AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING MEDIA FREEDOM AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

Master's Degree in Media Studies

to be awarded at the Nelson Metropolitan University

December 2022

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In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned thesis is my own work and it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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DATE: December 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this thesis possible: I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Professor GCM Mutinta for his encouragement and support. I greatly appreciate his guidance and expertise during my master thesis.

Special gratitude and appreciation go to the following:

- The South African Broadcasting Corporation in Johannesburg, Auckland Park for granting me permission to conduct research in the company and allowing me to interview journalists, editors and directors.
- The journalists, editors and directors of SABC for willingly participating in the study despite their hectic schedules.
- My mother Mrs Manwadu Nthuseni Christinah and siblings, Mulalo, Junior and Tshilidzi for their unwavering support given to me during the course of the study.
- Above all, my thanks are due to God, my Heavenly Father, without him this study would never been successful.

This research study is dedicated to my late father Dr Livhuwani Robert Manwadu and my mother Mrs Manwadu Nthuseni Christinah for instilling in me the passion of learning.

ABSTRACT

This research sought to analyse factors that affect media freedom at the South African Broadcasting Corporation using a descriptive research design and qualitative research methodology. Studies and media reports show that the South African Broadcasting Corporation is facing a myriad of challenges including woes related to media freedom hampering its mandate to inform, educate and entertain the public of South Africa. There is a dearth of studies conducted to understand the media freedom challenges at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. A qualitative approach was used in data collection, and in-depth interviews were utilised as instruments to collect data from participants. Non-probability sampling in particular purposive sampling method was used to select 4 directors, 4 editors and 4 journalists at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Data was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings show that challenges facing the South African Broadcasting Corporation include poor legal environment as the broadcaster lacks support from government to implement effective policies to protect employees and create a media freedom environment to allow workers to carry out their work independently. The study found that the political environment in the South African Broadcasting Corporation at affects media freedom. Some political organisations, influential individuals and entities are meddling in the operation of the broadcaster by trying to influence the narrative of the content broadcasted. The finding revealed that economic environment at the broadcaster is affects media freedom. The broadcaster is struggling financially resulting in poor income for employees, retrenchments, and inability to run approved programmes. In the context of constitution and policies, there is need for the South African Broadcasting Corporation to develop strategies that will specifically address both internal and external political, economic, and legal challenges it is facing if it is to be a high performing, financially sustainable, digitised national public broadcaster that provides compelling, informative, educational, and entertaining content via all platforms.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability of journalists to report freely on matters of public interest is a crucial indicator of democracy. A free press can inform citizens of their leaders' successes or failures, convey the people's needs and desires to government bodies, and provide a platform for the open exchange of information and ideas. When media freedom is restricted, these vital functions break down, leading to poor decision-making and harmful outcomes for leaders and citizens alike. In South Africa, media freedom has been deteriorating. Some populist leaders have overseen concerted attempts to throttle the independence of the media sector. Studies and media reports show that the South African Broadcasting Corporation is facing a myriad of challenges including woes related to media freedom hampering its mandate to inform, educate and entertain the public of South Africa. There is a dearth of studies conducted to understand the media freedom challenges at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The main aim of the study is to assess factors affecting media freedom in South Africa focusing on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) employees. This chapter presents the background of the study and the research problem. This is followed by the aim of the study, research questions and the research objectives. Thereafter a significance of the study is offered, together with a brief introduction to the literature review, theoretical framework, and research methodology. The last part of the chapter deals with the limitations of the study, the outline of the chapters and the summary of this chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Historically, the development of the mass media in the Third World, especially Africa, is substantially different from that of the Western industrialised countries. Scholars of international relations and international communications (Ropeer, Newman and Schulz, 2019) view the extent of media freedom from country to country as a key comparative indicator, either by itself or in correlation with other indices of national political and economic development. The public in democracies have assumed that news media are a powerful force against corruption, repression, and dictatorship, but only as long as media is free from government control. Human rights organisations advocate for media freedom in nondemocratic countries and Western countries focus on media assistance programmes aimed at encouraging

the development of media and improving the quality of journalism in developing media freedom, which is the principle that communication and expression through various media, including printed and electronic media, especially published materials, should be considered a right to be exercised freely. Such freedom implies the absence of interference from the state; its preservation may be sought through constitutional or other legal protection and security (Martins, 2017). Some countries also have some form of constitutional guarantee of media freedom at the same time have laws that restrict media freedom (Whitten-Wodring and Van Belle, 2015:1).

In South Africa, freedom of speech and expression is protected by a section in the South African Bill of Rights, chapter 2 of the Constitution (1996). Section 16 makes the following provisions, everyone has the right to freedom of expression which includes freedom of the press and other media, freedom to receive or impart information or ideas, freedom of artistic creativity and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. Even with the provision of the Constitution, Reporters without Borders, a nongovernmental organisation that conducts political advocacy on issues relating to freedom of information and the press, argues that South Africa's media freedom is under threat (Fourie, 2010). There instances when State's Security Agency spy on some journalists and tap their phones. Others are harassed and subjected to intimidation campaigns if they try to cover certain subjects involving the ruling party in government, government finances, the redistribution of land to the black population or corruption (Callamard, 2010).

According to the 2019 index, which rates 180 countries in terms of media freedom, South Africa dropped to 31 from 28 in 2019 (Ropeer, Newman and Schulz, 2019) and the cause is not well known and documented. This gave rise to the need to study factors affecting media freedom in South Africa, focusing on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) the public broadcaster in South Africa, and provides 19 radio stations as well as five television broadcasts to the public. It is one of the largest of South Africa's state-owned enterprises (Ropeer, Newman and Schulz, 2019). Martins (2017) argues that SABC is not spared from media freedom repression, although South Africa remains in a relatively strong position in terms of its global position in press freedom.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The South African 1996 Constitution guarantees media freedom. This includes press and electronic media as they all have a right to be truthful and accurate by getting the facts right, independent by being independent voices that should not act, formally or informally on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. The Constitution also guarantees fair and impartiality by presenting a balanced and objective to build trust and confidence in human by not causing harm and accountable by being professional and responsible (Roper, Newman and Schulz, 2019). These core principles of journalism that determine media freedom remain fragile because apartheid-era legislation and the 2004 terrorism laws are still used to limit coverage of government institutions. As stated above, South African laws guarantee media freedom in the Constitution. At same time legal environment that encompasses both the laws and regulations of the government in power, political environment that encompass political control over the content of news media by the government, economic environment that includes media ownership and its concentration, limitation to news production and distribution continue to affect media freedom and the SABC is not spared (Roper, Newman and Schulz, 2019). Blurt (2018) argues that there are ongoing efforts to control the SABC and to manipulate it for party purposes, causing a crisis in media freedom. This study therefore seeks to investigate factors that affect media freedom at SABC.

1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

- To analyse factors that affect media freedom at SABC using a descriptive research design and qualitative research methodology.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand how the legal environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.
- To ascertain how the political environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.
- To determine how the economic environment at the at South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.
- To understand how the infrastructure at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How does the legal environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affect media freedom?

- How does the political environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affect media freedom?

- How does the economic environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affect media freedom?

- How does the infrastructure at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affect media freedom?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is important because it will contribute to the body of knowledge on the factors affecting media freedom in South Africa. The findings may be used by management to inform strategies for addressing challenges faced in exercising media freedom in media companies in South Africa. The study may provide policy makers insight into the media freedom challenges faced in media companies. Therefore, policy makers may use these findings as source of dependable information to guide media freedom policies with the intention of evaluating and promoting the existing media freedom in media companies in South Africa. Stakeholders may be provided with information to make constructive suggestions for the enhancement of the media freedoms in the company under study.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is framed around the freedom of media in South Africa and the factors affecting media focusing on the constructs of the conceptual framework underpinning the study.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical body on media freedom has been modified several times and continues to be revamped an indication that media freedom is a dynamic field (House, 2017). Changes and additions have been made, particularly in expanding on the language for understanding media freedom. Despite the changes, though, the Freedom House has tried to retain sufficient continuity in questions and weightings so that a credible comparison over the years remains possible. This study used the Freedom House Model as a lens of the study. The model explains

that there are four domains that affect media freedom; legal, political, infrastructure, and economic factors presented in the diagram below (House, 2017).

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.10.1 Methodology

The study used qualitative research methodology designed to generate data on the quality of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). This method was deemed appropriate because of the complex nature of the phenomenon of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. In short, qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to navigate an appropriate research approach that the research problem under study required to be understood.

1.10.2 RESERCH DESIGN

The study used an exploratory research design to investigate the existing problem in order to discover new insights. The exploratory research design is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem and allows the researcher to be creative in order to gain the most amount of insight on a subject (Malhotra and Malhotra 2012). The purpose of the study was to assess factors that affect media freedom focusing on SABC. An exploratory design was suitable for this study because it enabled to the study to thoroughly investigate factors affecting media freedom at SABC.

1.10.3 STUDY SITE

The study site for this study was the SABC Head Office in Auckland Park in Johannesburg. SABC is estimated to have more than 1000 employees (Roper, Newman, Schulz, 2019).

1.10.4 Target population, sampling methods and sample size

The target population for this study were directors, editors, and journalists at SABC headquarters in Johannesburg. Non-probability sampling was used to select a sample. The twelve employees; four from each category were purposefully selected from SABC head office.

1.11 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data that involved reading through data repeatedly, and breaking data down, thermalizing, and building it up again in a novel way, elaborating and

interpreting it to understand the research problem under study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The Research Ethics Subcommittee of the Faculty of Humanities at Nelson Mandela University provided ethical clearance, and the gatekeeper's letter came from SABC.

1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation of this study is that the researcher was unable to conduct interviews face to face because of COVID-19 as people were maintaining social distancing. Phone calls and zoom were used to conduct interviews. The other limitation of the study is that some interviewees were not comfortable with answering the questions as they were afraid of losing their jobs but were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy.

1.13 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation has five chapters presented below

Chapter Organisation

1.13.1 Chapter One - Introduction

This chapter presents the overview of the dissertation by presenting the introduction, background to the study, the research problem, the significance of the study, aim of the study, research objectives, and research questions. The chapter also presents the brief methodology of the study and the conclusion to the chapter.

1.13.2 Chapter Two - Literature Review

This chapter deals with literature review on media freedom using different sources including books, journal articles, reports and policies will be used as the main source.

1.13.3 Chapter Three - Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology. The chapter presents the research design underpinning the study, methodology used, study site, population, and target population. In addition, the chapter deals with the sampling techniques, data collection and analysis techniques. The chapter also deals with the data control measures, pilot study, ethical issues, and the chapter conclusion.

1.13.4 Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Discussion

This chapter presents research findings and discussion based on the political, law, and economic environment of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC.

1.13.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the key findings on how the political environment, economic environment, legal environment and infrastructure environment affects media freedom at the SABC.

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the introduction to the study by presenting the background of the study and the research problem. This is followed by the research questions and the research objectives. Thereafter a significance of the study is offered, together with a brief introduction to the literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology. The last part of the chapter deals with the limitations of the study, the outline of the chapters and the summary of this chapter.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>
<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is an essential part of a student's research studies and dissertation. When researching a research topic, it must be narrow and focused. The purpose of this literature review is to demonstrate and help the reader to understand how the study fits into a broader context. Furthermore, the literature review is there to support an argument made by a researcher. The researcher extracts and synthesizes the main points, issues, findings and research methods which emerge from a critical review of the readings and as a result builds a coherent argument which leads to the description of a proposed study.

Literature review is therefore of coordinal importance for the in depth of the investigation of media freedom in South Africa to see if it also hinders the progress of the country and how it affects the country. There will also be provision of insight to the background of the problem. The researcher also gain assistance with regard to the planning of this study from the review of literature, as a result the literature review helps in scaffolding and supporting this research In this chapter, the researcher embarks on the review of literature relevant to factors affecting media freedom, the study focuses on the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The review will expose the manner in which this media is affected by laws, political environment and economic environment looking at the freedom of the media and how media presents information to the public. This chapter also includes the history of media freedom in South Africa. It also looks at the definition of media, media freedom and a conclusion will be reached on how political environment, legal environment and economic environment affect South Africa as a whole.

2.2 HISTORY OF MEDIA FREEDOM

Historically, the development of the mass media in the Third World, Particularly Sub-Sahara Africa, is substantially different from that of Western Industrialized countries. The Scholars (Ropper, Newman and Schulz, 2019) of international relations and international communications view the extent of media freedom from country to country as a key comparative indicator either by itself or in correlation with other indices of national political and economic development. According to Faringer (1991), the developing countries have not

experienced mass media development in the context of booming economic growth or the rise of a powerful new class.

In the Western industrialized countries, the press emerged simultaneously with the rise of middle class and accompanied the bourgeoisie's request for civil rights, such as freedom of speech and of the press (Faringer, 1991).

African government tends to limit freedom of the media with an aim to protect public from certain information resulting in media companies from African countries being unable to practice editorial independence. They believe that if media has full control of the public they can manage to pursue the public by publishing false facts thus resulting in media companies being censored (Faringer, 1991).

Freedom of the media in any form, as a philosophical problem, is an instance of a more general problem about the nature and status of rights. Rights purport to place limits on what individuals or the state may do, and the sacrifices they entail are in some cases significant. Thus, for example, freedom of expression becomes controversial when expression appears to threaten some important national interests such as the ability to raise an army. The general problem is, if rights place limits on what can be done even for good reasons, what is the justification for these limits (Scanlon, 1978: p519).

2.3 THE FREEDOM OF MEDIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

The media is not a monolithic entity but rather a broad term encompassing a variety of content provided to the public, or sectors of the public, over a range of platforms. There is no closed list of content provided by the media: news, politics, business, current affairs, entertainment, motoring, gardening, religion, home décor, fashion, food, celebrity and lifestyle are some of the many topics covered by the media (Petley, 2012).

Media freedom is the ability of the media to openly express ideas and information without fear of censorship or government interference. It also includes the ability to express views through published books, or leaflets, television or radio broadcasting, works of art, the internet and social media. The protection of the media's freedom takes a special position due to the media's role as a public's watchdog as well as its function to disseminate information and ideas, thus guaranteeing the right of the public to receive this information (House, 2009).

What does freedom of the media mean in South Africa's democracy when internationally recognised cartoonist, Jonathan Shapiro, who works under the name Zapiro had claims for damages against him for R7 million in 2008, by Jacob Zuma over a cartoon? (this claim was reduced in 2011 and a trial date set for October 2012).

Bennet (1982: p30-31) says that the concept media is made up of several layers of meaning. At the most basic level we understand that the concept refers collectively to the press, radio, television and film. But at the other levels, this collective understanding of the concept can be misleading, in that the various media referred to by the concept only resemble each other in a superficial manner. To take an example, the relationship between the state and broadcasting is very different from that of between the state and the press and on one hand the state and film on the other.

 In the case of broadcasting, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Held a monopoly from 1936. As a result, alternative points of view, particularly of a political nature were excluded from programme content for many years. This led to the perception that SABC was a government mouthpiece. Despite deregulation of the airwaves, the SABC still continues to denominate the broadcasting environment by virtue of its sheer size and seems unable to resolve its many problems (Fourie, 2001: p01).

The role of the news media in SA's democracy presents a paradox, a historically created conundrum: The South African media finds itself subjected to the ruling party's desire for more unity and consensus in the country's fractured society. The desire of the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) would be met if there was a more supportive and loyal press but the press finds compliance with this desire of litter with its professional code of ethics, its role of holding power to account, loyalty to the citizenry, exposing abuses of power and being a watch in the unfolding democracy (Daniels, 2012: p41).

The media is a legitimate adversary rather than an enemy of the people in a fluid, changing and unrealised imperfect democracy. The free press (and free press is used here in the sense of free from political interference, control and state intervention, not from economic, cultural or social interference) poses something of a challenge to the ruling alliance's hegemonic discourse, with its desire to limit the polymorphic voices of a diverse media.

A dissonance has crept in between the Constitution's ascription to independence of the media on the one hand the government and the state's actions, creating tensions in relations between the media and the ANC (Daniels, 2012).

One of the ANC's main problems with the media is what it conceives as inadequate and negative representation of its views as a ruling party. For example, at the launch of the ANC's online publication ANC Today 2001, the letter from the Former President 'noted: Historically the national and political constituency represented by the ANC has had a very few and limited media and democracy Secrecy obstructs by keeping the public ignorant of information that it - needs to make wise policy choices. The relationship between the media and democracy 23 years of its existence. During this period, the commercial newspaper and magazine press representing the views, values and interests of the white minority has dominated the field of the mass media (Daniels, 2012: p41).

In South Africa the biggest media company does not practice editorial independence as the shareholders are from the ruling party 'THE ANC', thus preventing them from publishing certain information that would prohibit the public to voting for the ruling party. Everything edited and published in the media is double checked if indeed it favours the ruling party. This means that the public is prohibited from getting access to some information, on the other hand the journalists are restricted from publishing and disseminating information to the public (Fourie, 2001).

This erosion of media freedom has mirrored the gradual loss of support for the governing party. In 2016 the African National Congress lost control of a series of municipalities in the conurbations around Johannesburg, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth. Under the presidency of Jacob Zuma, the political strength of the ANC has declined with almost daily accusations of nepotism, corruption and incompetence. As the party's parliamentary chief whip, Jackson Mthembu, put it despairingly: 'We have become corrupt to the core. All we are concerned about is to accumulate wealth as if there is no tomorrow. This has resulted in conflicts inside the government, which has sapped its ability to function effectively.' The Finance Minister, Pravin Gordhan, was described by the Huffington Post as the 'leader of the resistance' for refusing to concede control of the public purse to the president and his cronies. As the website put it, Gordhan has been 'harassed, harangued and hassled' for refusing to give in to what is termed 'state capture'. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that the media have come in

for intense pressure as they fulfilled their obligation to act as the nation's watchdog. Since submission of this article, fast changing events in South Africa around President Zuma's 'redeployment' and the Gupta family concerns, together with the inauguration of President Cyril Ramaphosa, mean pressures on the media continue to evolve (Plaut, 2018: p151).

The SABC, with its offer of television, radio and online platforms, has an unrivalled position in the South African media landscape. The ANC's determination to exercise control over the broadcaster dates back at least to 1991, when a party conference decided that what was required was to take control the SABC's output. The broadcaster's reach made this an obvious strategy for a governing party wishing to control the media. As the State of the Newsroom report published by the University of the Witwatersrand put it: 'The national broadcaster, the SABC, dominates the Broadcast landscape in both radio and television. In television the offer is extensive (Plaut, 2018).

The SABC operates four television channels: SABC 1, focusing on youth entertainment, drama and sport broadcasting in the Nguni languages and English; SABC 2, focusing on nation building with an emphasis on the complexity of the country culturally, historically and traditionally and broadcasting in Sesotho, Afrikaans, XiTsonga, TshiVenda and English; and SABC 3, a full-spectrum channel in English. The most recent television station, SABC's 24-hour news channel, began operating in August 2013. Yet the SABC's dominance was not as great as it once was. Since 1986 the television monopoly enjoyed by the SABC was broken, with Naspers initiating Media 24. Since then others have joined, including the eNCA news channel and ANN7, which is owned by President Zuma's allies, the Gupta family. Despite these the SABC's reach is impressive. It claims a weekly television audience of 79.3 million adults. In radio the SABC is unrivalled particularly in languages other than English: it has 23 radio stations with a weekly audience of 40 million. No other broadcaster can match its reach, particularly into the rural areas. Its isiZulu station Ukhozi is the biggest in the country—with more than 7 million listeners a week. Of the top 10 radio stations in the country, 8 belong to the SABC. It is the primary source of news for the majority of the population. This dominance has made the SABC a key target for government—from the apartheid years onwards. The determination to control the SABC and to manipulate it for party purposes has resulted in a crisis that goes back many years. Under President Mbeki, the head of SABC news, Snuki Zikalala, instituted a blacklist of commentators who were banned from the airwaves. The list included the president's own brother, Moeletsi Mbeki, who was critical of government.

Zikalala's removal in April 2009 led to what SABC journalists describe as 'a bit of a Prague spring' but the situation soon deteriorated, becoming even more restrictive. Under President Zuma the situation deteriorated still further, undermining the credibility of the organisation and making SABC staff deeply frustrated by their inability to tell a plain tale accurately. The Public Protector's report of February 2014 quoted an unnamed former SABC board member as saying: 'When governance and ethics fail, you get a dysfunctional organisation. Sadly, those in charge cannot see that their situation is abnormal. That has been the case at the SABC for a long time …' The report stated that there was 'abuse of power', 'maladministration', corporate governance deficiencies, and recommended that action be taken against the then acting Chief Operating Officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng. A close supporter of Jacob Zuma, he was only fired following the Public Protector's finding that he had lied about his qualifications. Sadly, the SABC's troubles did not end there (Plaut, 2018: p151).

The 'public asset approach' relates to a Welfarist approach to information aligned to the notion of public service media. In this media, the state has a duty to fund media that act in 'public interest' by promoting balance representatives and nation-building (Duncan and Seleoane, 1998: P16). That is an inexorable logic of capital that steers accumulation towards a greater concentration of ownership: media conglomerates need to spread their bets and stabilise their revenues and then to expand further to support the overheads generated by their original expansions, Keane (Duncan and Seleoane, 1998).

The marginalisation of South Africa from these markets is not surprising given the general delinking of the continent from the rest of the economic world, Dr Nevile Alexander (Duncan and Seleoane, 1998). The primary threat to censorship in African countries is still the state, with a lack of resources playing a significant role as well in frustrating the information flows. Many papers offer us some interest if controversial lessons. One of there is that public funding of media must inevitably equal government control it cannot mean anything else. This is a challenging equation for those countries still working in the basis of publicly funded public service broadcasting, a model that South Africa is still struggling to implement, and we need to assess whether irrespective of the amount of legislative padding put around the public broadcast state funding will in the last analysis only ever amount to state control (Duncan, 1998: p23). This means that private broadcasting is preferable to state broadcasting.

Ownership of important South African newspaper titles was transferred to black empowerment consortia (and to foreign investors like Independent and Pearson Plc); an agency was set up to develop community media and black journalists were appointed to senior editorial positions. An independent licensing body, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (later taken up by the Independent Communications Authority, ICASA) awarded new broadcasting licences to community radio stations. Yet this greater pluralization and independence of the South African media were coupled with growing commercialization and tabloidization. The alternative, grassroots media of the apartheid era dwindled due to withdrawal of funding and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has been beset by problems, seeing its public service functions increasingly eroded by commercial priorities and government intervention (Wasserman, 2010: p567-588).

Aside from structural changes, the cultural aspects of political communication in South Africa has shifted as the media moved towards greater self-regulation and professionalization. The media's claims to greater independence brought to the fore conflictual understandings of the media's role in a transitional, developmental context (Wasserman, 2010).

In South Africa, the highly legalized media environment of apartheid made way for a self-regulatory system governed by ethical codes, while a new non-racial professional body (the South African National Editors' Forum, SANEF) became an increasingly vocal defender of media freedom (Barratt, 2006). The government has criticized the media for failing to regulate themselves, and in turn proposed the establishment of a statutory body to ensure that media act 'responsibly' and uphold human rights (Louw, 2007).

Formal guarantees of press freedom notwithstanding, the relationship between the media and government in South Africa has been marked by interventions and conflicts since early in the new democratic era (Berger, 2009; Hadland, 2007; Jacobs, 1999; Louw, 2007). Such conflict is seen as intensifying (Louw, 2007: 82) to the extent that some commentators (Fourie, 2002) have drawn parallels between the African National Congress's (ANC) intolerance for media criticism to that of the apartheid regime. Laws making it an offence to insult political leaders and which can be used to force reporters to divulge information on their sources have had a chilling effect on the country's media (Wasserman, 2010: p567-588).

There was wide agreement among journalists, politicians, and intermediaries that democratization has brought unprecedented freedom of expression, linked to a human rights culture. These freedoms, manifested in constitutional guarantees and protected by a range of watchdog organizations like the Freedom of Expression Institute, the Press Ombudsman and SANEF, but also made visible through the transformation of the industry, were seen as an important foundation for political debate within the country. The legal environment was seen as supportive of rigorous political debate. These changes also created greater transnational news flow so that South African media became less parochial, taking a less 'provincial view on world affairs' as one journalist put it. Nevertheless, respondents often pointed out that pressures on freedom of speech and of the press now took a subtler form, ranging from 'bullying' or 'heavy-handedness' on the part of politicians, especially towards black journalists, who were expected to 'toe the line' or contribute to 'nation building', to economic pressures preventing the media from fulfilling their investigative watchdog function as well as they should. The public broadcaster, the SABC, was time and again singled out as a media institution where press freedom was being threatened, either by state intervention or by increased commercialization (Wasserman, 2010: pp567-588).

Media freedom under apartheid

Under apartheid, the mainstream print media were accused of either actively or passively colluding with the government. The big four publishing houses were predominantly owned by big capital- either the mining houses, which controlled the English language press, or Afrikaans business interests. These companies were vertically integrated at the level of print and distribution with restrictive measures in place to limit distribution (and some extent printing) to their own publications. Broadcasting was controlled by the state with the national state broadcaster, the SABC, operating as a propaganda arm for the government. In the 1980s. this status quo was challenged by the launch of a number of anti-apartheid weekly newspapers supported by foreign funds. What was dubbed the anti-apartheid or alternative press was established by respected journalists frustrated with the failure by the mainstream newspapers to report fully on the brutality of apartheid. Independent journals and newsletters began publishing over the same period, also targeting audiences and issues neglected by the commercial media, and a handful of independent news agencies reporting from outside the major urban centres extended the coverage of these papers and magazines (Lloyd, 2013: p12).

The apartheid government, obviously threatened by these publications, banned many of them for periods and detained some of the editors and journalists working for them. In mid-1987, for example, eight journalists were in detention under emergency laws. Although the state publicly claimed that none of them were imprisoned for their journalism, in several court cases challenging these detentions, the government argued that their writing had led to conditions for unrest. The alternative papers and magazines were completely reliant on international donor aid, as big business avoided advertising in them for fear of appealing to be critical of the government, as former Weekly Mail advertising executive, Merilyn Honikam, recounted in 2005 edition celebrating the paper's 20th anniversary, media directors told her that the paper's ideas about unbanning the African National Congress were too subversive. All but one of the independent newspapers closed down in the early to mid-1990s, the only two of the journals- a feminist publication, Agenda, and the labour focused Labour Bulletin- have continued publishing. None of the news agencies still operate. While these publications and media organizations had resisted government clampdowns, they could not survive reductions in donor aid, which followed the introduction of democracy. This has led to some claiming that the print media was in some ways more diverse under apartheid than after democracy (Lloyd, 2013: p12).

The SABC was, initially, an English-speaking channel like the British Broadcasting Corporation supporting the Allied cause in the Second World War. But as its staff volunteered to fight, they were replaced by Afrikaners, many of whom were of a far more conservative opinion (Ropeer, Newman and Schulz, 2019).

 With the election of the National Party in 1948, the SABC became the mouthpiece of the apartheid government. There was little attempt at unbiased broadcasting. In 1971 the corporation was explicitly instructed to broadcast television which should play its 'part in strengthening South Africa to nurture and strengthen people's spiritual roots to foster respect and love for its own spiritual heritage and to protect and project the South African way of life as it has developed here in its historical context' (Daniels, 2014).

  The SABC did not challenge this, but the authorities continued to keep a wary eye on its output. South African prime ministers and presidents watched the daily news with a telephone at hand, ready at any time to call the editor (Jacobs, 1999).

Post-Apartheid era

Television and radio, long dominated by the state broadcaster, have a history of bias in favour of the apartheid government and the main newspapers titles catering largely to the country's white minority, have historically sided with mining capital. The first democratic elections in 1994 clearly pointed to the bias of the South African media and how far removed they were from the majority of ordinary South Africans in their news coverage and editorial stances for example, in the 1994 elections the majority of mainstream newspapers endorsed a political party, the Democratic Party, which could only manage two percent of the vote. The South African media was forced to change in response to the fundamental political, economic, and social transformations occurring following the demise of apartheid (Jacobs, 1999).

Although freedom of expression is guaranteed in the 1996 Constitution, this right has often been understood in different ways. As a result, the media and the government have been at loggerheads on several occasions (Fourie, 2002). The initial years of democracy were marked by a mutual mistrust between the government and the media. The government had misgivings about the media's representativeness and many members of the media industry, in turn, were cautious of possible threats to media freedom posed by the new government. This pessimistic expectation can be interpreted against the background trends, in Africa, of governmental regulations (Duncan, 2003: p5), but has also been linked to racist and misplaced associations of the new government with authoritarianism (Wasserman and Jacobs, 2003).

This mistrust came to a head in tow subsequent investigations in to the media- the first as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's hearings in 1996 and the second as a special investigation into racism in the media by the Human Rights Commission (HRC) in 1999 (Wasserman and De Beer, 2005). These investigations had two things in common: they were some of the earliest instances of friction between the media sector and then newly elected government and they failed to ask broader, structural questions about intersection of the South African media, the market race. by paying substantial attention to press freedom issues and professional media institutions in a functional fashion, the TRC neglected critical issues of political economy. The methodologically flawed HRC investigation (Tomaselli, 2012) highlighted individual cases of alleged racism to make the general point that the South African media was 'racist'. It focused largely on issues of representation and, similar to the TRC inquiry, missed the opportunity to interrogate, in a critical fashion, the bigger questions about the more intricate power relations between race, the market and the state. A more thorough

investigation and addressing of these structural issues could have obviated some of the criticisms that have subsequently come to be levelled against the racial and class-based character of media market segmentation and the lack of community participation in the media sphere. The HRC hearings approached the media from a liberal, functionalist point of view (be it latent or manifest). It pointed out the media's past failure to contribute to social cohesion and focused on complaints (from black elites) about representation rather than structural issues pertaining to race in the media industry. (Jacobs and Johnson, 2007). Both these investigations could have benefited from a stronger incorporation of critical perspectives into, for instance, the political economy of the apartheid media. However, one should point out that the hearings did have some positive results, especially when viewed from the functionalist perspective of creating social cohesion. The renewed focus on the media's function in society led to subsequent attempts by SANEF to reassess the nature, role, and operation of the media, partly by commissioning a national audit on journalism skills (Steyn and De Beer, 2004).

Although media was the object of scrutiny under the Mandela presidency, it often clashed outright with Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki. Mbeki's relations with the media have been generally poor (Chotia and Jacobs, 2002). (Mare, 2003: p37) asserts: 'An intolerance of dissent marks Mbeki's style with pressure on the media more consistent than was the case with Mandela's occasional outburst.' The media, both local and international, have in turn also displayed antagonism towards Mbeki (Satgar, 2002: p168). He has constantly come under fire from the media on a number of issues, including his 'silent diplomacy' on Zimbabwe and his HIV/AIDS policy, his government's alleged inadequate service delivery and what is perceived as his incessant overseas traveling at the cost of leaving local matters unattended (Fourie, 2002: p32).

Netshitenzhe (2002), Chief Executive Officer of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), defined national interest as the aggregate of things that guarantee the survival and flourishing of a national-state and nation, as such national interest is circumscribed by a democratically elected government. The national interest could have been seen in the context of anti-apartheid discourse. The concept of nation as used by the South African liberation movements was linked to a history of anti-colonial thought and struggles for self-determination, as contextualised and adapted for South Africa. Post-apartheid critiques of the hegemonic potential of the concept national interest should therefore also take cognisance of earlier attempts to define nation li liberal terms (Netshitenzhe, 2002). The media, however

did not accept the concept of national interest as an adequate description of its role in post-apartheid South Africa, instead, it asserted its role as being in the service of public interest. In its submission on the Broadcasting Amendment Bill in 2003, the Media Institute of South Africa (Misa). the concept of public interest is the foundation of the professional role the media has adopted since the end of apartheid. From a functionalist point of view, which is the dominant frame within which the media's response to government criticisms of its scope and orientation was made, this would mean that the media is a defender of the public's interest in the face of possible abuse of government power. According to this perspective, the media acts as the fourth estate to keep government in check and provides the public with the information it needs to participate in public life. The media acts as a conduit between public and government, and in so doing works towards the harmonious functioning of society. For a more critical perspective, however, a different assessment might be made. If the media's insistence on the 'public interest' is to be critiqued from Jurgen Harbermas's viewpoint of an ideal of a public sphere, a different picture emerges of how the media relates to government and society as a whole (Wasserman and De Beer, 2005).

The end of apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela and the ANC government was a moment of real optimism. The South African Constitution guaranteed the right of freedom of expression, including freedom of the media (Zegeye and Harris, 2013). It was widely anticipated that the country would have a lively media scene, with plenty of diverse views being heard, many of them for the first time. The press, radio and television were expected to hold the government to account, but few foresaw that this would pose real problems. The incubus of apartheid had been lifted (Fourie, 2010). It was hoped that a newly diversified media would increase the offer to the public and that they would no longer feel the heavy hand of government (Tomaselli and Louw, 2011).

Controlling the South African Broadcasting Corporation

The introduction of democracy significantly changed the broadcasting landscape. An independent regulator was established shortly after the 1994 elections and the SABC was declared a public broadcaster, with a publicly nominated board of directors accountable to Parliament. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), now the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) following a merger with the telecommunications regulator in 2000, has over the past 18 years licensed more than 200

community radio and five community television channels 20 commercial radio stations covering different cities and towns, and one national free-to-air private television channel. Its founding legislation specifies that it must regulate the sector in the public interest and be independent of political and commercial interests and influence. This is reinforced in a clause in the South African constitution stating that broadcasting must be independently regulated to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society (Lloyd, 2013).

The contrast between the tightly state controlled apartheid radio and television system and the new independently regulated broadcasting environment is stark. However, freeing the airwaves has not always been the smooth transition to the model often touted as best practice by media development organizations to emerging democracies. The regulator is hampered by lack of capacity and has been called lumbering and slow and accused of failing to enforce some of its own rules, such as quotas it has set for South African content on television. While the public broadcaster is the only news and information source available to many South Africans, it has faced significant financial and leadership crises, and some managers have been accused of manipulating the news to promote particular groupings within the ruling party. The SABC is mostly funded by advertising (public funding from the national treasury and TV license fees paid by household's average between about 20 percent and 22 percent of its revenue) and has been criticized by a range of different stakeholders for focusing on elite audiences to woo commercial revenue (Lloyd, 2013).

 At the same time, external auditors have for several years raised concerns about inadequate internal financial controls in the broadcaster's annual audited reports. In 2009, the government had to bail the broadcaster out by guaranteeing a bank loan of approximately $175 million after the broadcaster became technically insolvent. Although the SABC has stated that it is on track to pay back this loan, newspaper headlines have continued to report on leadership battles between board members and managers. In the last four years alone there have been four different parliamentary appointed boards of directors and four different chief executive officers at the broadcaster. At the same time, advocacy organizations have accused successive government ministers of political interference in the appointment of senior managers at the SABC36 and particular executives of interfering in editorial decisions, allegedly to take sides in battles within the ANC (Lloyd, 2013).

Amid the allegations and counter-allegations about mismanagement, there seems to be agreement on one thing. There is an urgent need to review the funding, governance, and oversight structures in place to ensure the SABC meets its mandate to air compelling news, information, and educational programming to all South Africans. The government has heeded calls by non-governmental and community organizations for such a review and in December 2012 appointed a panel including a range of publicly nominated stakeholders to develop a new policy framework for the broadcasting and communication policies Despite the challenges faced in broadcasting, the difference between what was heard and seen on radio and television and the range of different services and formats on air before 1994 and what is available now is dramatic. However, there has been no such similar growth or change in the print sphere, though there was an initial shuffling of shares and titles just after the first democratic elections (Lloyd, 2013).

The SABC, with its offer of television, radio and online platforms, has an unrivalled position in the South African media landscape. The ANC's determination to exercise control over the broadcaster dates back at least to 1991, when a party conference decided that what was required was to take control of the SABC's output. The broadcaster's reach made this an obvious strategy for a government party wishing to control the media. As the State of Newsroom report published by the University of Witwatersrand put it: Political interference alone did not bring the SABC to the brink of bankruptcy. The ANC had adopted a range of measures directly out of the Mulderage playbook. The first was to establish a media company friendly to the party with the assistance of supporters of President Zuma and then to feed resources to it from the SABC. The aim was to fund a newspaper and television company owned by the Gupta family. (Plaut, 2018). In the next section, effects of the legal environment and political environment, economic environment on media freedom will be discussed in detail basing the discussion on the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

2.4 THE FOUR THEORIES OF PRESS

A systematic understanding of the press requires understanding of the social and political structures within which the press operates. The next section discusses the four theories of the press: authoritarian, libertarian, socially responsible and soviet communist.

2.4.1 The authoritarian theory of press

This is the theory which was almost automatically adopted by most countries when society and technology became sufficiently developed to produce what today we call the 'mass media' of communication. The authoritarian theory is a theory under which the press, as an institution is controlled in its functions and operation by organized society through another institution, government (Siebert, 1956: p9). The libertarian theory advocates that the press should be a marketplace of ideas where diverse views can be aired without fear of suppression or oppression (Siebert, 1956: p70). It posits that the press should be a medium through which, arguments, opinions and evidence are presented to the public on the basis of which they can check on the powerful and make informed decisions. Proponents of this theory argue that that the press should be autonomous and free from every form of state regulation because a state regulated press cannot call the government to account. They contend that that a state-regulated press will hamper efforts to expose corrupt politicians; that it will serve as a clog in the wheel of journalists' efforts to equip the public with the information they need to contribute intelligently to public debates and make informed decisions on other areas of life. Libertarian theory warns that journalists cannot function as the watchdog of society without press autonomy. The theory claims that press accountability will be provided for the media market. It argues that competition to gain readership will motivate the press to represent a wide of views and perspectives in society (Siebert, 1956: p71; McQuail, 2010: p176).

The weakness of this theory is that the press cannot work independently therefore it publishes news and information that the government wants the public to know. This means that the authority sets the code of conduct for the news agencies. This means that the news publishing outlets need to follow the rules and regulations set by the management. The authority has the right to provide a license and cancel it. Usually, they revoke the license when the media violates the policies imposed by the government. The media practitioners follow the government's instructions thoroughly to publish the news (Nerone, 2018).

2.4.2 The libertarian theory

Like other theories of the status and function of the mass media of communication in society, the libertarian doctrine is a development of the philosophical principles which provides the basis for the social and political structure within which the media operate. Liberalism, as a social and political system, has a set framework for the institutions which function within its orbit, and the press, like other institutions, is conditioned by the principles underlying the

society of which it is a part. For the last century, a large part of the civilized world has professed to adhere to the principles of liberalism (Seibert, 1956).

The function of the press is to protect the people's liberties and rights and to inform the public so they can participate as citizens in democratic self-government. The liberal theory prefers a privately owned news media that is maximally free to inform citizens and criticize public policy, as well as a watchdog on authorities. The right to publish and express oneself freely is not a prerogative of the state or government. It is a fundamental right of free individuals. The liberal theory argues that a free marketplace of ideas, while it may cause harm over the short term, is the best safeguard in the long run for a free and liberal society (Seibert, 1956).

The basis of this theory goes back to 17th Century. Printing press made it possible to publish several copies. This theory contrasts the authoritarian press and it is founded on the fundamental right of an individual. The libertarian free press flows from the individual's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. According to this theory a free press is seen as essential to a free society and dignity of the individual (Nerone, 2018).

The disadvantage of the libertarian theory of the press is that sometimes Wiki leaks platform publishes confidential documents for the public. Therefore, the government of many countries around the world does not allow the practice of libertarian press system, and it can impact the political parties to form the government (Nerone, 2018).

2.4.3 The social responsibility theory

The notion of 'social responsibility' was initiated by the 1947 Hutchins Commission on freedom of the press. The commission was set up in response to widespread criticism of the American press, and particularly its sensationalism, commercialism, ownership concentration, the alleged abuse of its powers and the consequent need to ensure press accountability. The social responsibility model argues that freedom to receive and disseminate information should be accompanied by some form of responsibility to the public. This responsibility, it states, should include not only the representation of comprehensive, factual and accurate reports but also the promotion pf public debates (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947: p21-27).

Unlike the libertarian theory, the notion of social responsibility sees a place for government intervention in media accountability systems. It posits that where the news media fall short in their responsibility to society, a public agency or government should be allowed to intervene to ensure press accountability. The media has an obligation to be socially responsible; to see that all sides are represented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility, it might be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it (Siebert, 1956: p5).

This theory rejects the way authoritarianism makes control actually lawful so that the media has no freedom of choice. Only the other hand, it also rejects a situation where there are no principles to limit and guide what the media can publish, that is, where they can publish whatever they like. This theory has been criticised quite a lot for being far too vague (Nerone, 2018).

2.4.4 The Soviet Communist Theory

It is closely tied to a specific ideology; the communist. Media in communist societies are state –owned and the government had a division of censorship. Other means of control include appointment of editors, a large number of directives regarding press content and press reviews and criticisms. The media organisations in this system were not intended to be privately owned and were to serve the interests of the working class. This theory is derived from Lenin's application. The ideas of the ruling class are dominant in every epoch, and media is the 'mental production' of the ruling ideology hence it requires control of working class. The interest of working class is projected, and media is used as tools to socialize the people (Siebert, 1956).

The theory says the state have absolute power to control the media for the benefit of the people. They put end to the private ownership of the press and other media. The government media provide positive thoughts to create a strong socialized society as well as providing information, education, entertainment, motivation and mobilization. The theory describes the whole purpose of the mass media is to educate the greater mases of working class or workers. Here, the public was encouraged to give feedback which would be able to create interests towards the media. Under communist theories like soviet theory, the journalist or press should support the leadership rather than a watchdog. If the leadership is wrong the whole nation will suffer a lot Private ownership is not allowed which leads the press without any restriction and it can serve

people without any authoritative blockades. Soviet communist theory allows some restriction based on the nation interest rather than personal (Nerone, 2018).

2.5 THE FREEDOM HOUSE MODEL

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers. Changes and additions have been made, particularly in expanding on the language for understanding media freedom. Despite the changes, though, the Freedom House has tried to retain sufficient continuity in questions and weightings so that a credible comparison over the years remains possible. The Freedom House Model explains that there are four domains that affect media freedom; legal, political, infrastructure, and economic factors which were discussed (House, 2017). Government worldwide have expressed interests in regulating media infrastructures. In some cases, such interests take the form of laws directly prescribing the conditions of information access and exchange of the technical capabilities of media infrastructure. In others, legal incentives for the takedown of certain kinds of information produce regulatory effects. The Freedom House Model looks at all angles affecting media freedom in a company which act as an advantage when drawing conclusions of the research. The results will contribute to the body of knowledge on the factors affecting media freedom in South Africa. The findings may be used by management to inform strategies for addressing challenges faced in exercising media freedom in media companies in South Africa. The Freedom House Model is used as theoretical lens to study factors that affect media freedom at SABC. When analysing the SABC, the legal environment factor encompasses an examination of both the laws and regulation that could influence media content, and the extent to which they are used to enable or restrict the media's ability to operate. Under the political environment, the researcher looks at the degree of political influence in the content of news. On the third factor, the economic environment for the media this includes the structure of media ownership, transparency and concentration of ownership. The fourth factor is the infrastructure; that explains that the set of fundamental facilities and systems that support the sustainable functionality of media houses can hinder media freedom (Callamard, 2019).

2.6 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MEDIA FREEDOM

The section below is a discussion of the main factors that influence media freedom, framed using the theoretical framework underpinning the study. This study is using the Freedom House

Model as a lens of the study. The Freedom house model fits to be a theoretical study as it explains all four factors (legal, political, infrastructure and economic) which affect an institution thus making it easy for the researcher to conclude on whether or not the company has media freedom based on those four factors. The freedom house model is formed by an organisation (Freedom House), that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights. It was founded in October 1941 (House, 2017). The model explains that there are four domains that affect media freedom; legal, political, infrastructure, and economic factors which will be discussed below (House, 2017).

Figure 1: The Freedom House Model (House, 2017).
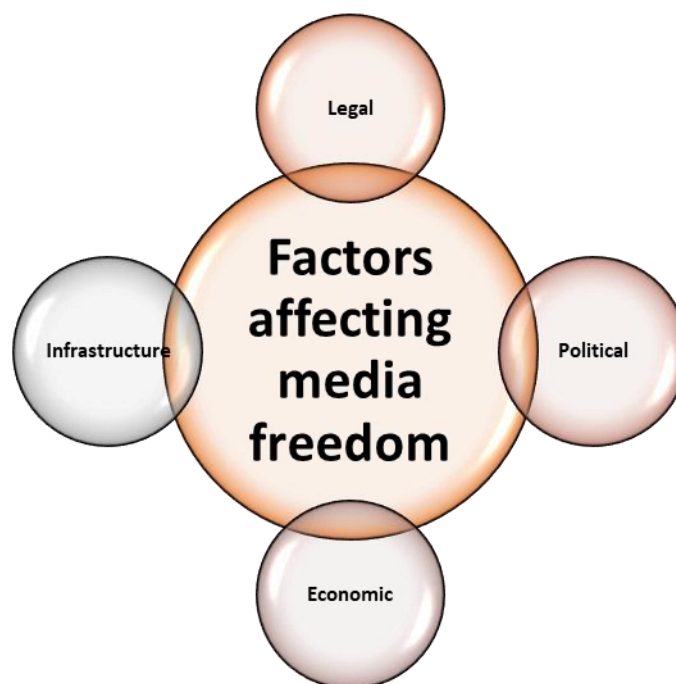
2.6.1 Effects of the legal environment (legislative framework/constitution) on media freedom

There is a new legal and policy framework under construction. Under this framework, journalists and digital news publishers stand to be criminalised for performing ordinary journalistic work. Problematically, these new regulations, policies and bills are too often assessed in isolation from one another. Both policy makers and critics deal with them separately. This silo-type approach misses the over-arching implications which this hodgepodge of new regulation will collectively have on the media and communications landscape in the country, and its negative implications for freedom of expression for both the news media and ordinary citizens.

Each of the new policies within the media regulatory landscape contain provisions which take away from media freedom. Collectively, if implemented together in their current form, they would construct a regulatory regime which would severely inhibit the promotion of media freedom, and freedom of expression more broadly. These provisions include, for example, the Film and Publication Board's online regulations and amendment bill, the Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill, the Cybercrimes and Cybersecurity bill, presumably the Media Appeals Tribunal, and should it ever see the light of day again, the Protection of State Information Bill.

Freedom of the media, including the right to access and receive information, is a fundamental human right, central to achieving all human rights, individual freedoms and meaningful electoral democracies.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 19 of the University Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and under more or less in similar terms by Article 19 of the International Convener on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes the right to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers (Callamard, 2019: p1215).

This means that a starting-point for discussion the freedom of the media law of the media in South Africa could be a critical investigation of whether the meaning(s) and values attached to the basic concept of 'freedom of expression', are still appropriate today.

 For the government it would entail a critical investigation of the compatibility of the concept of 'freedom of expression' with the developmental role they want the media to play. For the media it would mean an investigation into whether their modes of operation, their production of content is interrupted or interfered by the government or any power of the state (Fourie, 2002: p17-40).

Against the background of an overview of the relationship between the government of apartheid and the media, the similarly of this relationship to conflict between the African National Congress (ANC) government and the media in 2000 and the early part 2001, it is

argued that there is a need to rethink and start with the revaluation of the values underlying the concept of 'freedom of the media' (Fourie, 2002).

While there is a legal precedent interestingly in relation to an African country that argues that monopolisation of telecommunications can lead to a violation to the right to receive and impart information, Goggin, (Duncan, 1998). The commercial media today are characterised by an increasing concentration of ownership in countries that allow it and a depletion of small media concerns as an entry level and running costs increase, Smith,1991 (Duncan and Seleoane, 1998). In South Africa, the biggest broadcasting company SABC, is owned by the government, which increases the chances of the government to control the media company and this also limits entry level of new media companies as they are competing with big sharks.

In contemporary society, increasingly globalised private media institutions rival and even surpass governments and state-sponsored public institutions as key providers of information. Information is longer seen in this context as a public asset, but as a privately appropriable commodity.

Several factors tend to hamper the smooth functioning of the fourth estate. However, legal and regulatory framework appear to impact media the most supposedly due to the traditional mandate of the media itself in society vis-à-vis the power of the state to enact those laws. The scholar Nyarko (2015) concluded that media freedom is more susceptible to encroachments by presidents when other political bodies neither check and balances executive authority nor have in place mechanism to sanction its action. They appear to argue that in the absence of strong state institutions to regulate activities of a president the media's watch dog role is stretched to the extent that it critically makes it vulnerable to executive crackdowns.

Writing on constitutional promise, Ogola (2011) observed that on paper, most African states have moved a long way in a short time, but the constitutional promise contained in these reforms, however, has not been fulfilled. Bank (2014) observed that it is not without significance that section 16 of the South African Constitution, after stating that 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression' includes freedom of the press and other media under the general rubric of freedom of express and places these facets of the right on equal footing with 'freedom to impart information and ideas, freedom of scientific research' (Bank, 2014: p410). In this context we can see that the researcher is trying to show that deliberate intent of some

governing authorities to promulgate provision on media freedoms under general themes in constitutions to create a vacuum which somehow enables them to pounce on media at the least provocation even if the media is justified.

2.6.2 Effects of the political environment on media freedom

Journalism is under attack from a number of quarters. Attacks and threats to the media freedom are a mark of the importance of journalism, but the effects are felt by the citizenry at large. Interference with media freedom is simultaneously an interference with the pubic right to receive information or ideas. The constitutionally guaranteed right to free media is mainly about citizens right to be informed; journalists hold it in trust for the broader public. Journalism and its organisation have not always been successful in making that point clear.

Media shapes public opinion and journalists shape media contents, but content is not shaped freely. In scholars' view, freedom of the media is directly linked with democracy and freedom from state and owner's interference. Media freedom is the right of media to report and criticize without retaliation from the government (Hatcher, 2017). According to Arvin Kumar, freedom from government control is needed, but it should not target professional autonomy of the media. He further says when media work is free environment, the professionals may face hurdles owing to the commercial motivations of the owners (Kumar, 2012).

Main threats to freedom of expression and press freedom today are political threats: Several direct threats to press freedom were identified, e.g. the ruling ANC's proposal that a Media Tribunal be established to replace the self-regulation by the press ombudsman, or the proposal of new laws (e.g. the Film and Publications Amendment Bill, which could make pre-publication censorship possible). Subtler political threats included perceived government influence in the editorial content of the public broadcaster or behind-the-scenes politicking on the board of the SABC. The interviews were held before the split in the ANC that saw the ousting of President Thabo Mbeki, the withdrawal of corruption charges against his successor Jacob Zuma and the formation of a new rival party, the Congress of the People (COPE). At the time of the field research, the tremors in the political landscape were however already unmistakably severe and respondents remarked on the impact of political infighting on the climate of political communication, as the public sphere became increasingly polarized. A clear victim of this political ferment was the SABC (see Berger, 2009), where internal tensions

linked to the Zuma–Mbeki opposition impacted negatively on the SABC's ability to exercise its freedom of speech in the service of its public broadcasting role (Wasserman, 2010: p567-588).

In view of Jakobowich, 'A system of free and democratic media cannot be created without a stable democratic system in an open society. Freedom of the media can provide the resources to the audience to make their assessment who are the good and bad guys in politics and take the responsibility as a watchdog on behalf of public to prevent government abuses (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990).

 The media freedom discussion needs to be broadened out and take into account developments which do not amount to direct attempts to harass journalists, but damage their ability to do this important work in other ways. The long standing business model of journalistic media is in terminal decline as audiences move to online and social media. Legacy media companies are under intense financial pressure and staffing levels in news rooms keep dropping. Investment in the time and effort to do journalism of quality is way down. The use of information as a weapon is not new- propaganda is as old as the hills, and South African political and fractional companies have often made use of leaks as a form of warfare but we seem to be entering a new phase where it becomes harder and harder to distinguish real exposes from the false. Some journalists and media outlets, in some cases liberally supported by public funding are allowing themselves to be used for fractional ends (Kumar, 2012).

Critics have pointed out that in the South African case, the political system was transformed radically, with citizenship rights now extended to all South Africans, but that the narrowest practical definition of democracy was used to justify an elite transition" from apartheid to neoliberalism (Bond, 2000).

On this view, the political system was radically reformed, but economic policies adopted after apartheid still favoured elites and continued to marginalize the poor majority of South Africans, for whom economic justice is still evasive. As far as the media is concerned, critics point to the fact that the media have largely been supporting this economic arrangement, and have presented a view of reality from a vantage point in the middle-class suburbs (Friedman, 2011). From this suburban perspective, media freedom is unimportant right in the new democracy, but there is less interest in the basic economic rights and the associated human dignity of those

citizens for whom life in the post-apartheid democracy is still a struggle for survival (Wasserman., 2013).

The coupling of political democratization with increased marketization of media within a globalized context also created tensions between the drive to commercialize media and the need to include previously marginalized groups into the new democratic public sphere (Sparks, 2009). Given these competing imperatives, the importance and meaning of media freedom is all but self-evident. It not only increases the society's knowledge and provides a sound basis for participating within a society, but it can also secure checks on the state accountability this helps prevent corruption that thrives on secretly and political environment.

Usually coupled with the notion of media freedom is that of responsibility, often framed in terms of the 'watchdog function' of the media (Voltmer, 2006: 4). However, in new democracies adversarial or antagonistic media are sometimes seen to undermine the fragile trust put in a new government (Voltmer, 2006: 4). Especially in the developing world it has been argued that the media should support government in its national and developmental goals – being a guide dog rather than a watchdog – even if this means curtailment of press freedom (Gurevitch and Blumler, 2004: p338; McQuail, 2005: p178). These demands are often resisted by the media, who safeguard their new independence at all costs (Wasserman, 2010: p567-588).

Politicians and political parties have recognized the power the media possess to bring ideas, messages and propaganda to the citizens in general and to the voters in particular. In most African countries, leaders enjoy unlimited access to the media. When leaders monopolize access, they often deny it to their opponents (Rukwaro 1992; Ochilo, 1993).

On November 18, 2011, readers of the South African Weekly Mail & Guardian newspaper were confronted with a black banner across its front page: Censored: We cannot bring you this story in full due to a threat of criminal prosecution. Eighty percent of the linked story on page two of the paper had been blacked out–evoking memories of a 1986 edition of the paper (then called the Weekly Mail) that illustrated the severe effects of apartheid-era censorship laws imposed in terms of a state of emergency (Lloyd, 2013).

The effects of political environment on media freedom lead to lack of investigative journalism: Although there have been examples of excellent and far-reaching investigative work being done by newspapers like the Mail & Guardian or the Sunday Times, the media in general stood accused of favouring entertainment and diversion in the form of 'infotainment'. This is not a unique complaint about contemporary global media (Thussu, 2007), but was seen by respondents as particularly problematic in a new democracy where the media should contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and root out corruption. In the South African context, the lack of investigative journalism in the post-apartheid era was seen as particularly ironic or unfortunate given the fact that media are now freer to embark on such reporting than they had ever been under apartheid. In other words, the hard-won freedom was seen to be squandered for short-term commercial benefit. Some commentators linked the lack of investigative journalism to the preference for glamorous ('sexy') news stories of interest to an elite, and conversely the marginalization of issues of relevance to the poor majority which require more effort on the part of reporters. Again this situation was seen to be exacerbated by the juniorization of newsrooms brought on by increased commercial pressures. These problems were connected as follows by an intermediary at a social movement:

... the groups that I'm concerned with, one of the problems we have is the quality of journalism and reporting and that's got to do with juniorization of the newsroom and lack of investment in serious investigative journalism. And also to prioritize the issues of the poor, they are not sexy, and I think that is our problem with all the bourgeois media in my mind, I mean poverty is not sexy... so we are all into these bullshit things of the celebrities and the gossip and of course glamorizing this sort of mindlessness and of course also selling products. So the media in the main actually plays this role, which is not an accident, it's a political function, it suspends critical thought.... It is to avoid people from asking but why people are still shitting in the bucket system 15 years after democracy, why they're living in houses that are falling apart, why they're unemployed, why they're hungry, why they're poor, why for they're getting bad education and I mean in some ways there is a lot of possibilities for, for lack of a better word, developmental sorts of media in this country to raise these issues in a more systematic way than I think it (doing) (Wasserman, 2010: p577)

In the 1980s, successive states of emergencies banned reporting on growing public resistance to apartheid policies as well as stories on the resultant security force actions. Newspapers could be arbitrarily suspended and stopped from publishing for up to six months Fast forward 25

years later, and it's the same story with a different cast: the party that fought for a free South Africa turned into a government using similar censorship tricks on its media The introduction of democracy significantly changed the broadcasting landscape. An independent regulator was established shortly after the 1994 elections and the SABC was declared a public broadcaster, with a publicly nominated board of directors accountable to Parliament (Lloyd, 2013).

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), now the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) following a merger with the telecommunications regulator in 2000, has over the past 18 years licensed more than 200 community radio and five community television channels,20 commercial radio stations covering different cities and towns, and one national free-to-air private television channel. Its founding legislation specifies that it must regulate the sector in the public interest and be independent of political and commercial interests and influence.

This is reinforced in a clause in the South African constitution stating that broadcasting must be independently regulated to ensure fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing South African society. The contrast between the tightly state controlled apartheid radio and television system and the new independently regulated broadcasting environment is stark. However, freeing the airwaves has not always been the smooth transition to the model often touted as best practice by media development organizations to emerging democracies. The regulator is hampered by lack of capacity and has been called lumbering and slow and accused of failing to enforce some of its own rules, such as quotas it has set for South African content on television.

2.6.3 Effects of the economic environment on media freedom in South Africa

Research on the strategic behaviour and performance of firms has been a key focus of organizational studies since the 1960's (Whipp, 1996). Recently the subject has attracted the attention of media scholars and political economists. One reason for the increased attention has been the growing awareness among scholars of the impact that media economics and management have on media performance.

Furthermore, recent research has suggested that the dynamics of media markets have a measurable impact on the quality of journalism that reaches society (Jacobsson and Becker,

2006). The relationship between high-quality journalism and transparency in government, economic development and civil society has been widely acknowledged (World Bank Institute 2002).

There are several valuable models for understanding how market forces affect the performance of media and quality of journalism. The industrial organisational model tries to answer the management of advertising spaces in the media. In this light, advertisers are not only major financial contributors, but they also shape the form and content of media (Mattelart, 1991). Advertising being the main source of revenue, news media services must peruse audience-maximizing alongside 'the additional factor of seeking to please and also not to offend advertisers' (Whitney et al., 2004: p406).

As for private groups, media part of global strategy developed to diversify their activities and make profits. The novelty is that media and their content are also considered as mere short term financial operations that participate in what observers call the 'speculative bubble' i.e. markets whose actors buy stocks or assets they usually sell as soon as they can expect substantial profit (Bouquillion, 2005).

Such tendencies considerably weaken journalistic news making which traditionally tends to rely on a steady professional environment capable of guaranteeing editorial independence and attractive working conditions. Owing to industrial mergers, companies restructuring or dabbling on the stocks and shares, many papers, magazines, radio station and television channels change hands for reason that have to do with editorial logics. In the end, this favours big companies and establishes news media are likely to be owned or controlled by large media corporations or wealthy individuals (Whitney et al., 2004). The political economy approaches address the influences on news making related to media ownership and concentration, financial mechanisms, conflicts of interests between the freedom of press and economic pressures (from shareholders or advertisers) as well as more traditional form of direct political intervention (Guyot, 2010: p100-117).

Having greater prosperity means more than having cars, homes, and flush bank accounts. One of the many benefits that economic freedom can help produce is greater freedom of the press. In recent years, there has been debate about the direction of causality between economic

freedom and press. Economic freedom protects the journalists and journalists protect economic freedom.

Consolidated and corporatized media ownership combined with low audience revenues can negatively affect media capacity by increasing media outlets reliance on corporate funding and restricting financial independence. establishing causality between drivers and media outcomes calls for careful consideration of the mechanism and underlying media market supply and demand. Heterogeneous country circumstances also require one to construct and interpret the outcomes differently to assess in –country media freedom.

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Media is defined as part of good governance. Media freedom increases political participation reduces corruption (Fardigh et.al., 2011) and is positively correlated with overall governance performance (UNESCO, 2008). These studies have correctly sought to control for a set of explanatory variables (including GDP, political systems, religion, historical and cultural characteristics) to isolate the impact. In South Africa, funding sources should have diversified and alternative mechanisms and schemes introduced to ensure outlets independence from political and commercial influence and reduces their reliance on advertising revenue. Despite

high levels of development in South Africa, social inequalities remain marked and only 49,8% of the population has completed high school and only 4.2% has a college degree (Prat and Stomberg, 2013). Developing programmes to increase access to higher quality education for the poor and marginalised communities, especially in the predominantly Black rural areas, would improve economic outcomes reduce dependence on the state broadcaster and increase popular demand for information (Prat and Stromberg, 2013: p135).

Reese and Balinger (in Domingo et.al 2018: p.326-342) suggest that the term gatekeeper used to describe the main task of journalists, indicates their claim to be the ones who decide what the public needs to know as well as when and how the information should be provided. The gatekeeper role is maintained and enforced by professional routines and conventions that are said to guarantee the quality and neutrality of institutional journalism. Contemporary critics Massey and Haas (2002) have proposed participatory journalism that asked for a more reciprocal relationship between reporter and their audiences, suggesting news should be a conversation rather than a lecture (Domingo et.al 2018: p326-342).

A free press disseminates information and ideas among citizens, contributing to a people's common storehouse of knowledge, this improves the workings of representative government by helping citizens communicate with their governments. In other words, the media is able to keep the government closer to the people by helping policymakers better understand how their actions ae being perceived.

This means that media can make peaceful and positive changes in the society. The benefits are being able to say what you want and express your feelings of a certain subject such as government or public and private property or things. Media freedom is essentially a limit on government power. If the media aren't free, then government has a significant power over individuals that it does not need to have. The freedom of the media allows a range of ideas to be shared and tested. If a given world view is suppressed, it will not be debated. Debate typically improves promising theories and can kill stupid ones.

2.6.4 Effects of infrastructure on media freedom in South Africa

The effects on infrastructure explain that the set of fundamental facilities and systems that support the sustainable functionality of media houses can hinder media freedom (Callamard,

2019). To many, even media activists, policy making about communication infrastructure resources may seem to be both bewildering and elusive: bewildering because of its sheer breadth, interrelatedness and complexity, and elusive because it necessarily requires constant responsive to technological innovation and change (Lentz, 2010).

What broadcasting, telecommunications, and internet policy share in their connection to infrastructure necessary to be informed citizens or consumers, and for people to speak and be heard. It is essential to realize the fundamental role that these forms of communication infrastructure continue to play in shaping the possibilities of media freedom. David Bollier's notion of the 'commons' helps to consider the importance of infrastructure resources to the freedom of expression. Generally speaking, resources are those things to which one turns for help when in desperation, such as a recourse or refuge. For example, managing the public airwaves can be set within a discussion about forest, minerals lakes and rivers, government research and development investments, and various kinds of cultural spaces, both physical and electronic. Bollier worries that these and many other public resources are being enclosed. Bollier warns about the contemporary enclosures of the information commons. We view evidence of this in the concentration of media property ownership, the privatization of public databases and the public airwaves, centralized programming of previously local radio broadcasting, and escalating control of the flow of public knowledge through aggressive corporate litigation using intellectual property rights law (Lentz, 2010: p3). If physical infrastructure has a multiplier effect on economic growth of the country, then the information and news infrastructure has a similar effect on its intellectual capital-people. If the quality of our democracy is being messed up by weaponised misinformation, then media needs to fight it by weaponing good journalism.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Media freedom can recover much more quickly after a period of authoritarian governance than some other elements of democracy, such as the rule of law. But it is also subject to rapid reversal. SABC has played an important political and social role in the two and a half decades since the end of apartheid. Benefiting from strong constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and a vibrant civil society, media have contributed to a culture of democratic debate while playing a watchdog role to keep political power to account through investigative reporting into corruption and malfeasance. Despite these positive developments in the

emerging democracy, the role of the SABC has also been contested. The media itself bears the characteristics of the continuing severe socio-economic inequalities in the rest of South African society and have been accused of serving mostly an elite. A free and independent media sector can keep the population informed and hold leaders to account. This is as crucial for a strong and suitable democracy as free and fair elections will be made, citizens will not make un-informed decisions about how they are ruled. The setback has not necessarily been greater in Africa than elsewhere, but in fact, in an environment characterized by weak political institutions and a nascent, and thus fragile democratization process, it is probable that this set back will take longer to reverse. In terms of the themes discussed, the four theories of the press focus more on the state-press relationship. This approach obviously narrows the scope within which the media-society relationship should be considered. It is also a one way and linear approach to normative media theorizing. The Freedom House model looks at all angles of the media companies, political, economic, legal and infrastructure effects on media freedom thus broadening the study on media freedom.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is a systematic process or specific procedures, or techniques used to conduct research. There are three types of research methods, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative research methodology is used to collect data that is reduced into statistics through an active control of all aspects such as variables in the actions and representation of the respondents. The focus of quantitative research is on quantities of the phenomenon. Qualitative research methodology is used to generate an in-depth understanding of the reasons, motivations, and opinions for the existing research problem. Mixed methods research is research that combines elements of qualitative and quantitative methods by generating in-depth understanding of a research problem supported by statistics. This study used qualitative research methodology discussed below to investigate employees' experiences of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. The chapter starts by presenting the methodology, followed by the research design, study site, target population and techniques used to select participants. The data collection instruments, data quality control measures and ethical issue for consideration are also highlighted. The chapter ends with a summary of the chapter.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

This study is within the paradigm or philosophy of phenomenology that attempts to create conditions for the balanced study of research problems (Menon, Anindya and Sreekantan, 2014). Phenomenology is regarded as a subjective approach to an issue as it focuses on the consciousness and the content of the conscious experience people have such as perceptions, judgements, attitudes, and emotions. It is a philosophy that seeks to ascertain the cardinal properties and structures of people's experiences through systematic reflections (Orbe, 2009). Phenomenologists do not believe in the concept of objective research. For this reason, they put together assumptions through a process called phenomenological epoché. This means that phenomenologists believe that analysing daily human behaviour can help people to come to a greater understanding of nature or research problem. For this to happen, Zahavi (2003) states that people should be studied because their understanding of things reflect the society, they live in. This study is informed by the philosophy of phenomenology as it seeks to gather data or

people's conscious experiences of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. Thus, employees' experiences of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC as opposed to the way factors are perceived outside of the SABC. This phenomenological study will attempt to understand employees' perspectives and understandings of the phenomenon of factors affecting media freedom at SABC.

3.3 RESERCH METHODOLOGY

There are three types of research methods. Quantitative research methodology is mainly used to quantify a phenomenon being studied by collecting numerical data or data that can easily be transformed into statistics that can help understand a research problem. Creswell (2009) explained that quantitative methodology is used to quantify or measure opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and any defined constructs. Quantitative research methodology uses measurable data to uncover patterns and formulate research facts (Guba, Hunter & Brewer, 2008). Quantitative research methodology measures a research problem under study and allows data to be collected using structured research instruments. Quantitative research methodology also allows research results to be generated from a large sample size that is representative of the whole population under study. Using quantitative research methodology studies can generate a representative sample and has high reliability.

Mixed methods combine both quantitative and qualitative methods to capitalise on the strengths of each approach. Creswell (2014) stated that a mixed methods design provides a more comprehensive answer to the research questions of the study. He also argued that a research design that integrates different methods is more likely to produce better results in terms of quality and scope. According to Creswell (2014), the mixed methods design goes beyond the limitations of a single approach because it integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Many researchers advocate that these two methods are complementary (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Thomas, 2003). Curlette (2006) argues that data collected by applying qualitative techniques can be used to support conclusions reached by performing tests on quantitative data and vice versa. In this regard, researchers deem it beneficial to use a mixed method study combining the two approaches in order to sharpen their understanding of the research findings. Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2009:9) stated that the use of both forms of data allow researchers to simultaneously generalise results from a sample to a population and to gain a deeper

understanding of the phenomena of interest. Researchers can generalise the sample to the population and this is one of the aspects of quantitative research. This can further support and enhance descriptions of some aspects of the data, which is an approach taken by qualitative researchers.

This study did not use quantitative research methodology or a mixed methods approach because the study is aimed at generating in-depth understanding of the research problem without reducing the data into statistics, and neither is the study intended to complement quantitative data with qualitative data. The study therefore used qualitative research methodology designed to generate data on the quality of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research methodology is effective at digging deeper into the research problem. Scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue that qualitative research methodology is effective in generating data on people's attitudes, views, opinions, desires, feelings, behaviour, and other issues related to the research problem. Therefore, qualitative research methodology was selected for this study because the method is effective in conducting an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research methodology is appropriate for this study because the rationale of the study is to ascertain the views, feelings, attitudes, and opinions of the participants on the factors affecting media freedom at SABC at the head office. Qualitative research methodology was also chosen because of its capacity to interpret the meaning of the research problem through data informed by people's perceptions and experiences of life, in this situation in relation to people's perceptions and experiences of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. The method was also chosen because of its effectiveness in exploring meanings participants make of the research problem and its ability to investigate a phenomenon in a natural setting allowing the generation of reliable data on the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. In other words, qualitative research methodology was chosen because the method allows researchers to collect up-close data by talking to participants and assesses how participants react to the situation under study. Creswell and Plano (2011) said that in natural settings participants tend to be truthful in their responses. This also influenced the selection of the qualitative research method to generate credible findings. Qualitative research methodology was chosen for the study because scholars (Grbich, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2012) argue that qualitative methodology builds a complex way of reasoning about a research problem. Therefore, the method was chosen to help the study build patterns, themes, and categories of abstract units of information on the factors affecting media freedom at SABC in order to have a systematic understanding of the research problem. Qualitative

research methodology was chosen because of its emergent design. This means that qualitative research methodology provides a flexible research process that is not limited by rigid prescribed phases and processes but changeable during research as need arises (Hill, 2012). This method was deemed appropriate because of the complex nature of the phenomenon of the factors affecting media freedom at SABC. In short, qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to navigate an appropriate research approach that the research problem under study may require to be understood.

3.4 RESERCH DESIGN

A research design is plan, strategy and procedure for a research project comprising of decisions from the underlying worldviews to the detailed methods of data collection analysis (Creswell, 2009). Mc Milan and Schumacher (2006) stressed that a research design describes how the study will be conducted. Creswell (2009) notes that a research design is a plan of how the research is going to be conducted and indicates who or what is involved and where and when the study will take place. In the same vein, Mc Millan and Schumacher (2006) concur with the idea by stressing that a research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer the research questions. In other words, a research design indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used. According to Creswell (2013), a research design is a type of inquiry which provides direction for procedures in a research study. Creswell (2009) describe research design as the plan or strategy of shaping the research; the design deals primarily with aim, purpose, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location, time, money and availability of staff.

The research design used in this study is the exploratory research design as it adds quality and vital information to the study, it also allows the researcher to be creative in order to gain the most amount of insight on a subject (Malhotra and Malhotra, 2012). The purpose of the study is to assess factors that affect media freedom focusing at SABC. An exploratory design is suitable for this study because it enables to the study to investigate factors affecting media freedom at SABC.

Exploratory research design is defined as a research design used to investigate a problem which is not clearly defined. It is conducted to have a better understanding of the existing problem

and it explores the research topic with varying levels of depth (Creswell, 20014). Exploratory research design does not aim to provide the final and conclusive answers to research questions. When conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change the direction because of revelation of new data and new insights (Saunders, 2012). Exploratory research design is often referred to as grounded theory approach or interpretive research as it is used to answer questions like what, why and how (Singh, 2007). The importance of exploratory research is that it is carried out when a topic needs to be understood in depth, especially if it has not been done before. The advantages of exploratory research design are its flexibility and adaptability to change. It usually costs relatively less than other research design. Exploratory research is effective in laying the groundwork that will lead to future studies. To benefit from the advantages of exploratory research design mentioned above, this study used an exploratory research design to understand factors that affect media freedom focusing at SABC.

3.5 STUDY SITE

The study site for this study is the SABC head office located in Johannesburg. SABC is a public broadcaster in South Africa and provides 19 radio stations as well as five televisions broadcast to the public. SABC is one of the largest of South Africa's state-owned enterprise. The number of employees in this institution is estimated to be 1000 employees (Ropeer, Newman, Schulz, 2019). The mission of the South SABC is to be a high performing, financially sustainable, digitised national public broadcaster that provides compelling, informative, educational and entertaining content via all platforms. SABC is chosen as the study site because it is the public broadcaster in South Africa, and it is the largest of South Africa's state-owned enterprise therefore making it a major attraction of research especially on Media freedom related topics.

3.6 TARGET POPULATION

Target population is the group of people the researcher is interested in (Vonk, 2017: p1). The target population for this study are; directors, editors, and journalists at SABC headquarters in Johannesburg.

3.7 SAMPLING METHODS

Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population or the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole

population (Mugo, 2002). The purpose is to draw conclusion about the population from the characteristics of the sample. Non-probability sampling was used to select a sample. In non-probability sampling, randomization is not important in selecting a sample from the population of interest. Rather subjective methods are used to decide which elements are included in the sample hence non-probability sampling is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the participants or units in the population equal chances to be included (Etikan, 2016). Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. The purposive sampling technique is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. Editors, journalists, and directors who were selected for the interview are those working at SABC head office. Participants should have been working at SABC for more than four years to make the study benefit from their experience. The researcher chose editors, journalists, and directors because it is important to get response from all major employees of the company to balance their experiences within the SABC and their responses. The employees in these different departments view media freedom in different ways therefore it is important to capture each side. Journalists are important in this research as they are expected to provide a fair opinion because they are committed to finding the truth and presenting it to the public, on the other hand editors edit out the work, giving approval to the news stories. Directors are part of the decision makers of the company. This shows that these three categories play a major part in what ends up being news for the public.

3.8 SAMPLE

A sample is a group of people, objects or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement (Creswell, 2014). The sample should be representative of the population (Mugo, 2002). Maree (2007: p147) states that a sample is a sub-set of the population of a pre-determined number. Monette, Sullivan, and De Jong (2005) also indicated that a sample is often drawn from a population which, in the true sense of the word, refers to all possible cases of what we are interested in study. The sample of this study was made up of directors, editors and journalists at SABC head office.

3.9 SAMPLE SIZE

A sample size is the group of subjects selected from the general population and is considered a representative of the real population for that specific study (Faber, 2014). Mc Milan and Schumacher (2008) refers to a sampling size as the number of elements in a sample. Generally

speaking, with exception of the case studies, the larger the sample: the more valid and accurate the study. The reason laying behind being that a larger sample is more likely to be a representative of the population. Out of all SABC employees at the head office, twelve were purposively selected for the study: four from each category (director, editor and journalists). The sample size twelve was deemed adequate as the study was aimed at data saturation or collecting data until no new information from twelve participants is expected to be added that would enhance or change the findings of a study.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.10.1 In-depth Interviews

An interview is an important qualitative research tool through which the researcher collects data from the participants. An in-depth interview is significant in unfolding opinions, experiences, values, and various other aspects of the population under study. The in-depth interviews are mostly long-duration, face-to-face, interviews conducted to achieve a desired goal. In-depth interviews also known as one-on-one are methods of extracting more detailed information or deep understanding of the subject or concept (Kvale, 1996).

In-depth interviews are efficient methods of collecting primary data. The benefit of an in-depth interview is that it helps to uncover more detailed and in-depth information. Unlike other formats of interview, these are intensive interviews of individuals mostly conducted from small number of respondents. According to Showkat and Parveen (2017), an in-depth interview is often considered as a form of conversation, making it one of the most significant forms of data collection. Being a method of collecting the primary data, an in-depth interview enables the researcher to study behaviour of the participant and get an in-depth understanding of the concept under study. In-depth interviews make participants who refrain from expressing their opinion publicly to become more suitable (Kvale, 1996).

The researcher used the in-depth interviews to get more information of the factors affecting media freedom at the SABC. By interviewing the selected participants, the researcher got different perspectives of the issue under study. This method allowed the researcher to get different detailed information from the selected participants on the research topic. The researcher administered the same interview guides when interviewing journalists, editors and directors.

3.10.2 Document collection

Document collection is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic material. Like other analysis methods this requires that data can be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin, 2008). Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation as part of a study take a variety of forms. They include advertisements, agendas, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, background books, and journals. Researchers typically review prior literature as part of their studies and incorporate that information in their reports. The researcher collected documents because they provided supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from the documents were valuable additions to the primary data.

3.11 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data. It is the activity of making sense or of interpreting and theorizing data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Data analysis involves reading through one's data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking data down, thermalizing, and building it up again in a novel way, elaborating and interpreting it (Terre Blanch et al., 2006: p94). Boejie (2010) explains that analysis is the breaking up, separating or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements or units. During this process, facts are broken down into manageable pieces, then the researcher sorts, and fits them properly, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns, or wholes.

The researcher used thematic analysis as presented below (Tareef, 2018: p166 – 169).

Step 1: Planning for recording of data

The researcher planned for the recording of data in a manner that was appropriate to the setting, and participants. This means that the research recorded the interviews with the consent obtained from the interviewees. The researcher also took motes during the research interviews. The Covid-19 pandemic made the researcher to conduct telephonic interviews.

Step 2: Data collection and preliminary analysis

First, data was collected from interviewees at SABC. Second, data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (Tareef, 2018).

Step 3: Managing/organizing data

The researcher organised information she obtained from the interviews factors affecting media freedom at SABC into file folders (Tareef, 2018). According to Flick (2006), the researcher should transcribe the required information that responded to the research questions, and this guideline was followed in this study.

Step 4: Reading and writing memos

During the reading process, the researcher listed available data on notecards, performed minor editing where necessary to make field notes retrievable and generally cleaned up what seemed overwhelming and unmanageable (Tareef, 2018). The researcher read the data several times to understand it and then made notes of important facts regarding the research study on the factors that affect media freedom. The researcher went through the data collected and making notes.

Step 6: Interpreting and developing typologies

The researcher interpreted the data based on the results and information she got from the interviews conducted with the SABC employees. She interpreted in respect to each factor affecting media freedom at SABC; political, legal, economic and infrastructure.

Step 7: Presenting data

The researcher presented data in text, tabular form. At this stage, the researcher ensured words chosen are summarized and reflected the complexity of data. This means that a summary on how infrastructure, politics, economics, and law affect the media freedom in SABC were presented. The researcher made conclusions based on the information she obtained, and the information obtained by previous scholars.

3.12 QUALITY CRITERIA

Credibility

Credibility refers to determining reliability of how the study results will be (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011: p188). The researcher conducted a pilot study with six junior directors (two from each

of the following categories: director, editor and journalists) to test the research instruments of the study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011: p188), a pilot study provides an opportunity to test the reliability of the study results by checking the accuracy of the interview items to enhance the credibility of the study findings. The researcher requested from participants to use an audio recording device during interviews to ensure that all the information is recorded accurately.

Dependability

This refers to the relationship between the study findings and the data from which the findings are formulated. Research documents used during the study were properly listed, whereas sources were properly acknowledged for future referencing and verification (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011: p188).

Transferability

This data quality control measure was used to succinctly and adequately highlight the context of this study and the findings to help researchers to transfer research findings to another situation. All interviewees with the same job function were asked the same questions to increase the chances of data reliability (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011).

Confirmability

The study ensured that results generated in this study were confirmed by participants, to ensure results presented reflect their views shared during semi-structured in-depth interviews (Lindlof, 2011). This was done by sharing the key results with participants.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics in research refers to the field of applied ethics that seeks to ensure that the welfare of research participants is protected (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The gatekeeper's letter was provided by the relevant authority at the SABC head office. The ethical clearance was provided by the Research Ethics Subcommittee of the Faculty of Humanities at Nelson Mandela University. The main rationale of getting ethical approval is to ensure that human rights and dignity for all participants are not violated.

Ensuring participants have given informed consent

Participants were provided with adequate information about the nature of the study and their role in the study was adequately and clearly explained to participants to allow them to make decisions based on correct facts or information about the study; to participate or not to participate in the study. Each participant voluntarily gave consent to participation.

Ensuring no harm comes to participants

During research, the researcher ensured that no emotional, physical or any other work-related harm was done on participants. Participants were asked to be interviewed from venues of their choice for safety and security purposes. In addition, no emotional raising questions were used in the interviews.

Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

To uphold confidentiality, the researcher ensured that participants' identities are not revealed to anyone outside of the study. In other words, only the researcher knew the identities of the participants. The researcher also informed participants of their right to withhold information. Data is also kept under lock and key at the researcher's office to ensure proper data management and security.

To uphold anonymity, there were no documentation used with personally identifying information. Therefore, personally identifying information such as names, addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, were not on the interview guides.

Privacy was also upheld by referring all participants to their right of to be interviewed in a private online place they are comfortable and asked to withhold information they were not comfortable to share.

3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodology used in this study. The qualitative research approach was described and the reason for using this methodology was given. The exploratory research design was defined and explained in detail with its advantages and why it was appropriate for the study. The study site and the target population was explained in detail. Purposive sampling technique was explained and how it was used to select the sample. The sample and sample size

were clearly defined and identified. Data collection instruments: in-depth interviews and document collection were clearly discussed indicating their advantages and justification to use them in the study. The data collection and analysis process discussed step by step. Quality criteria and ethical consideration were explained in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study investigated factors affecting media freedom at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. This chapter presents and discusses the findings obtained at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. In order to obtain results, a qualitative study was conducted using in-depth interviews. Data collected was analysed manually using thematic analysis. This chapter deals with research objectives and the research process followed. This chapter also presents and discusses findings and ends with a chapter summary.

4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand how the legal environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.

- To ascertain how the political environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.

- To determine how the economic environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.

- To understand how the infrastructure at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom.

4.3 RESEARCH PROCESS

An ethical clearance was obtained from Nelson Mandela University Ethics Committee. To start data collection, the researcher sent emails to the South African Broadcasting Corporation introducing herself, explaining the research topic, the aim and importance of the study. A gatekeeper's letter was sent to the head of news at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The researcher was able to reach four editors, four journalists and four directors, which is a sample size of 12 participants. To uphold all ethical research considerations, the issues of anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy were explained to participants. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. In-depth interviews were used to collect data, which was analysed using thematic analysis.

The following section presents and discusses data generated on the legal environment factors that affect media freedom at SABC.

4.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE: TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION AFFECTS MEDIA FREEDOM.

When journalists, editors and directors were asked about how the legal environment at SABC affects media freedom, several perspectives were shared, as presented below.

4.4.1 Policies and laws

The editors, journalists and directors had the following to say regarding policies and laws at SABC:

A participant stated:

> *We have supportive laws that help us to practise our freedom of expression. For example, we have some form of broadcasting laws that serve as a way to maintain order among SABC businesses, brands, and the company. The laws help to protect the rights of the broadcaster, and we people who work here as well as help to establish a certain standard for how things are run here* (Journalist 1, 06 January 2022)

In agreement, another employee said:

> *The SABC has its own field of law to protect itself. The SABC laws clearly dictate and define what is acceptable, and what is not in our place of work as journalists. To me, this is good in the sense that it provides a sense of stability that helps us to maintain our scheduled broadcast order, as well as giving us protection to easily settle any media disputes that might occur as we work* (Director 1, 10 January 2022).

Another participant had a different view:

> *We do not have laws that protect us when carrying out our work in the field as journalists. Sometimes we are asked to cover stories on violent*

protests and our safety and security of journalists is not guaranteed. I would put in place certain measures or policies, for example, to contract a security company to provide security personnel to accompany journalists assigned to cover protest or violent action (Editor 1, 08 January 2022).

Another participant stated:

State laws in South Africa restrict our media freedom. We are not allowed to report on every event or on everyone without consent or we might get arrested but sometimes it is the state protecting itself by harassing journalists (Editor 3, 08 January 2022).

In agreement, another participant said:

According to my understanding on how this works, laws hinder media freedom because people can now stop us from investigating stories on grounds of defamation of character and other grounds. Most law makers, including government, make laws to protect themselves from us as they see us as a threat. This has now moved to the public as the public now sees us as a threat. We are the mouthpiece of the community. The government creates laws to protect themselves from us; therefore, hindering and interfering how we work and our media freedom (Editor 4, 08 January 2022).

The findings show that SABC has internal laws and policies that help prevent employee dissatisfaction while also outlining agreements and guidelines that are used to manage the broadcaster and employees as well as to resolve issues effectively, with minimal conflict. The internal laws and policies somehow help employees to be treated fairly and if they feel appreciated for their efforts, they are more likely to exercise their media freedom. This finding is supported by Lentz (2010), who argues that laws and policies are important because they help to maintain order, protect rights and liberties, establishing standards, and resolving

disputes when it comes to media business and its interactions with employees, individuals, government agencies, and other businesses.

The study, however, found that laws passed by government in South Africa are the main factors hindering media freedom. The study found that government regulates the media business according to its defined priorities that may not be in agreement with the priorities of media houses and society at large because the legal system tends to be framed by the government for the government. This finding suggests that the laws, which are passed by the government for media business operations, are sometimes restrictive or that they disempower journalists. For example, sometimes government regulations require journalists to get consent to cover stories. which is most of the time denied, or failure to adhere to the restrictive legal environment results in heavy fines or penalties; therefore, forcing SABC to follow all these regulations at the expense of media freedom.

Also, the study found that there are laws that hinder SABC employees from performing work because people now choose to go to court so that investigations on stories are stopped or they are not aired. This hinders media freedom because sometimes stories are in the public interest and SABC acts in public's interest. In agreement with this view, Cronin (2019) states that each of the new policies within the media regulatory landscape contains provisions which take away from media freedom. It is also observed that the state sometimes protects itself because, in most such cases, stories are in the interest of the public, but journalists cannot report on them as they are afraid of defamation cases. Unlike other media companies that have resources to fight for stories in court to be covered, SABC does not have enough funds, resulting in media restrictions. It is therefore logical to deduct that South African laws contribute to hindering journalists from doing their work, thereby limiting media freedom. In agreement, Fourie (2010) states that laws or policies, if not properly developed and implemented, can interrupt journalists' production of content.

The study revealed that the lack of safety of SABC employees during fieldwork is restricting their media freedom. That is because SABC has no protection policies for journalists assigned to carry out stories in volatile environments. This explains why South African journalists and media personnel have also been increasingly exposed to violence, with the number of journalists injured countrywide having risen. Despite all of this, findings in this current study show that legal impunity for perpetrators of crimes against journalists remains the norm. In

support of the findings, House (2009) says that journalists are targeted for many reasons and by many people. Some are investigating corruption and abuse of power, are expressing political or social views which others wish to silence, or simply stand as a voice of peace in times of crisis. Irrespective of the motive, however, the targeting of journalists is a telling reflection of how important or vital their work is. This view is supported by Jacobs and Johnson (2007), who found that intimidation and harassment of journalists in South Africa are extreme forms of censorship, and a violation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, among other things, recognises the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers. But they also erode the conditions for peaceful and inclusive societies. Therefore, SABC should put in place policies to protect journalists because there is a sickness in the land today that condones and encourages threats and violence against journalists. In agreement, Hatcher and Thayer (2017) say that free press in South Africa should be better be protected by laws that protect all people.

The following section presents and discusses findings generated on the political environment at the SABC that affects media freedom.

4.5 RESEARCH OBJEVTIVE TWO: TO ASCERTAIN HOW THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE SABC AFFECTS MEDIA FREEDOM

4.5.1 The Government and political parties

When directors, journalists and editors were asked about how the government and political parties affects media freedom these were their responses:

A participant said:

> *In terms of the political environment, we have to be careful about certain things, especially around politics. I cannot play into people's factional battles. Sometimes people will send you their stories only to find out that they have their own personal agendas to push* (Journalist 1, 06 January 2022).

Another participant said:

No, there is no political control. The South African Broadcasting Corporation is controlled by democracy in a sense that the board reports to parliament. The parliament consists of different parties. It is controlled in terms of regulations (Director 1, 10 January 2022).

In agreement with this:

There has never been a threat of political interference. It may have happened in the past but not since my time with the SABC (Editor , 08 January 2022).

In disagreement:

The SABC is a national broadcaster, so there is bound to be interference from the ruling party, especially during elections time. During the elections, the ruling party wants to shape our content but the editorial policy of the SABC does not allow them to do so and it always leaves a bad taste between the broadcaster news management and the ruling party leadership (Journalist 2, 06 January 2022).

Another participant in agreement stated:

There is political interference, for example, in times of national elections some political parties come to some of our colleagues asking for their stories and campaigns' content to be covered more than others (Editor 3, 08 January 2022).

Another participant in agreement said:

There are guidelines which safeguards policies. The public has contributions to them, stakeholders can make contributions to them too. The public comes first but external forces will always be there. There are

forces that can influence independence and media freedom, for example. The board of SABC is approved by the stakeholders. The lawmakers are political representatives the majority party; therefore, can influence decisions. As an editor, if a boss calls me and says I should remove something I will do it to safeguard my job (Editor 2, 08 January 2022).

Another participant in agreement stated:

There will always be politics, particularly on how information is disseminated. Regardless of whether private or public, there will always be political influence. We have had some journalists or workers who were suspended by because of the influence of politicians. Many shareholders that were running the SABC were once threatened in the past; therefore, political interference will always be there because information is important to the public. Sometimes there is freedom but at a certain expense, to say that do not report bad about Person X; instead report about this and that. There is a specific minister of media and communications who had that particular influence (Editor 4, 08 January 2022).

Another participant stated in agreement:

There is no media freedom in any media company in South Africa. Let us take for instance here, the main sponsor of SABC being the government, the government always bails out the SABC whenever it has financial troubles, when they are covering events of the same institution that bails them out to avoid stepping on their feet they need to take a certain angle. For the SABC to be totally free they need to be independent. People in the past who were given high positions it was usually because they are politically connected, it was never about qualifications or knowledge (Journalist 4, 06 January 2022).

4.5.2 Censorship

When the directors, editors and journalists were asked whether there is censorship and how it affects media freedom, this was the responses of the employees.

A participant said:

> *There is no censorship at the SABC but there is self-censorship. This happens when you become too close to a person; therefore, when you cover news related to that person there will be boundaries. For example, being too close to a mayor you will not cover a story related to him* (Editor 2, 08 January 2022).

Another participant said:

> *Protests were prohibited in the past but now there is no censorship* (Director 3, 10 January 2022).

A participant said:

> *There is media freedom at the SABC* (Director 2, 10 January 2022).

Another participant said:

> *Censorship was there back in the days but I would not say it's censorship but what people report and why depends on the newsroom meetings daily* (Editor 3, 08 January 2022).

A participant said:

> *No, as a journalist it depends on what you do; if you write columns they can express their views freely. As a journalist you cannot bring your expression because we have the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa, an independent regulatory body of the South African*

government, established in 2000 by the ICASA Act to regulate both the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors in the public interest; therefore, editors have the right to question any content. Certainly, there are rules; you cannot publish anything (Journalist 3, 06 January 2022).

The findings show different views on the effects of the political environment on media freedom. Most of the employees said that the political environment affects media freedom at SABC. Findings show that certain political parties or influential persons want to control how SABC carries out its work in their favour. The findings suggest that SABC has the challenge of wanting to further government, their main funder. However, findings also show that the SABC has no censorship but that outside influences can cause information to be censored. In agreement, Hatcher and Thayer (2017) say that the effects of the political environment lead to lack of media freedom because it can lead to an inability to engage in investigative journalism (Thussus, 2007). The findings show the importance of what Kumar (2012) says, that freedom from government control or influential individuals is needed, but that it should not target the professional autonomy of the media. In agreement, Gurevitch (1990) states that freedom of the media can provide the audience with the resources to make their own assessment of who the 'good and bad guys' are in politics while they take the responsibility of being a watchdog on behalf of the public to prevent government and individual abuses.

The following section presents data generated on the economic environment at the SABC that affects media freedom.

4.6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE: TO DETERMINE HOW THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AT THE SABC AFFECTS MEDIA FREEDOM

4.6.1. Funding

When journalists, editors and directors at SABC were asked about how the economic environment including funding, affects media freedom these were the responses:

One participant acknowledged:

The SABC has just emerged from a Section 189 process where costs had to be curtailed in a massive way for us to remain financially afloat. We were all impacted. The newsroom was also immensely affected. We now

have fewer people doing more work, for the same money. So, yes, the SABC is a huge organisation with a large, mostly unfunded public mandate (Editor 1, 08 January 2022).

Another participant stated:

Funding does not give the government control because they receive 3 per cent of the funding from the government. Twelve per cent comes from the licences; the rest is from advertising; therefore, it is not controlled. Maybe in the past the ruling party had more influence; hence, the ruling contested to say that the SABC is bias (Director 1, 10 January 2022).

Another participant said:

The SABC needs funding. As a result, if there is no adequate funding and if people are not paying their TV licences that affects the whole production. It is affecting the production because we need that money to operate. Money is needed so that journalists can be paid (Journalist 3, 06 January 2022).

A participant indicated:

The SABC is not financially okay but that does not mean that it is biased (Director 2, 10 January 2022).

Another participant suggested:
Financially, in 2021, SABC was in a bad state. A lot of people got retrenched including myself. I was then forced to re-apply for positions advertised on a lower salary scale because I needed the money. So the retrenchment affected me emotionally and financially (Journalist 2, 06 January 2022).

4.6.2. Income

Journalists, editors and directors at SABC were asked about how the economic environment affects media freedom in relation to their income.

A participant stated:

> *Most of our colleagues have been retrenched; our salaries have been put on hold for like three years. Your salary being the same for three years and the cost of living being high is frustrating* (Journalist 1, 06 January 2022).

Another participant indicated:

> *They need funding, and as a result, if there is no adequate funding that the SABC is receiving and if there are people not paying their TV licences, for example, that affects the whole production and the quality of what is being produced. Money is needed so that journalists can be paid. I need money to come to work and to perform my duties. In order for me to bring those stories to the viewers, I need the salary. How do I go out and tell stories of holding the powerful accountable if I am not being paid, or how do I tell your story about academic finances or poverty stories? The SABC needs money for us to run the operations* (Journalist 3, 06 January 2022).

A participant said in agreement:

> *When the economy is weaker, companies somehow are affected and their pockets weaken making them to invest as much as they used to do on advertising, marketing and collaborating with the corporation. When these big names that bring revenue pull back due to financial constraints it is salaries that suffer and the running of day-to-day business on the newsroom and production and we end up with the corporation taking whatever comes its way to boost revenue, compromising the brand; even you cannot bite the hand that feeds you. If it is the government bailing the SABC all the time, then it is the government that might end up pulling the strings inside the SABC, further having the upper hand and influencing how its image is presented and how stories about them are written. That is limiting media freedom, according to me; hence, the rumour that some*

stories pass by Luthuli House for a thumbs-up before being broadcast
(Editor 4, 08 January 2022).

The findings show that the SABC economic environment influences media freedom. All participants agreed that SABC has little money resulting in low income, retrenchments and an inability to cover certain stories. Looking into the findings shows that the SABC is always bailed out by the government, which somehow gives them access to the SABC because it is impossible to bite the hand that feeds you; therefore, most of what is aired is in favour of the funders. In agreement with these findings, Hatcher and Thayer (2017) say that the economic climate of an organisation has a big impact on business because it determines the level of consumer spending, affecting prices, investment decisions, and the number of workers that businesses employ. These are some of the critical issues affecting SABC. In addressing these woes faced by SABC, Whitney et al. (2004) state that, with advertising being the main source of revenue, news media services must pursue audience-maximising alongside the additional factor of seeking to please and also not offending advertisers. In addition, SABC should work towards financial independence so that government and influential individuals do not have control or access over the decisions which are made at SABC. Disagreeing with the fact that all stakeholders to media houses should 'just be funders', Mattelart (1991) states that advertisers or major financial contributors should not be allowed to shape the form and content of media. This means that, despite the fact that governments, organisations and individuals feed the institution, they should not be allowed to determine the content aired. This can be achieved by developing strong news boardroom policies.

The following section presents data and discussion generated about the infrastructure environment at the SABC that affects media freedom.

4.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE FOUR: TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE SABC AFFECTS MEDIA FREEDOM

When employees were asked about how infrastructure at SABC affects media freedom, these were their responses:

A participant had this to say:

Like any news organisation, resources are scarce. Not every story will get resources allocated to it. The news-making process involves a diverse value chain of people, equipment, and others (Editor 1, 08 January 2022).

Another participant stated:

Processes are slow. You need to wait; then the stories die while you are waiting for approval. We need to speed up the process so that journalists can do their jobs, Sometimes, as a journalist, you cannot hurry a story. You need to investigate and make sure it passes all the guidelines, but on the other hand it is important for a story to be hurried so that it will not die because in most cases you find that the stories which die because of slow processes or red tape are of importance but there is nothing you can do (Editor 2, 08 January 2022).

A participant indicated:

There are a lot of grey areas. ICASA needs to ensure that they do not to give SABC mandate without funding (Director, 10 January 2022).

A participant in agreement stated:

Infrastructure is the biggest problem. Technology develops; you can buy an equipment and two years later it becomes irrelevant. Let us say a journalist goes to another area to report a story and there is no signal, so the journalist needs to go to the studio to report it; by then it may be too late. Television news in the past, bulletin was at 19:00 hours; now we have a station that runs 24/7. SABC needs to ensure that news is now terrestrial available at SABC 1, 2, and 3 because now it is available at DSTV and we are depriving poor people (Editor 2, 08 January 2022).

Another participant said:

> *There are gatekeepers. When reporting a story your story needs to be double checked, if they need to keep up with what is being reported, they will need to have enough resources* (Journalist 4, 06 January 2022).

In disagreement, a participant stated:
> *I would say infrastructure and resources have enhanced the way things are done in the newsroom; production is quicker, and news get disseminated faster. I do not think it affects media freedom. That I would tell lies with the editorial team on how the story is presented to the public and whether they want to omit, fabricate or add on what the reporter on the ground has put forward. Also, when outside politics enter the newsroom, media freedom goes outside the window and gets compromised in the process. Such has been said by the SABC; it being a State organ was bound to be I assume, I always believed. Politics always find their way into the newsroom (*Editor, 08 January 2022*).*

The findings show that the SABC infrastructure affects media freedom. The study found that the lack of adequate emerging technology and the newsroom infrastructure hinder media freedom. In agreement, Fourie (2010) found that the lack of currently developing in the media industry technologies that are expected to be available makes it difficult for journalists and media houses to carry out their work; therefore, hindering media freedom. Friedman (2011) agrees, stating that, for whatever reason, when media houses are not providing technologies to employees that create, or are expected to create, significant social or economic effects it hinders media freedom because employees cannot actualise themselves fully into professional, cutting-edge journalists because media-merging digital technologies generate new opportunities for media freedom. Fardigh, Andersson and Oscarsson (2011) say that the development of new digital communication technologies and media has given rise to novel issues relating to the digital reproduction and distribution of copyrighted works, which enhance media freedom.

The study found that SABC has challenges of internal structural management causing regulations or conformity to formal rules or standards, which are viewed as excessive, rigid or redundant and thus affect media freedom. In addition, the study suggests that SABC bureaucracy hinders or prevents action or decision-making making stories of public interest die

without being carried out. In agreement, Friedman (2011) says that the excessive burden of formal procedures that slow down a media house's processes restricts media freedom because these bureaucratic behaviours require many steps to be fulfilled making journalist fail to cover fast-developing stories. In agreement, Daniels (2018) suggests that in media environments, regulations should be avoided because they affect media freedom negatively by holding back crucial decisions and actions that need to be taken in order to deal successfully with day-to-day operational media issues.

The study also found that SABC is facing financial factors making it difficult for employees to carry out work and, as a result, limiting media freedom. In agreement, Lentz (2010) states that, for media activists, policy-making about communication infrastructure resources may seem to be both bewildering and elusive: bewildering because of its sheer breadth, interrelatedness and complexity, and elusive because it necessarily requires constant responsiveness to technological innovation and change. Infrastructure also leads to how work is done in-house, who performs what duty, and what the processes are to produce a news story. The findings on how work is performed in-house indicate that the journalists had an issue with how slow the processes are, leading to stories dying. Some participants showed that stories which need to air are first discussed and then chosen by looking at the importance of the story as well as some other factors. This takes away media freedom because journalists are not the people who sit in editorial meetings daily; therefore, journalists tell their stories but they do not tell them as they are.

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the research findings by first presenting a summary of the research process. Then, this chapter presented the key objectives of the research. This was followed by findings on the political, law, infrastructure, and economic environment factors affecting media freedom at SABC. The summary concludes this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings generated from the data collected from 12 employees of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. These conclusions and recommendations are informed by the findings regarding the legal, political, economic, and infrastructure environment at the South African Broadcasting that affect media freedom. The chapter ends with the conclusion.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 To understand how the legal environment at the South African Broadcasting affects media freedom

The study found that government-enacted rules in South Africa constitute the primary impediment to media freedom. The legal system is designed by the government; therefore, the study concluded that the government regulates the media industry according to its defined priorities, which may or may not be in agreement with the priorities of media houses and society at large. In conclusion, it is also observed that government-enacted regulations governing media operations are sometimes restrictive towards journalists. In agreement with this conclusion, Kellem and Stain (Nyarko et al., 2015) argue that legal and regulatory frameworks appear to impact media the most, supposedly owing to the traditional mandate of the media itself in society regarding the power of the state to enact those laws. The research study also concluded that SABC has internal laws and rules in place to help avoid employee displeasure, as well as agreements and standards for managing the broadcaster and employees to resolve issues effectively and with minimal friction. Policies and procedures are an essential part of any organisation. The findings are in agreement with Kumar (2000), who argue that policies and procedures in a media house provide a roadmap for day-to-day operations. They ensure compliance with laws and regulations, give guidance for decision-making, and streamline media house internal processes. It is, therefore, logical to state that SABC is making an effort to have consistent processes and structures to enable media house operations to run smoothly. Furthermore, having internal legal frameworks makes employees follow procedures, perform their tasks correctly, and provide consistent customer service. This enhances the quality of SABC services. In turn, this may be the reason SABC has been improving the

reputation of broadcasters because employees seem to know that they are fulfilling their roles and take pride in their work.

5.2.2 To ascertain how the political environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom

The study shows that the political environment at SABC affects media freedom because certain political groups or important individuals want to influence how SABC carries out its operations to their advantage. The study shows that SABC is struggling to operate independently and its media freedom is curtailed because the broadcaster is funded by government. The study seems to suggest that SABC employees are not able to exercise their media freedom fully in an effort not to bite the hand that feeds them. Although the study found that there is little censorship at SABC; nevertheless, broadcast material tends to be restricted because of outside influence. In agreement with this conclusion, Kumar (2000) states that freedom from government control is needed, but that it should not target the professional autonomy of the media. SABC needs freedom from government control in order to perform its duties without influence. Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) argue that freedom of the media can provide resources to the audience to make their assessment of who the 'good and bad guys' are in politics and to take responsibility as a watchdog on behalf of the public to prevent government abuse. Therefore, there is a need to promote free media at SABC, unfettered by government control in order to promote a free exchange of views, which can help to protect democracy, peace and stability.

5.2.3 To determine how the economic environment at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom

The study found that the economic environment at SABC affects media freedom. SABC does not have enough income to meet its operational expenses without funding from government or dependence on other organisations. This implies that SABC lacks financial independence making the broadcaster susceptible to the control of government and powerful persons in terms of content, making the broadcaster serve narrow interests. In agreement, Kumar (2000) found that it is because of unpalatable economic conditions at SABC that the broadcaster always looks to government to be bailed out, which makes it easy somehow for government to control SABC. In agreement, Whitney (2004) states that because advertising is the primary source of revenue for news media companies, they must consider audience-maximising to avoid the

additional issue of trying to please rather than to irritate advertisers. Leedon (2008) also states that the economic independence of media houses increases media freedom.

5.2.4 To understand how the infrastructure at the South African Broadcasting Corporation affects media freedom

The study found that the infrastructural environment at SABC affects media freedom. Internal structural management issues at SABC were reported to have resulted in stiff or superfluous regulations, or conforming to formal norms or standards, all of which have a negative impact on media freedom. Furthermore, the study found that SABC bureaucracy obstructs or delays action or decision-making in carrying out programmes resulting in public stories dying without being told. The study also found that media freedom at SABC is hampered by a lack of suitable emerging technologies and newsroom infrastructure. Infrastructure influences how work is done at the SABC, who performs what duties, and how news items are produced. The study found that some journalists who investigate stories are not part of the editorial meetings, which limits media independence because journalists' stories are not conveyed as intended but edited to align with the agenda of the editorial team that may be serving an external influence. In agreement with this finding, Callamard (2019) states that the effects on infrastructure illustrate how a set of basic facilities and processes supporting the long-term operation of media houses can obstruct media freedom.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Legal environment recommendations

More laws should be implemented in relation to protecting journalists in South Africa since the study found that journalists at SABC are experiencing safety challenges when working on their stories. SABC should therefore put in place a legal requirement that SABC field journalists should be accompanied by security officers. It is recommended that SABC should budget for security or guards, which will help protect journalists when they are on duty. Besides, certain measures should be loosened in relation to reporting news; for example, if the matter investigated by the journalist is of critical public interest yet risks defaming a person, the investigation should go ahead.

5.3.2 Political environment recommendations

In many developing countries like South Africa, democracy is formally established by political elites, and authoritarian rulers control power beyond the influence of the majority of people; therefore, instead of more participation there is more exclusion, and instead of the rule of law, there is insecurity, impunity, and a lack of accountability. Political elites and the government should be prohibited from owning more than one-third of the shares in a media company, especially in a public national broadcaster. This will help to give media houses freedom and editorial independence, allowing them to play a part in the development of the country.

5.3.3 Economic environment recommendations

The study found that SABC relies on the government for funding. Instead of the company relying more on government for funding, SABC should find more funders to reduce the power of the government to control and make decisions on behalf of the media institution. There is a need for SABC to conduct audience and use research. This will increase its reach and scope to inform not only media managers to boost advertising, but also to inform editors and journalists to learn about their readers, listeners and viewers. If this is achieved, the issue of the SABC not being free from political control will be resolved because the broadcaster will be economically independent and viable.

5.3.4 Infrastructural environment recommendations

Findings show that the SABC has a problem when it comes to regulations, which affects both physical and procedural operations. There is a need to remove non-essential procedures, forms, and regulations that hamper media freedom at SABC. Anything obsolete, redundant, and wasteful or confusing to SABC diminishes media freedom. It is recommended that the SABC cuts down on regulations to allow the media to function effectively in newsrooms. If the infrastructural environment that curtails media freedom is not addressed, the ability of SABC to compete in the local and global media market will be hampered, as will the sustainability and/or growth of the broadcaster.

5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDTIONS

- There is a need to conduct research using quantitative research methodology to measure the factors that affect media freedom at the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

- Further audience research is needed so that the data can be used to grow advertising at the SABC in order to generate funding that will have an effect on media freedom.

- As an important contribution to media freedom, the theoretical model employed in this study should be used to assess factors that affect media freedom.

- Researchers should replicate this study in the private sector to have an understanding of factors that affect media freedom.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented conclusions and recommendations based on the findings in this research project. The conclusions and recommendations section sums up the key points of the findings, or the significant outcomes of the investigation. The conclusions and recommendations relate directly to the aim of the study as stated in the introduction, indicate the extent to which the aims have been achieved, summarise the key findings, and highlight the significance of the study. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the political, law, infrastructure and economic environment of the factors affecting SABC. This summary concludes this chapter.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

PO Box 77000, Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, 6031, South Africa   mandela.ac.za

Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee (Human)
Tel: +27
(0)41 504 2175
Janelle.Vermaak
@mandela.ac.za

Ref: H/21/HUM/JMS-002

Date: **(04 November 2021* - subject to National and Institutional response to COVID-19 pandemic)**

Ms S C Manwadu

THOHOYANDOU

THOHOYANDOU

PRETORIA

0950

Ms Manwadu

TITLE OF STUDY: AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING MEDIA FREEDOM AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

PRP: Ms Manwadu

PI: Dr G Mutinta

Your above-entitled application served at the *Faculty Post Graduate Studies Committee 04 November*
2021 for approval. The study is classified as a negligible/low risk study. The ethics clearance reference number is **H/21/HUM/JMS-002** and approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. The immediate completion and return of the attached acknowledgement to
   Noxolo.Mngonyama@mandela.ac.za, the date of receipt of such returned acknowledgement determining the final date of approval for the study where after data collection may commence.

2. Approval for data collection is for 1 calendar year from date of receipt of above mentioned acknowledgement.
3. The submission of an annual progress report by the PRP on the data collection activities of the study (form RECH-004 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) by 15 November this year for studies approved/extended in the period October of the previous year up to and including September of this year, or 15 November next year for studies approved /extended after September this year.
4. In the event of a requirement to extend the period of data collection (i.e. for a period in excess of
   1 calendar year from date of approval), completion of an extension request is required (form RECH-005 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal)

5. In the event of any changes made to the study (excluding extension of the study), completion of an amendments form is required (form RECH-006 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal).
6. Immediate submission (and possible discontinuation of the study in the case of serious events) of the relevant report to RECH (form RECH-007 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) in the event of any unanticipated problems, serious incidents or adverse events observed during the course of the study.
7. Immediate submission of a Study Termination Report to RECH (form RECH-008 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) upon expected or unexpected closure/termination of study.
8. Immediate submission of a Study Exception Report of RECH (form RECH-009 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) in the event of any study deviations, violations and/or exceptions.
9. Acknowledgement that the study could be subjected to passive and/or active monitoring without prior notice at the discretion of Research Ethics Committee (Human).
10. The immediate completion and return of the attached acknowledgement to Noxolo.Mngonyama@mandela.ac.za.
11. Approval for data collection is for 1 calendar year from date of this ethics approval letter.

Please quote the ethics clearance reference number in all correspondence and enquiries related to the study. For speedy processing of email queries (to be directed to Noxolo.Mngonyama@mandela.ac.za).   It is recommended that the ethics clearance reference number together with an indication of the query appear in the subject line of the email.

We wish you well with the study.

Yours sincerely

Dr Janelle Vermaak
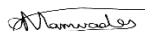**Faculty of Humanities**
Ethics Sub-Committee Chairperson

3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDITIONS FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

I, **name of PRP** (PRP) of the study entitled **TITLE OF STUDY (Hyy-xxx-xxx-xxx)**, do hereby agree to the following approval conditions:

1. The submission of an annual progress report by myself on the data collection activities of the study by 15 November this year for studies approved in the period October of the previous year up to and including September of this year, or 15 November next year for studies approved after September this year. It is noted that there will be no call for the submission thereof. The onus for submission of the annual report by the stipulated date rests on myself.

2. Submission of the relevant request to RECH in the event of any amendments to the study for approval by RECH prior to any partial or full implementation thereof.

3. Submission of the relevant request to RECH in the event of any extension to the study for approval by RECH prior to the implementation thereof.

4. Immediate submission of the relevant report to RECH in the event of any unanticipated problems, serious incidents or adverse events.

5. Immediate discontinuation of the study in the event of any serious unanticipated problems, serious incidents or serious adverse events.

6. Immediate submission of the relevant report to RECH in the event of the expected or unexpected closure/discontinuation of the study (for example, de-registration of the PI).

7. Immediate submission of the relevant report to RECH in the event of study deviations, violations and/or exceptions.

8. Acknowledgement that the study could be subjected to passive and/or active monitoring without prior notice at the discretion of RECH.

Signed: Date: 15/12/2021

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Journalists Interview Questions

1. Media shapes public opinion and journalists shape media content. At the SABC, do journalists shape content freely?

2. The main threats today in media freedom is the political threat. Is your work affected by this threat?

3. At the South African Broadcasting Corporation, who controls the dissemination of information to the public?

4. Journalists and digital news publishers stand to be criminalised for performing ordinary journalist work. Are there and laws and regulations that hinder you from practicing freedom of expression? And how does it affect your work?

5. The absence of strong state institution to regulate the activities of the government makes the watch dog role of media weak. Can you confidently say that the SABC is the watch dog of the country as it is the biggest broadcaster in South Africa?

6. Are there any market forces which affect the performance of media and quality of journalism at the SABC?

7. If you were part of the decision making committee at the SABC, what policies would you change regarding how you do your work?

8. If the SABC was to change the way they report news events, do you think there would be a change in the country? Particularly on how audiences view or judge certain issues?

9. Does the economic, political and law environment affect how you report news particularly on which stories should be covered and which stories shouldn't be covered?

10. What financial issues and infrastructure issues is the SABC facing currently and does it affect you?

Directors Interview Questions

1. The SABC is financed through a combination of advertising (about 80%) licence fees (about 18%) and government (2%). It differs from public broadcasters in other countries because it relies heavily on advertising, is this true? The fact that it is also funded by the government does it give the government control on what is being reported?

2. Who controls the dissemination of information the public?

3. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes the right to hold opinion without interference to seek, receive and impart information. Is there media freedom at the SABC and do journalists and editors practice freedom of expression and editorial independence?

4. How does the political environment affect media freedom at the SABC?

5. The SABC is claimed to be the mouth piece of the government, how would you respond to this?

6. Your opinion on what funding model the SABC should adapt and follow? If the SABC is facing financial issues and how it affects his work, the editors work and journalist?

7. How does the economic environment affect media freedom?

8. How does the legal environment affect media freedom?

9. Media freedom is the ability of the media to openly express ideas and information without fear of censorship or the government's interference. Is there media freedom at the SABC and is content censored?

10. Which policies protect journalists regarding how they should work?

11. Do you think the fact that the SABC is funded by the government has a disadvantage?

12. Your stance on editorial independence of the SABC in the newsroom with regard to political influence on how the SABC should report.

13. What is your view on the relationship between the SABC and its regulator ICASA, and if you were given a chance to improve this relation what would you do?

14. what changes would you make regarding the SABC policies which affects how information is disseminated to the public?

Editors Interview Questions

1. Are there any policies or external forces such as political, economic and legal environment which affects editorial independence?
2. Who controls the dissemination of information?
3. Through what channels does information undergo before it is published or presented to the public?
4. How does the economic environment affect media freedom at the SABC?
5. Are there any policies within the media at the SABC which take away media freedom?
6. How is media freedom constrained by regulations and policies in your company?
7. Your stance on editorial independence of the SABC in the newsroom with regard to how the SABC should report?
8. If appointed as the SABC board, what he would do differently in relation to policies which affect how he works?
9. How does the infrastructure at the SABC affect media freedom?
10. Is there censorship at the SABC?
11. What policies protect you as an employee in relation to editing?
12. How does Infrastructure affect media freedom at SABC?

APPENDIX 3: GATEKEEPERS LETTER

Nelson Mandela University

School of Communications and Journalism

041 504 11 11

The South African Broadcasting Corporation

PO Box 41

Auckland Park

2006

Johannesburg

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to conduct research at the South African Broadcasting Corporation Head Office.

My name is Manwadu Lufuno Charity currently staying at Port Elizabeth Forest Hill. I am studying for a Masters qualification in Media Studies (Research) in the Communications and Journalism department at Nelson Mandela University.

My research topic is an analysis on the factors affecting media freedom at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. South African laws guarantee media freedom in the Constitution. At same time legal environment that encompasses both the laws and regulations of the government in power, political environment that encompass political control over the content of news media by the government, economic environment that includes media ownership and its concentration, limitation to news production and distribution continue to affect media freedom and the SABC is not spared. This study seeks to investigate the factors affecting media freedom at your institution. The factors which will be investigated are legal factors, economic environment, political environment and infrastructure. The study is important because it will contribute to the body of knowledge on the factors affecting media freedom in South Africa. The findings may be used by management to inform strategies for addressing challenges faced in exercising media freedom in media companies in South Africa.

The research will entail collecting data from the SABC employees (4 journalists, 4 directors and 4 editors). I request permission to conduct an interview with the selected members in your organisation. I will invite individuals from your organisation to participate in this study. If they

agree they will be asked to be interviewed. In order to avoid the spread of Covid-19 the interview can be conducted telephonically or via zoom meetings.

Participants will be given a written consent form before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Your sincerely
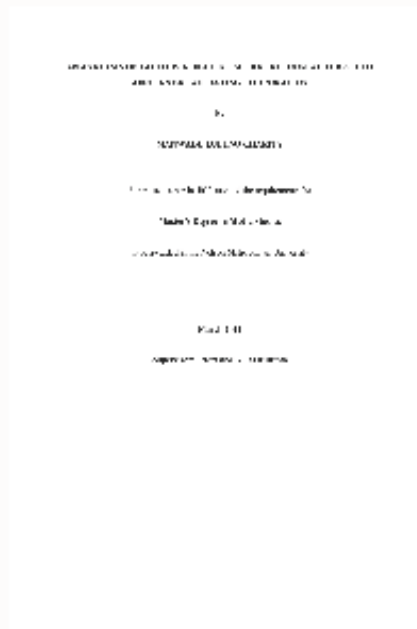Miss Manwadu Lufuno Charity

APPENDIX 4: TURNITIN REPORT

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Digital Receipt

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File size:	559.33K
Page count:	84
Word count:	26,986
Character count:	149,711
Submission date:	03-May-2022 01:47PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	1827113113

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING MEDIA FREEDOM AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION