial policy.

5.19 Funeral Assistance

To alleviate the burden of grief the Company will assist with funeral arrangements and expenses commensurate with Grade in the following circumstances and manner:-

- (a) In the event of the death of an employee, his spouse or children, the Company will provide the following:
 - Coffin or Calico cloth, commensurate with grade.
 - Transport to the place of birth or intended place of burial.

Appendix 5 B Code of practice for The Nation

NATION PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

CODE OF PRACTICE

Editors are responsible for the use of material submitted by journalists employed by Nation Publications limited. They should also satisfy themselves as far as possible that material contributed by non-staff members was obtained in accordance with this code.

This code demands self-restraint by editors and journalists, and it applies in the spirit as well as in the letter.

1 INDEPENDENCE

- 1.1 Freedom from obligations except of fidelity to the public interest is vital.
- 1.2 Nation publications shall stand on the principle that all persons are equal before the law and should not be swayed by any political, economic or other social prejudices.
- 1.3 Nation publications shall not allow themselves to be used privately for individual interests running counter to public interest as defined under section 8, or for worthless or immoral or illegal purposes.
- 1.4 The promotion of any private interest contrary to the public interest, for whatever reason, is forbidden as it is not compatible with honest journalism.

2 REPORTING NEWS

- 2.1 Nation Publications shall be obliged to report news truthfully, accurately and fairly.
- 2.2 News shall be presented in context and in a balanced manner, without an intentional or negligent departure from the facts whether by:
 - Distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation
 - Material omissions or Summarisation
- 2.3 Only what may reasonably be true having to the source of the news may be represented as facts, and such facts shall be published fairly with due regard to context and importance.
- 2.4 Nation publications shall usually seek the views of the subject of serious critical reportage in advance of publication, provided that this may not be done where the newspaper has reasonable grounds for believing that by doing so it would be prevented from publishing the report or where evidence might be destroyed or witnesses intimidated.

2.5 Nation publications shall not publish information obtained by dishonest or unfair means, or the publication of which would involve a breach of confidence, unless there is an overriding public interest.

2.6 Nation publications shall not place gratuitous emphasis on the race, nationality, religion, colour, country of origin, gender, sexual preferences, marital status, political views or intellectual or physical disability of either individuals or groups, unless the fact is relevant.

3 ACCURACY

3.1 Nation publications shall take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material.

3.2 Where there is reason to doubt the accuracy of a report and it is practicable to verify the accuracy thereof, it shall be verified. Where it has not been practicable to verify the accuracy of a report, this shall be mentioned in the report.

4 FACT AND OPINION

4.1 Nation publications shall clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. Generally, factual material shall be based on some truth and should be capable of justification.

4.2 Opinions should equally have some factual basis and should not be conjured out of thin air.

4.3 Where a report is not based on facts or is founded on opinions, allegation, rumour or supposition, it shall be presented in such manner as to indicate this clearly.

4.4 Nation publications shall endeavour to make clear distinction between reports and expressions of the newspapers. News reports shall be free from the author's or the newspaper's opinion or bias of any kind.

5 ADVOCACY

Nation publications are justified in strongly advocating their own views on controversial topics provided that they treat their readers fairly by:-

5.1 Making fact and opinion clearly distinguishable.

5.2 Not misrepresenting or suppressing relevant facts

5.3 Not distorting the facts in text or headlines

6 COMMENT

6.1 Nation publications shall be entitled to comment upon or criticise any actions or events of public importance provided such comments or criticisms are fairly and honestly made.

6.2 Comment by Nation publications shall be presented in such manner that it appears clearly that it is comment, and shall be made on facts truly stated or fairly indicated and referred to.

6.3 Comment by Nation publications shall be an honest expression of opinion, without malice or dishonest

motives, and shall take fair account of all available facts to the matter commented upon.

7. AFTER PUBLICATION

7.1 Nation publications should make amends for publishing information or comment that is found to be harmfully inaccurate by printing, promptly and with appropriate prominence, a retraction, correction or explanation.

7.2 An apology shall be published wherever deemed appropriate by the Editor.

7.3 A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies shall be given to individuals or organisations as appropriate at the Editor's discretion.

8. PRIVACY

8.1 Nation publications, in both news and comment, shall exercise exceptional care and consideration in matters involving the private lives and concerns of individuals, bearing in mind that any right to privacy or breach of confidence may be overridden by a legitimate public interest.

8.2 Publication is in the public interest if it helps in:-

- Detecting or exposing crime, misdemeanour or corrupt practices
- Detecting or exposing anti-social conduct
- Protecting public health and safety
- Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organisation

9. HOSPITALS

9.1 Except where it is in the public interest, reporters making enquiries at hospitals or similar health institutions shall clearly identify themselves to a responsible officer and obtain permission before entering non-public areas.

9.2 The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar health institutions.

10. MISREPRESENTATIONS

10.1 Journalists shall not generally obtain or seek to obtain information or pictures through misrepresentation or subterfuge except in the public interest.

10.2 Unless it is in the public interest, documents or photographs shall be removed only with the express consent of the owner.

10.3 Subterfuge shall be justified only in the public interest, and only when material cannot be obtained by any other means.

11. HEADLINES, POSTERS, PICTURES AND CAPTIONS

11.1 Headlines and captions to pictures shall give a reasonable reflection of the contents of the report or picture in question.

11.2 Posters shall not mislead the public and shall give a reasonable reflection of the contents of the reports in question.

11.3 Pictures shall not misrepresent or mislead or be manipulated to do so.

12. GATHERING INFORMATION

12.1 Nation journalists shall neither obtain nor seek to obtain information or pictures through intimidation or coercion, unless it is in the public interest.

12.2 Unless their queries are in the public interest, Nation journalists shall not photograph individuals on private property without their consent and shall not persist in telephoning or questioning individuals after having been asked to desist and shall not remain on their property after having been asked to leave and shall not follow them.

13. PAYMENT FOR ARTICLES

No payment or offers of payment shall be made for feature articles or information to witnesses or potential witnesses in current criminal proceedings or to people engaged in crime or to their associates, including family, friends, neighbours and colleagues except where the material concerned ought to be published in the public interest and the payment is necessary for this to be done.

14. BRIBES

14.1 Nation journalists shall not accept bribes from news sources or newsmakers or individuals or organisations.

14.2 Any gift received in the course of duty must be declared to the Editor and other editorial staff.

14.3 Nation journalists shall not demand or receive any payment for news coverage from news sources.

15. CHEQUE BOOK JOURNALISM

The right of Nation publications to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but consideration of public welfare. The sense of responsibility of Nation publications derives from their readership and the attention they command. Consequently, Nation journalists should be responsible and live up to the highest honour and trust bestowed on them by not being influenced by monetary or profit considerations.

16. SOCIETAL MORALS

16.1 Reports, photographs or sketches relative to matters involving deaths, suicide, indecency or obscenity shall be presented with due sensitivity towards the prevailing moral climate.

16.2 In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries shall be carried out and any approach made with

sympathy.

17 INNOCENT RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Unless it is in the public interest, reporters shall generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.

18 JUVENILES

18.1 Reporters shall not normally interview or photograph children under the age of 18 on subjects involving the personal welfare of the child, in the absence of or without the consent of a parent or guardian.

18.2 Children shall not be interviewed or photographed while at school without the permission of the school authorities, unless in the public interest.

18.3 Nation journalists shall not reveal the name, address, school or any particulars that would lead to the identification of any person under the age of 18 who is involved in cases concerning sexual offences, whether as victims, or as witnesses or as accused persons unless the Court or the Minister rules otherwise.

19 VIOLENCE

Due care and responsibility shall be exercised by reporters with regard to the presentation of brutality, violence and atrocities. "

20 VICTIMS OF RAPE OR INDECENT ASSAULT OR SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

20.1 The identity of rape victims and other victims of sexual violence shall not be published by Nation publications without their consent.

20.2 The identity of perpetrators of sexual violence and their residence after serving prison terms shall not be protected by Nation publications

21 REPORTING THE COURTS AND PARLIAMENT

Reporters shall report on Court and Parliamentary proceedings only subject to the restrictions imposed by either of them as per their orders.

22 DISCRIMINATION

22.1 Nation publications shall avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, religion, sex or sexual orientation or any physical or mental illness or disability.

22.2 Nation publications shall avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, nationality, country of origin, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, political views or intellectual or physical disability unless these are directly relevant to the story.

22.3 Nation publications shall avoid the use and publication of threatening, abusive or insulting words or material with the intention of stirring up racial hatred or in circumstances where racial hatred is likely to be stirred up.

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25 **CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES**

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26 **FAIR PLAY**

Nation publications shall not publish unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without an opportunity being given to the accused to be heard as fair practice demands the giving of such opportunity in all cases of serious accusation outside judicial or parliamentary proceedings.

27 **CONSULTATION**

From time to time, where dealing with a sensitive story, the Editor may need to consult with Management. Sensitive stories shall be those that have serious national implications, such as the declaration of war, national disaster, revelations that can affect the position of the national economy, can cause national panic or panic on a wide scale, can cause civil strife or national strikes, etc.

28 **DISREPUTE**

28.1 While Nation publications shall use their own discretion in matters of taste, care shall be taken to avoid lapses of taste so repugnant as to bring the freedom of the press into disrepute or be extremely offensive to the public.

28.2 Nation journalists have a duty to uphold their professional ethics and conduct and must ensure that they do not bring the profession into disrepute.