CONTENTS

iv

DEBATING ICT POLICY FIRST PRINCIPLES FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Jane Duncan
Department of Journalism, Film and Television
University of Johannesburg, South Africa
jduncan@uj.ac.za

ABSTRACT

This article builds on the work of Robin Mansell and civil society inputs to the World Summit on the Information Society, to propose a set of first principles for ICT policy-making for the global South. It draws on the case of South Africa, which has experienced a long troubled path towards convergence of its media and telecommunications sectors into one ICT sector. Shying away from the realities of convergence will not help countries in the global South, such as South Africa, to confront challenges of ICT adoption and usage, such as the very real and present danger of ICTs reproducing or even reinforcing existing informational and communications inequalities. In fact, this article argues that policy is needed to ensure that the benefits of ICTs are generalised across society. However, in the absence of radical approaches to ICT policy-making, these developments risk becoming under-regulated or even unregulated, leaving them to the vagaries of the market. If policies are developed, they may be laundered from other contexts that do not speak to the informational and communications challenges of countries like South Africa. This article argues

for democratic alternatives to the information society narrative that underpins so much ICT policy-making in the global South, and that promotes market-led, modernist, deterministic approaches to ICT development.

Keywords: communication rights, convergence, ICT policy, information society, radical theory, South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION: RUNNING BACKWARDS

In May 2014, shortly after South Africa's fifth general election, the government announced that it was splitting the executive authority for communications, the Department of Communications, into two separate departments. Services that related to media content would be incorporated into a newly constituted Department of Communications, including the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa), the Government Information and Communication System (GCIS) and the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). The GCIS and MDDA both fell under the presidency before the election. Those aspects of communications that were carriage or infrastructure-related have been allocated to the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services. This split has also been replicated at a parliamentary level, with the oversight and legislative committee responsible for the sector, the Portfolio Committee on Communications, being split into two as well.

At the time of writing, the government had provided no coherent public justification for the split. Civil society organisations such as SoS – Support Public Broadcasting Coalition and the Right 2 Know Campaign are confounded by the decision (Odendaal 2014; Udemans 2014), as South Africa appears to be bucking the worldwide trend towards convergence of the media and telecommunications sectors into one Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. The government even initiated an ICT policy review on a converged basis in 2012, to assess the effectiveness of all laws and policies impacting on the sector, and in view of the rapid changes in technology. However, after the split, the process stalled. Civil society and opposition parties have speculated that the government made this change to enable the Department of Communications to bring under one roof a range of content services that would form the basis of an undeclared Ministry of Information or Ministry of Propaganda: an anathema in a democracy (SoS – Support Public Broadcasting Coalition 2014).

What made the decision all the more confounding is that convergence has been a policy and legislative objective for the past decade. In 2000, parliament passed the Icasa Act to respond to the convergence of broadcasting and telecommunications by merging the then-separate regulators for these sectors into one body. Globally, broadcasting content and ownership issues have generally been tackled by

broadcasting regulators, while telecommunications regulators focused on technology and connectivity-related issues, but as both sectors converged, it made sense to converge regulators too. South Africa duly followed this increasingly global trend (Souter 2009, 8). Echoing similar trends in countries like Malaysia, South Africa's parliament adopted a semi-layered approach to licensing, where licences were offered not according to specific communication technologies (such as radio, television or cellular communications), but according to services that were grouped together on the basis of specific layered characteristics (such as content, application or services, digital or transport services or infrastructure) (ACMA 2011, 21).

The danger of pursuing broadcasting and telecommunications development separately is that convergence may become unregulated as it falls between two policy silos, which could lead to ICT development becoming market-driven and its benefits being enjoyed by a few. On the other hand, a public interest-driven convergence policy could ensure that the benefits of ICTs are generalised across society. In the absence of such a policy the sector may suffer from inefficient regulation, the duplication of networks and services, and sectoral fragmentation (Nigerian Ministerial Committee on ICT Policy Harmonisation 2012, 8). Therefore it remains in the interests of the majority of South Africans for an ICT policy to be developed on a converged basis.

In pursuing separate development paths for broadcasting and telecommunications, South Africa risks lagging behind continental developments – already, other African countries have adopted policies that promote convergence. For instance, Nigeria and Zimbabwe adopted converged policies in 2012, in spite of the fact that organisations such as Freedom House and Reporters without Borders (2014) do not consider their media environments to be as free as South Africa's, so these countries would not ordinarily be considered models for media development. Yet in terms of promoting convergence they have outstripped South Africa, which suggests that the country is losing its traction as a regional trend-setter. Kenya's policy, adopted in 2006, reveals some of the weaknesses of recent ICT policy-making, where sectors are still dealt with in the old silos, with little effort being made to promote synergies and integrate the sectors into one converged sector. Zimbabwe is considering the possibility of moving in the opposite direction to South Africa and merging or at least encouraging significant cooperation between two distinct departments, the Ministry of ICTs, Postal and Courier Services and the Ministry of Media, Information and Broadcasting Services – a difficult undertaking, as the former is led by a Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) minister, while the latter is led by a ZANU-PF minister. Nevertheless, the Zimbabwean chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa – Zimbabwe) is attempting to promote an integrated vision that straddles these divides. These continental developments strongly suggest that South Africa is running backwards in relation to ICT policy, not forwards.

As many countries grapple with the futures of their communications sectors, the following question emerges: What should the foundational values or first principles

be of a converged communications sector for southern countries still grappling with legacies of colonialism and apartheid, and the continued challenges of poverty and inequality? The present article addresses this question. It draws on some of the ideas put forward by civil society in response to a paper developed by an advisory panel appointed by the-then Ministry of Communications, and tasked with kick-starting the policy review process. In 2013, the panel released a framing paper, calling for public comment on the first principles that should guide subsequent policy formulation; it did so to focus minds on what South Africans actually want out of their communications system. It felt that South Africans spent too much time debating the strengths and weaknesses of the 'as-is' situation, and too little time on what they would actually like out of the sector, which risked stripping the policy-making process of its more visionary elements. <It> <The paper?> argued that the strengths and weaknesses of the sector should be debated after the first principles were concluded, so that the communications status quo could be assessed against these foundational principles. Australia has followed a similar policy-making process and, refreshingly, South Africa sought to emulate this best practice.

Needless to say, there are risks involved in such an approach: for instance, policy-makers may create unrealistic expectations of their ability to deliver. But unless implementation decisions are guided by some basic principles – which in turn reflect a national consensus about what matters most in the communications space – then these decisions risk becoming directionless and purposeless. After all, without a roadmap, all roads are good. Worse, policy-making risks being captured by interests that do not have the aspirations of the broader citizenry at heart. In the spirit of policymaking in its early phase, this article therefore confines itself to foundational questions rather than implementation questions.

2. CONVERGENCE CHALLENGES GLOBALLY AND CONTINENTALLY

ICTs involve the electronic capturing, processing, storing and distribution of communications messages. While this definition includes analogue and digital forms of communications, more aspects of communications processes are being digitised, which is enabling the convergence of the two previously distinct sectors of broadcasting and telecommunications. Telecommunications service providers that were confined to voice services can now offer a range of media content services too, such as television or video on demand. The communications services that can now be offered are likely to be greater in number, faster and of higher technical quality than analogue services offered in technological silos. Converged network operators can also offer 'quadruple play' services (voice, telephony, the Internet and television) for a single subscription: a highly attractive prospect for communications users seeking simple, cost-effective communications solutions.

4

Convergence is not a mere technical process; it allows the media to be conceptualised in very different ways to the ones that media users have become accustomed to. For instance, users have understood broadcasting as a unilinear, one-to-many communications tool, but if Web 2.0 tools are integrated into broadcasting services, broadcasting could become much more dialogic, and a service like public service broadcasting could become much more interactive. In fact, it could be argued that in an era of convergence, public service broadcasters should have a duty to interact, as they could become more relevant to youth audiences who are growing up expecting to be interacted with, given the huge popularity of social media amongst the youth. The inherent strengths of converged ICTs mean that they can be used to encourage what Guy Berger (2011) has referred to as communications-enabled citizenship, where people can practise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship by using ICTs to hold public officials to account, or to contribute to participatory governance. In large democracies some level of mediation is necessary, as mass involvement in public decision-making is unrealistic. However, mediation can also lead to public representatives taking decisions that do not reflect 'the will of the people'. Legacy media can be used (and have been used) to relay public views to keep these representatives in line with public opinion, but there are limited spaces in these media for genuine dialogue, given their inherently allocutive nature. ICTs, on the other hand, can potentially make real South Africa's constitutional right to receive or impart information or ideas, as they allow citizens to speak back to those in positions of authority, rather than being mere recipients of decisions. As a result, their dialogic character has enormous democratising potential.

The immense possibilities for improving and extending communications through ICTs have led technological optimists to trumpet convergence as a new era for communications – an era that offers a more much democratic, interactive, diverse media and communications space. However, unless convergence is regulated for public purposes, it may reproduce and even reinforce informational and communications inequalities, rather than promoting an utopian digital democracy. Just because ICTs have the potential to become more ubiquitous and enable more dialogic communications, does not mean that this potential will automatically be realized. This is because technology is not an independent force in society; rather it is embedded in existing social relations which – to paraphrase Raymond Williams (1979, 6) – 'set limits and exert pressures' on technology take-up. South Africa's splitting of its Department of Communications makes coherent policy development more difficult. The two departments may not cooperate effectively; in fact, turf-wars have also developed between them over the management of the free-to-air television digital migration process, which has led to further delays (the process has overshot its national deadlines several times already) (Phakathi 2014). They also risk promoting separate development paths for telecommunications and broadcasting, which may make it difficult for them to promote the best that convergence has to offer. In fact,

5

converged services may fall between two stools, leading to them becoming regulated more by market forces, than by public policy.

Africa faces particular communications challenges, given the history and contemporary realities of the continent. Technological optimists have celebrated mobile penetration in Africa as a panacea for the continent's connectivity problem; however, in doing so, they tend not to acknowledge the extractive nature of mobile phones, where expenditure on connectivity diverts disposable income away from other productive uses (DeMaagd 2008; Diga 2008). Access to a handset does not automatically mean connectivity: high communications costs mar the ability of many Africans to use mobile phones to their full potential, and this is especially so with regard to data costs (Calandro, Gillwald, Moyo and Stork 2010). Where regulatory authorities do exist, they have not intervened sufficiently to regulate connectivity costs, advantaging profit-seeking communications service providers to the detriment of communications users. Many African countries also rely heavily on imported hardware and software, as they have not developed local industries to lessen their technological dependency. Educational curricula often do not encourage innovation in this sector, which increases the risk. These problems risk leading to African adoption of ICTs integrating the continent into the global economy on highly unequal terms, and to its detriment.

Freedom of expression and access to information also remain major challenges on the continent. While many African countries have opened up their media and telecommunications sectors over the past two decades, transformation has remained superficial and governments have proved to be most resistant to establishing independent communications regulators and transforming state broadcasters into public broadcasters. Governments have liberalised with little consideration for measures to protect media pluralism and diversity, leading to a general trend of transformation from state to market regulation (Barker 2001; Chuma and Moyo 2010). Secrecy still prevails in many societies, although progress has been made in promulgating access to information laws, significantly in Nigeria and Liberia. In the case of South Africa, the country's Promotion of Access to Information Act appears to have become more of an obstacle to information access than an enabler, as government and private sector compliance remain low and there are few consequences for non-compliance (Right 2 Know Campaign 2014, 3). Privacy is an altogether neglected right on the continent, with privacy-violating practices such as a mandatory registration of subscriber information management (SIM) cards being widespread (Donovan and Martin 2012). Few citizens are aware of their data rights, and there have been few public education campaigns to encourage them to learn about their rights and how to claim them.

Relevant ICT policies would need to ensure that all communications users have access to the benefits of convergence, while addressing weaknesses in the legacy

media environment. Unless they do so, these problems may end up being reproduced and even amplified in the digital environment.

3. INFORMATION SOCIETY-SPEAK AND COMMUNICATIONS TRANSFORMATION

If ICT policies are going to be relevant in Africa and affirm the information and communications needs of its citizens, then they need to provide a vision that these citizens can identify with. However, dominant ideologies that promote convergence tend to reinforce existing social relations, and the most prominent is that of the information society.

Many countries in the global South have embraced the information society as a transformative concept for their communications sectors. While the merits and demerits of this concept have been debated in academic circles for over a decade, to the point where it may be considered by many to be outdated, the concept still enjoys considerable traction in government policy-making, and undergirds many recent ICT policy initiatives on the continent. As a result, critiques of the concept remain relevant. When the South African Department of Communications released a Green Paper on ICTs in 2013 to take the ICT policy process forward, the then minister, Yunus Carrim, argued that the review should explore how South Africa could become a more effective knowledge economy and information society, and the rest of the Green Paper makes it clear that the information society/knowledge economy/ knowledge society provides conceptual frames for the policy review (Ministry of Communications 2013, 7). By that stage, information society-speak had become central to the South African government's thinking in relation to communications (Oyedemi and Lesame 2005, 78).

An information society places ICTs at the centre of cultural, social and economic development, leading to these societies' productive sectors becoming dominated by information work and information flows. Information societies are meant to be inherently transnational, given that ICTs have enabled information and communication flows across borders (ibid.). Manuel Castells (2000), however, prefers the term 'network society', which places the networking logic of ICTs at the centre of society, i.e., contemporary society is hardwired to communicate, to the point where this activity has become the central defining feature of the current epoch. As this new form of society flows from digitisation and the spread of ICTs, government policy is expected to support these shifts, to ensure that countries remain relevant in the globalising world.

However, the information society concept is not politically neutral. The information society and even the network society are concepts that rest on a foundation of technological determinism, i.e., they assume that technology is the main driver of socio-economic development, and that societies can be changed merely through the

7

adoption of new technologies. In reality, though, technology is likely to be one driver of social change amongst many, and to assert causal primacy to technology only is to elevate its change agency status to a level that it does not deserve, or that is not appropriate. Fetishising the role of technology in social change can distract countries from the far more basic tasks that need to be undertaken to make societies more just and equal.

The information society is also inherently modernist in character, in that it assumes that all countries need to follow the same development trajectory to evolve. More specifically, societies need to evolve from the agricultural stage to the industrial and then post-industrial or informational stages, and if all societies are to progress, then they all need to pass through the same stages. However, there can and should be no one path to development. Also, modernisation theory tends to ignore the structuring effects of power relations between countries, and fails to recognise that the development of the richer North has been premised, to an extent, on the underdevelopment of many countries in the South (Alampay 2006). Yet in order to prove their global relevance, countries may feel pressured to embrace generic 'one-size-fits-all' ICT policies, in spite of the fact that these policies may not address local circumstances holistically.

When countries impose information society policies wholesale, they risk prioritising ICTs in favour of industries that are as important (if not more important) to the development of a country, and starving them of resources. A robust domestic manufacturing sector, for instance, is necessary to ensure that a country is not over-reliant on commodities imports, can beneficiate its own raw materials, and can also drive industrial development. Yet governments may be tempted to neglect manufacturing on the basis that it is not at the cutting edge of the new economy, and may promote the view that a country should rather leapfrog into tertiary sectors such as ICTs to remain globally relevant. Such an approach may condemn a country to technological dependence. It may be tempted to promote ICTs as a job-creation strategy, where 'e-skills' are seen as a silver bullet for unemployment as the sector is the future of economic development. However, e-skills strategies may not take into account the fact that the labour absorption capacity of services, including the ICT sector, is lower than sectors such as agriculture and the industrial sectors. In fact, in South Africa, since 1991, employment in communications has declined more drastically than in any other major sector, in spite of the expansion in the sector (Economic Sectors and Employment Cluster 2010, 66). This means that an ICT-driven economic strategy could warp development, and exacerbate rather than alleviate unemployment.

Information society-speak has also served the American-driven neoliberal agenda well, as it has convinced more and more countries that they must open up their economies to foreign investment to compete globally, and ICT-driven growth necessitates the importation of technology to enable the free flow of such investment

across borders. From the mid-1990s onwards, information society-speak became commonplace in multilateral development institutions which touted the diffusion of ICTs as a panacea for the developing world's problems. Under the thrall of a new ICT-driven approach to development, institutions such as the World Bank financed ICT for development projects (ICT4D). However, many failed mainly because they were supply-driven, not demand-led. Implementers assumed that ICT take-up would flow naturally from these technologies being diffused into communities, with scant focus on the human capabilities needed to integrate ICTs into their lives. Expensive multipurpose ICT centres in rural areas fell into disuse as residents were unable to adapt them to everyday use. At times, implementing agencies overlooked the need for more basic services such as electricity and transportation, which dampened demand even further (Kwaku Kyem 2012; Nulens and Audenhove 1999).

The flawed assumptions of the ICT4D paradigm also became apparent in South Africa when telecentres were rolled out in various rural areas, only for some of them to fail. The Universal Service Agency of South Africa (USA-SA) rolled out telecentres in the late 1990s, and by 2000, 65 such centres were established across South Africa, mainly in poor areas. However, by then, about a third of these were not operational. Less than half the telecentres had computers and working Internet access, and less than a third demonstrated that they had a reasonable chance of self-sustainability, meaning that most would require external assistance in order to survive over the longer term (Benjamin 2003, 6–7). Telecentres were expensive to run as they offered multiple services, yet many could not afford or did not know how to use the more sophisticated services like the computers and Internet, which led to these services remaining underutilised. Many communities were so poor that they could not to afford to sustain a telecentre without ongoing subsidy, and the USA-SA model tended to assume that telecentres could become financially self-sustaining. This equipment was provided irrespective of local needs, which led to a top-down approach to communications development (Benjamin 2003, 10–14).

ICT4D projects can lead policy-makers to adopt a problematic 'add-ICTs-and-stir' approach, where ICTs are merely grafted onto existing social relations, thereby doing little to alter the fundamental structural problems in a country's economy that give rise to inequality, unemployment and underdevelopment. As Christian Fuchs (2012, 413–434) argues, while contemporary forces of production may be driven increasingly by communications and information, relations of production remain essentially unchanged from earlier periods in history, and capitalist in nature. In fact, ICT-driven growth can lead to economies becoming even more distorted than they were, and more dependent on technologies imported from a small group of powerful (mainly northern) multinationals. These technologies may also prove to be difficult to impossible to domesticate, leading to inappropriate investments. These investments may, however, be made in any event, as governments have been lulled

JANE DUNCAN

by information society-speak into it being necessary to keep their relevance in the global economy.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) has recognised the limitations of information society-speak and developed what it considers to be an alternative concept of the 'knowledge society' – a concept that is found in Zimbabwe's and Nigeria's ICT policies, both released in 2012. However, Unesco's attempt to reinvent the more deterministic concept of the information society has not been particularly successful, as it has reproduced many of the weaknesses of information society-speak. This it does by assuming that individuals are responsible in the main for structural problems such as unemployment, as they have not re-skilled sufficiently despite the fact that there may be too few jobs, no matter how highly skilled people are. The knowledge society and information society both tend to avoid questions of power, in that they assume that technology and education alone can change how society is organised, rather than any struggles to change how power is distributed in society (Leye 2007, 84–85). Technology does not change society; people change society. They may do so with the assistance of technology, but people remain the primary drivers of change.

ICT policies need to ensure that ICTs are integrated into social life in meaningful ways, and that they complement rather than frustrate a society's level of development. There is nothing inevitable about cycles of development and how they unfold, including how ICTs should be integrated within them. Policy-makers can and must exercise agency in making political choices about the relationship of technology with society. If ICT-driven modes of development have proven not to work in other southern country contexts, then they must make different political choices.

4. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ICT POLICY-MAKING

Many ICT policies are relatively conventional business and government-driven policies, and as a result do not problematise 'information society' claims. Countries developing converged ICT policy frameworks may be tempted to adopt a 'blueprint' approach to policy development, where templates produced elsewhere are used as the basis for policy development. This approach can be problematic as it can lead to policy from other contexts being laundered, with insufficient attention being paid to local contextual needs and capacities. Some African countries have used a 'blueprint' developed by the African Information Society Initiative (the National Information and Communication Infrastructure plan model), which emphasised connectivity at the expense of policies that promote the effective use of ICTs. This blueprint also placed little emphasis on the need to develop a domestic ICT industry; a gap which, needless to say, benefitted foreign ICT multinationals (Adam and Gillwald 2007).

10

Another problem common to ICT policies, especially in the global South, is that they tend to be extended telecommunications policies rather than true convergence policies, and after a good start that focused public attention on ICT first principles, South Africa is at risk of lapsing into this approach, given the splitting of the two ministries. This will present a missed opportunity for policy-makers to step outside media and telecommunications silos. The existing incumbents benefit from the lack of convergence regulation, as it allows basic market structures to remain intact.

Mindful of the deficiencies of information society-speak, Robin Mansell (2009) identifies three possible principles that could underpin such a policy, and that should therefore form the basis of future research. The first is human rights, where usage of ICTs is recognised as a human right and where ICTs are promoted as tools for the advancement of human rights. The second is access, which emphasises not only having physical access to ICTs, but also having the capabilities and literacies to use and adapt them, so that ICTs become integrated into peoples' lives. The third is participation and representation, or using ICTs to promote involvement in public life, and ensuring that all social groups are represented adequately to enable their full and fair participation. These principles provide a useful starting point for an alternative conceptualisation of ICT policy. However, one principle Mansell does not mention is the de-commodification of ICTs and the assertion of the communications space as a commons, where society's resources – including less material, exhaustible resources such as information – are defined as inherently public in nature, and where attempts to enclose information and communications for profit are resisted. Unless ICTs are treated as a public good rather than a commodity, the other principles may not be realised as ICT roll-out is likely to track the fault-lines of wealth and poverty in society.

Civil society contributions to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) could also be usefully integrated into ICT policy-making. In this regard, the civil society declaration to WSIS outlines four core principles:

- Social justice and people-centred sustainable development, which rejects the profit motive as the main driver of ICT developments in favour of human need;
- The centrality of human rights, which understands ICTs as being central to the protection and promotion of human rights, while human rights are applied to ICTs, including but not limited to, the rights to freedom of expression, dignity, equality, privacy and access to information;
- The promotion of culture, knowledge and the public domain, where ICTs both preserve and promote cultural, linguistic and social rights. The increasing privatisation of knowledge should not prevent ICTs from being used to expand the public sphere using the multiplicity of languages and cultural forms of expression available to humanity;

- An enabling environment, where fair, equal and open access to knowledge become guiding principles.

These principles were proposed before National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed the pervasiveness of the Unites States' mass surveillance that extended far beyond what was warranted to fight terrorism. These revelations place communications privacy at the centre of any discussions about human rights online. In this regard, several international non-governmental organisations have proposed that human rights principles should be applied to communications surveillance practices, and that these should include requiring states the ensure the integrity of communications and ICT systems – something that many countries (including South Africa) have failed to do as they have insisted that all communications networks should be surveillance-enabled. This means that no one in South Africa can communicate with a reasonable expectation of privacy (Duncan 2012; Necessary and Proportionate Principles 2013).

Unlike Mansell's principles, the WSIS civil society principles do recognise that the pursuit of profit should not structure communications choices in the main. Yet, like Mansell's principles, they place emphasis on the centrality of human rights as a foundational principle. Both sets of principles fail to recognise that human rights can play a conservative rather than transformative role, in that they can channel the struggle for a most just society into a struggle for the ability to enjoy rights and freedoms as individuals. However, unless the struggle attacks the foundations of inequality, namely the distribution of wealth in society, the ability to individuate – including through communications – may remain confined to a select few in society.

While these principles are broad enough to capture important concepts that information society-speak tends to sideline, two other important principles that should be considered are those of relevance and the building of local productive capacities. Policies should not impose ICTs as panaceas to development problems when they cannot possibly play that role, and should not promote ICTs at the expense of other sectors that may need to be developed before ICTs can become fully integrated into social life. The take-up and use of ICTs should actually extend the range of human informational and communications possibilities, including for traditionally more marginalised sectors of society, such as women, the aged and people with disabilities. Otherwise ICTs may be taken up and used only by those social groups that have the human, technical and financial resources to appropriate ICTs first. Furthermore, North–South disparities can be reversed only if southern countries build industrial capacities to manufacture ICTs themselves. Unless the political economy of ICT ownership and control is taken seriously in ICT policy-making, the realities of existing North–South power relations are likely to trump the high-minded ideals proposed by Mansell and civil society.

12

5. WHAT SHOULD A CONVERGED ICT POLICY LOOK LIKE? STATIST VERSUS DEMOCRATIC MODELS

What would an alternative ICT policy look like? A policy that avoids the traps of information society/knowledge society discourses, and promotes a more meaningful integration of ICTs in the cycle of human development? Ewan Sutherland (2014, 179–186) has made the very cogent point that telecommunications are not nearly as contested ideologically as the media, which impoverishes debate about the sector and its future direction, and allows the 'Washington Consensus model of telecommunications' to remain unchallenged as the dominant paradigm. He is correct: telecommunications scholarship lacks a radical tradition, even a critical tradition, that is orientated towards transformative social change, rather than being purely observational, and that actively seeks such change. Yet he has also noted that no operational models of a politically radical telecommunications system are in operation elsewhere. The policies proposed by the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the newly established Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) do not break significantly with the approach adopted by the African National Congress (ANC), namely to regulate capitalism to achieve public interest objectives.

As welcome and challenging as his contribution is, Sutherland glosses over important differences in left-wing politics, flattening out different organisational traditions as being variations of socialism, when in fact they are not. While the EFF embraces anti-capitalism, it does not embrace socialism. The SACP does promote socialism in theory, but a highly Stalinised version which bears little resemblance to democratic socialisation. Noticeably absent from all these formulations, including Sutherland's critique of them, is the question of democracy, which must not be reduced to formal representative democracy (where democratic participation is conflated with voting in elections) or to participatory democracy (where people participate in key decision-making processes, but still lack the power to change society fundamentally, as individuals have different capacities to participate in unequal societies). Rather, democracy is understood here as a system of participation that allows a society's citizens equality of access to the means of decision-making for key decisions that structure their lives. This form of democracy will necessarily involve a level of representation, but where participation is realised more fully and where direct democracy is considered to be a foundational principle of a social order, rather than a threat to it. Sutherland assumes that nationalisation is an inherently radical demand, but it can also be reactionary. After all, the fascists of the 1930s nationalised. Absent from his critique too is the difference between nationalisation and socialisation: where the former involves state control of a company, the latter involves democratic control of a company by its workers or users (or both). Granted, nationalisation may be a necessary condition for socialist ownership, but it is not a sufficient condition. Statist approaches to ICTs, including nationalisation and central

13

planning, risk leading to policies and practices that are top-down, inefficient (as they are unable to respond to user needs directly) and susceptible to elite capture and corruption: problems which Sutherland rightfully critiques. But what he misses is that these practices cannot be understood as radical in and of themselves, and certainly not socialist (understood here as workers' control over the means of production, not as state ownership and central planning).

Venezuela's ICT policy provides an interesting example of a more people-centred approach. The country has nationalised key industries and clearly places itself on the left of the political spectrum, but cannot be considered socialist as the capitalist state remained even after Hugo Chavez took power, which is why his coming to power and others with similar policies in Latin America has been dubbed 'the pink tide'. Furthermore, Venezuela has taken an authoritarian turn, with government crackdowns on opposition groups in the wake of the 2013 elections (Article 19: 2013), although there are signs of the US overstating the extent of the democratic deficit for self-serving ends (Carasik 2014). However, Chavez's administration achieved significant gains for workers and the poor, given the massive public support for radical social policies (Saunois 2012). At a time when more southern countries have rushed to privatise their telecommunications service providers, in 2007 the administration re-nationalised Venezuela's own (CANTV). The government did so as part of a broader effort to reclaim public services from the private sector, arguing that nationalisation was necessary to ensure that the company met its social obligations, especially to poorer users and rural areas (Buxton 2010).

Yet, significantly, the transformation of CANTV did not stop with re-nationalisation. The company also helped establish grassroots working groups and workers' cooperatives to democratise the company, both at the points of production and consumption. According to Transnational Institute researcher, Daniel Chavez, this they did to move beyond a statist approach, where 'all activism and protagonism [sic] in social life must be in the hands of the state' (Buxton 2010). Chavez argued that community participation kept the parastatal's management on its toes, by assisting it to be guided by 'good, socially-driven ideas' (ibid.). CANTV maintains that re-nationalisation with an element of socialisation has allowed it to expand the country's fixed-line network and achieve higher than average levels of tele-density (the number of telephone lines in a particular area) in the region, improve its network readiness, encouraged it to invest in ICT development and achieve a 100 per cent mobile penetration. The company aims to reinvest any profits in social projects, rather delivering them to shareholders as dividends (Figuera, Cardinale and Silva 2012). In addition to the transformation of CANTV, the country developed a National Plan for Telecommunications that was divided into six thematic areas: access to ICTs, technological sovereignty and independence, transformation of the state, the use and application of ICTs as enabling development tools, and the development of

an inclusive communications model. This plan encompasses foundational principles that could also be relevant to other countries in the global South.

Drawing on the lessons learned from Venezuela, as well as the recommendations of Mansell and civil society on WSIS, a radical vision for ICTs would focus on promoting a society where everyone can practise the right to communicate through ICTs, and use this right to develop to their fullest human potential. To achieve this vision, policy-makers should enable policies to come into being that enable users to practise the right to communicate through ICTs. This would ensure that policies are resourced appropriately, so that they do not task the government and state with unfunded mandates, and should include a process of ongoing review to ensure that the policies are fit for purpose – if they are not, then adjustments can be made quickly.

This mission would translate into objectives that include spearheading the development of the ICT industry and indigenous technologies and capabilities; building local capacities of ICT users to enjoy sovereignty and self-reliance in the 'globalised' society and economy; supporting local culture and identity through the use of ICTs and nurturing local talent. Furthermore, in the post-Snowden era, a people-driven ICT policy would aim to ensure the freedom, independence and security of communications over ICTs. An ICT policy would also consider promoting ubiquitous communications, which aim to allow users to access information anytime, anywhere, anyhow, depending on the choice of the user, as well as dialogic communications, so that users have the ability both to receive and impart information, knowledge and ideas, and not just be the recipients of messages from a few information providers. These objectives would help move ICT policies beyond the conventional information-society-based frameworks that reinforce rather than challenge dominant power relations in the sector, while at the same time not falling into a Luddite trap of rejecting ICTs in favour of legacy media.

Needless to say, such a policy needs to emphasise the importance of ICT access, so that no one is denied access to ICTs on the basis of their position in society, while also promoting the use of ICTs to ensure social inclusion. The policy would promote technological sovereignty and independence, and national self-reliance in ownership and control of the sector, thereby ensuring that it does not become dependent on other countries for its ICT growth and development. However, many southern countries may not enjoy the economies of scale and scope necessary to break dependency relations, which may require them to explore regional cooperation with like-minded countries. In other words, in promoting sovereignty, policy should not promote narrow national chauvinism, but should be internationalist in outlook.

Another area that the policy would need to touch on is ICTs and environmental sustainability, given the tendency of the sector to generate large amounts of 'e-waste', and the temptation that northern countries may feel to treat southern countries as their dumping ground. However, recycling may also create jobs and increase the longevity of ICTs that other countries may have dumped because they

15

are not considered to be sufficiently cutting edge. The ICT sector is an exemplar of the adage that production produces consumption, leading to ICTs being discarded prematurely so that their users can keep up with the latest trends. Technological independence includes ensuring that the South does not become tied into entirely unnecessary cycles of conspicuous consumption simply in order for it to prove that it is more 'with-it' than others.

An ICT policy would nurture local talent and ensure that they can become active participants in the public sphere,6 rather than passive consumers. While not prescribing the uses that ICTs could be put to, an ICT policy can identify priority areas and encourage the development of these (e.g., education) where policy enables ICT users to develop the digital literacy needed to be full participants in society, rather than being relegated to the role of spectators or consumers. ICTs have an important role to play in the creation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge to help citizens solve development problems in their communities and workplaces. Local talent will have the means to disseminate their ideas and creative expressions only if policy ensures plurality and diversity in the communications system. ICTs should encourage communities to develop their own spaces for recording, preserving and distributing knowledge that speaks to local needs and provides alternative ways of seeing the world. Women, especially, should be encouraged to become producers of local content, as women's voices are often noticeably absent from the public sphere.

However, ICTs will be domesticated only if users are encouraged to become critical users. While ICTs provide unprecedented access to communications, unsuspecting users can also be hurt – even harmed – by negative online activities such as trolling. Children are particularly vulnerable as they may not have developed the coping skills necessary to deal with the sorts of predatory practices that blight the communications landscape. Unless these coping skills are developed on a bottom-up basis, the government may be tempted to step in and regulate, even censor, ICT content in ways that would amount to interference with users' freedom of expression and access to information rights. In fact, an ICT policy should make censorship wholly unnecessary except in the most extreme cases, by empowering users to reject all forms of discrimination and exploitation (e.g., hate speech, racism, sexism and ethnicism), to respect a diversity of views, and discourage intolerance of people who disagree with those views. These digital skills are absolutely necessary to ensure that users practise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship online. The development of critical ICT users needs to start at school level, given the reality that more young people are highly active online. Schools should offer foundational courses, and possibly more advanced courses later on, in media literacy. These courses should help students to not just take this content at face value, but also to cope with offensive and even threatening ICT users, such as stalkers and trolls.

At the same time, an ICT policy would set a framework for the transformation of the state, to improve effectiveness and transparency. While state ownership of

the most strategic institutions in ICT – especially those networks that comprise the communications backbone – is undoubtedly a necessary condition for the benefits of ICTs to be generalised, it is by no means a sufficient condition. This is because state-owned entities that are not managed in a participatory fashion are likely to become lumbering, inefficient beasts. But there can be no doubt that the profit motive needs to be removed from how they operate. This framework should encourage the setting up of an independent, converged regulator and a single Ministry of Communications that focuses on facilitating the right to communicate and on enabling access to the means of communication, rather than becoming a communicator in its own right. This means that ICT policy should counsel strongly against the establishment of ministries of information (if they do not exist) or their maintenance (if they do exist). Governments may well be tempted to address ICT disparities by inserting themselves into the communications space and becoming communicators in their own right, but this approach bleeds much-needed resources away from more democratic ICT initiatives and invariably disposes the government towards propaganda.

An ICT policy would also ensure that all state-owned media organisations are transformed into public media, and that there is public participation in the development of public media models. However, public broadcasters will remain relevant only if their mandates are reconsidered in the light of technological convergence. This may well mean transforming public service broadcasters into public service communicators that move beyond allocative forms of communication, and incorporate audience views through, for instance, drawing on user-generated content. If public service broadcasters transform in this fashion, they strengthen the possibilities of them maintaining and even growing their youth audiences, given that many young people are growing up with the expectation of being interacted with, rather than being spoken to on a top-down, one-way basis.

6. CONCLUSION

It is tempting for policy-makers to promote the convergence of ICTs, by drawing on recycled policies and perspectives that makes a business case for convergence before they make a public case. Countries like South Africa have done themselves no favours by embracing problematic concepts such as the 'information society'. ICT policy frameworks tend to ignore two important, interrelated concepts: power and democracy, and South Africa is no exception to this general rule. Unless the power relations that structure ICTs are challenged and changed, the benefits of ICTs are unlikely to be realized, except for a lucky few. Yet it will not be possible to develop ICT policies underpinned by alternative first principles unless democracy is taken more seriously. Policy-makers may well argue that the ICT sector is technically complex, and requires specialist expertise to shape it. But at the same time, more ordinary citizens have a basic working knowledge of ICTs as these become integrated

into their lives. The organic, experiential knowledge of users can easily be underrated and even undermined, while specialist knowledge, which may well be tied to vested interests in the industry, may be overvalued. ICT users should play a fundamental role in saying how the ICT sector should be shaped in their own best interests and should participate in its governance – an essential feature of socialisation.

Policy-making also needs to encourage a genuine ideological contest in the ICT space, as the sector risks inheriting the ideological weaknesses of the legacy telecommunications sector – with its quasi-religious adherence to the precepts of regulated neo-liberalism (not necessarily a contradiction in terms) – rather than the ideological strengths of the media sector, with its strong democratic, public interest-driven practices and critical intellectual traditions. But this does not have to be: by allowing a true cross-pollination of sectors, a set of first principles that really do speak to the aspirations of the citizens of the global South could well emerge. This article is a tentative attempt to encourage just that.

NOTES

1   This article draws on work I undertook for the Media Policy and Democracy Project and the Right2Know Campaign on South Africa's ICT policy review, which was underway at the time of writing, as well as for the Zimbabwean chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. Misa commissioned me to assist them in developing an alternative ICT policy framework for Zimbabwe. This article reflects some of my thinking developed over this period.

2   This is in spite of the fact that Icasa regulates both broadcasting and telecommunications.

3   Icasa's approach is slightly different from Malaysia's, in that the South African parliament chose not to license content services, on freedom of expression grounds.

4   The Washington Consensus is understood here as neoliberal reforms favoured historically by multilateral institutions to rescue ailing economies, including an emphasis on global competitiveness, tight monetary policy and the rolling back of the state from public sector service provision through privatisation and commercialisation of public services. Sutherland makes the argument that the Washington consensus model of telecommunications diverges from classic neoliberalism in that it does not involve freedom from regulation and government control, but collaboration between telecommunications operators, regulators and government, with the operators shaping the market through lobbying and litigation. This means that the market is far more tolerant of regulation than in other sectors (Sutherland 2014, 173). While this distinction is debatable, this debate is not the focus of the article.

5   By politically radical I mean anti-capitalist or democratic socialist perspectives on ICTs, although Sutherland and I do not see eye to eye on this definition, as should be evident from this article.

6   I associate myself with arguments made by Colin Sparks and Nicholas Garnham that,

notwithstanding the many theoretical and empirical flaws embedded in Jürgen Habermas' conception of the public sphere, it remains a relevant concept to aspire to as a singular sphere where common opinion can be formed and society improved through critique. This concept remains as relevant (if not more so) in the digital media space as it was in the analogue media space. See Sparks (2000, 140) and Garnham (quoted in Webster 2004, 361).

REFERENCES

Adam, L. and A. Gillwald. 2007. 'The Political Economy of ICT Policy Making in Africa: Historical Contexts of Regulatory Frameworks, Policy Performance, Research Questions and Methodological Issues.' http://www.aercafrica.org/documents/ICT_project_working_papers/Adam_Gillwald_The_Political_EconomyofICTPolicyMaking.pdf

Alampay, E. 2006. 'Beyond Access to ICTs: Measuring Capabilities in the Information Society.' International Journal of Education and Development using ICTs 2 (3): <page count>.

Article 19. 2013, April 24. 'Venezuela: Critical Situation for Free Speech Post-Election.' http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/3713/en/ (accessed December 23, 2014).

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). 2011. 'Enduring Concepts: Communications and Media in Australia.' Regulatory report. http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/_assets/main/lib310665/Enduring_Concepts.pdf (accessed September 12, 2014).

Barker, J. 2001. 'Is No Policy a Policy Goal?' In Media, Democracy and Renewal in Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on Media Reforms in the Global Age, ed. K. Tomaselli and H. Dunn, , 90–109. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Benjamin, P. 2003. The Universal Service Agency's Telecentre Programme: 1998–2000. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Berger, G. 2011. 'The Silliness of Policy Silos: Broadband and Broadcast in South Africa.' Presentation for the International Association of Media and Communications Research, Istanbul, July 15.

Buxton, N. 2010. 'What Should a 21st Century "Socialist" Telecommunications Company look Like?' Interview with Daniel Chavez. http://www.tortillaconsal.com/tortilla/es/node/5456 (accessed October 10, 2014).

Calandro, E., A. Gillwald, M. Moyo, and C. Stork. 2010. 'Comparative Sector Performance Review 2009/2010: Towards Evidence-Based ICT Policy and Regulation,' Volume 2, policy paper 2. http://www.researchictafrica.net/publications/Policy_Paper_Series_Towards_Evidence-based_ICT_Policy_and_Regulation_-_Volume_2/Vol_2_Paper_5_-_Comparative_ICT_Sector_Performance_Review_2009_2010.pdf (accessed September 12, 2014).

Carasik, L. 2014. 'The US should Respect Venezuela's Democracy', Al Jazeera, February 25. http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/2/the-us-should-respectvenezuelasdemocracy.html (accessed December 23, 2014).

Castells, M. 2000. 'The rise of the network society.' In The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Volume 1. Oxford: Blackwell.

Chuma, W. and D. Moyo. 2010. Media Policy in a changing Southern Africa: Critical Reflections on Media Reforms in the Global Age. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

DeMaagd, K. 2008. 'Pervasive Versus Productive: The Case of Mobile Phones in Developing Economies.' GlobDev 2008, Paper 3. http://aisel.aisnet.org/globdev2008/3

Diga, K. 2008. 'Mobile Cellphones and Poverty Reduction: Technology Spending Patterns and Poverty Level Change Among Households in Uganda.' Unpublished paper. Workshop on The Role of Mobile Technologies in Fostering Social Development. Sao Paolo, Brazil, June 2–3. http://www.w3.org/2008/02/MS4D_WS/papers/position_paper-diga-2008pdf.pdf (accessed October 10, 2014).

Donovan, K. and A. Martin. 2012. 'The Rise of African SIM Registration: Mobility, Identity, Surveillance and Resistance'. Information Systems and Innovation Group Working Paper no. 186. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

Duncan, J. 2011. 'Monitoring and Defending Freedom of Expression and Privacy on the Internet in South Africa.' Internet Rights and Democratisation 1, Global Information Society Watch. Johannesburg: Association for Progressive Communications. http://www.giswatch.org/sites/default/files/southafrica_gisw11_up_web.pdf (accessed October 10, 2014).

Economic Sectors and Employment Cluster. 2010. '2010/11 – 2012/13 Industrial Policy and Action Plan (IPAP).' Presentation to Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry, February 23.

Figuera, C., Y. Cardinale, and F. Silva. 2012. 'Information and Communications Technologies for Social Inclusion: Experiences in Venezuela.' Presentation at the 4th Global Information Infrastructure and Networking Symposium (GIIS) 2012, Choroní, Venezuela.

Freedom House. 2014. 'Map of Freedom.' Freedom in the World 2014 (report), https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2014#.VJk2ZsDWA (accessed December 23, 2014).

Fuchs, C. 2012. 'Capitalism or Information Society? The Fundamental Question of the Present Structure of Society.' European Journal of Social Theory 16 (4): 413–434.

Kwaku Kyem, P. A. 2012. 'Is ICT the Panacea to sub-Saharan Africa's Development Problems? Rethinking Africa's Contentious Engagement with the Global Information Society.' Progress in Development Studies 12 (2-3): 231–244.

Leye, V. 2007. 'Unesco's Road towards Knowledge Societies.' Javnost – The Public 14 (4): 84–85.

Mansell, R. 2009. 'The Information Society and ICT Policy: A Critique of the Mainstream Vision and an Alternative Research Framework.' LSE Research Online. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/24990/1/The_Information_Society_and_ICT_Policy_(LSERO).pdf (accessed September 13, 2014).

Ministry of Communications. 2013. 'National Integrated ICT Policy Green Paper.' Government Gazette no. 37261. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Necessary and Proportionate Principles. 2013. 'International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance.' https://en.necessaryandproportionate.org/ (accessed October 3, 2014).

Nigerian Ministerial Committee on ICT Policy Harmonisation. 2012. 'National ICT Policy': 8.

Nulens, G. and L. Audenhove. 1999. 'An Information Society in Africa? An Analysis of the Information Society Policy of the World Bank, ITU and ECA.' International Communications Gazette 61 (6): 451–471.

Odendaal, N. 2014. 'Fears of Propaganda, Fragmentation emerge as Communications Department Divided.' Engineering News, May 7. http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/fears-of-propaganda-fragmentation-emerge-as-communications-department-divided-2014-05-27 (accessed September 12, 2014).

Oyedemi, T. and Z. Lesame. 2005. 'South Africa: An Information Society?' In New Media, Technology and Policy in Developing Countries, ed. Z. Lesame, 76. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Perry, A. 2012. 'Africa Rising.' Time, December 3. http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2129831,00.html (accessed September 12, 2014).

Phakati, B. 2014. 'Departments in Turf War over Digital TV Process.' Business Day, November 12. http://www.bdlive.co.za/business/technology/2014/11/12/departments-in-turf-war-over-digital-tv-process (accessed December 23, 2014).

Reporters without Borders. 2014. 'Africa.' In World Press Freedom Index 2014 (report), http://rsf.org/index2014/en-africa.php (accessed December 23, 2014).

Right 2 Know Campaign. 2014. 'R2K Secret State of the Nation Report 2014: Trends, Patterns and Problems in Secrecy.' http://www.r2k.org.za/wp-content/uploads/R2K-secrecy-report-2014.pdf (accessed October 14, 2014).

Saunois, T. 2012. 'Venezuela Presidential Election, Chavez Comfortably secures Victory over Neoliberal Right.' The Socialist, October 2012, http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/international/Americas/Venezuela/15408/10-10-2012/venezuela-presidential-election (accessed September 11, 2014).

SoS – Support Public Broadcasting Coalition. n.d. 'Ministerial Instability and ICT Fragmentation offers No Good Story to Tell.' Press statement of the SoS – Support Public Broadcasting Coalition. http://www.supportpublicbroadcasting.co.za/blog/entry/ministerial_instability_and_ict_fragmentation_offer_south_africa_no_good_st/ (accessed September 5, 2014).

Souter, D. 2009. 'The APC ICT Policy Handbook.' Association for Progressive Communication: 8. <pse check this entry>

Sparks, C. 2000. 'The Global, the Local and the Public Sphere.' In The New Communications Landscape: Demystifying Media Globalization, ed. G. Wang, J. Servaes and A. Goonasekera, 74–95. London: Routledge.

Sutherland, E. 2014. 'Towards an Alternative Vision for Telecommunications: The Economic Freedom Fighters and the South African Communist Party.' Communicatio 40 (2): 172–190.

Udemans, C. 2014. 'SoS Coalition Opposes Communications Restructuring, Ousting of Carrim.' Human IPO, May 27. http://www.humanipo.com/news/44445/sos-coalition-opposes-communications-restructuring-ousting-of-carrim/ (accessed September 11, 2014).

Webster, F. 2004. The Information Society Reader. London: Routledge.

Williams, R. 1973. 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory'. New Left Review 82 (Nov–Dec): 3–16.

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AMONG GHANAIAN UNIVERSITIES

Robert Hinson
The Business School
University of the Free State, South Africa
honsonrobert@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory study that brings to the fore the extent to which universities in Ghana report on their sustainability performance. It explores the issue of whether Ghanaian universities report on their sustainability performance, as well as the dimensions of sustainability they report on. A framework based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines and campus sustainability assessment tools was used as the basis for investigating sustainability reporting among the six biggest universities in Ghana. Despite the fact that none of the six universities had stand-alone sustainability reports, they all reported on their university sustainability performance through websites and annual reports, despite not explicitly claiming to be addressing sustainability. It was also noted that there is variable coverage of sustainability issues among the universities investigated. It appears that sustainability reporting in Ghanaian universities, while still in its infancy, is emerging. Universities in developing economy contexts might be encouraged to explicitly address and report sustainability issues through 'soft' regulations which address the imperative and content of sustainability reporting.

22

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become a paradigm within which environmental and social issues involving quality of life have come to be regarded as key ingredients for socio-economic progress (Nkamnebe 2011, 217; Palma, De Oliveira and Viacava 2011, 252). The sustainability perspective on development implies that due consideration is given to the development needs of all stakeholders (both present and future) in the allocation of current resources for immediate development (Emanuel and Adams 2011, 81). The sustainability perspective is therefore synonymous with concepts like triple bottom line (economic, social and environmental) thinking and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Indeed, Carroll and Shabanna (2010, 86) argue that these related terms are competing to be accepted as descriptors of the field. Other scholars such as Fortanier, Kolk and Pinkse (2011, 666) and Hahn and Kühnen (2013, 6) consider sustainability, CSR and the triple bottom line as <consistent?> <interchangeable? related?> concepts. In this article, therefore, sustainability will be considered as a broad term synonymous with triple bottom line thinking and CSR practice.

In response to growing expectations and pressures from society in respect of environmental sustainability, socially responsible action and accountability (Guzman and Becker-Olsen 2010, 203; Porter and Kramer 2006, 1), organisations are increasingly engaging in and disclosing their social, environmental, economic and safety-related performances. Making periodic disclosures of such information is becoming known as 'sustainability reporting' (Fonseca, Macdonald and Dandy et al. 2011, 22). The issue of sustainability reporting has become a modern-day global concept, leading to a paradigm shift in the ways in which performance reporting is done by businesses and organisations, be they public or private, profit-making or non-profit (KPMG 2011, 3; Mussari and Monfardini 2010, 489). According to the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (2012, 20), at least 5 800 sustainability reports were produced during 2011. In addition, 95 per cent of the world's 250 largest companies, representing various industries, reported their sustainability performances in 2011 (KPMG 2011, 6). In essence, reporting is now the norm, not the exception (ibid, 12).

Despite the apparent importance of sustainability reporting, however, the level of such reporting in universities, when compared to corporations, still seems low (Lozano 2011, 75). Fonseca et al. (2011, 23) note in relation to sustainability reporting that 'few studies are addressing the perspectives of the education sector, let alone its higher education fraction'. Vaughter, Wright and McKenzie et al. (2013, 2265) note that especially limited in the sustainability literature are comparative

studies focusing on sustainability reporting among universities. The present study is therefore an attempt to bridge this gap in the literature by investigating sustainability reporting by universities within the developing economy of Ghana. The objectives of this study are therefore to

1. investigate the extent to which public universities in Ghana report their sustainability performances; and
2. identify key dimensions of the sustainability disclosure of universities in Ghana.

The article is organised as follows: the subject of the article is introduced, i.e., sustainability reporting, with a focus on the need to investigate this phenomenon within the context of universities. Next, the authors employ institutional and stakeholder theory in an attempt to understand why firms in general report their sustainability performances. Thereafter, the authors focus on sustainability reporting imperatives within the context of universities, before discussing the research framework adopted for the study, the methodology and the results of the study. The article ends with conclusions drawn from the study as well as proposed future research directions.

2. THEORETICAL INSIGHTS INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IMPERATIVE

Society's increasing demand for accountability and transparency in organisational operations has been widely discussed in academic literature (cf. Lozano 2011; Porter and Kramer 2006). In line with these demands, organisations are increasingly disclosing their social, environmental, economic and safety-related performances. According to Lee (2011, 281), the intensity and coherence of societal pressures which organisations experience can be said to be largely dependent on the configuration of external influences. According to Lee (2011, 281), this may include distal institutional influences as well as proximate stakeholder influences. The ability of such an interplay of institutional and stakeholder influences to trigger sustainability performance and reportage among organisations is alluded to in the literature (cf. Fortanier et al. 2011, 668; Lee 2011, 281). Such an interplay of institutional and stakeholder pressure therefore makes a combination of institutional and stakeholder theories useful for understanding why organisations engage in sustainability reporting.

Institutional theory examines how and why organisations tend to look and act the same (Miles 2012, 150). Thus, the theory is designed to explain homogeneity in behaviours among organisations operating within the same field (Mussari and Monfardini 2010, 488). According to institutional theory, institutions (including laws, regulations, customs, social and professional norms, culture and ethics) exert constraining influences on organisations within the same field, and this, in turn, leads to isomorphism among organisations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 147). DiMaggio

24

and Powell (ibid, 150) note that three types of isomorphic pressure are exerted on organisations: coercive, normative and mimetic. Coercive isomorphism refers to situations in which organisations are influenced by some societal expectations/ pressures from entities with resources on which the organisations depend (Miles 2012, 145). Mimetic isomorphism refers to organisations' imitation of other organisations which they perceive to be successful as a result of uncertainty in their operating environment (Mussari and Monfardini 2010, 489). Normative isomorphism refers to situations where organisations look or act the same as a result of following professional standards and practices established by education, training, professional networks and the movement of employees between firms (Miles 2012, 146). In summary, the preceding discussions point to the fact that coercive isomorphism (e.g., government regulations), mimetic processes (copying successful firms) and normative pressures (e.g., professional norms) may cause organisations operating under the same environmental conditions to adopt sustainability reporting as a form of behaviour. In line with coercive isomorphism, for example, Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010, 203) note that 'external pressure from national governments and multinational organisations such as Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank and the Global Compact (GC) forces companies to become more responsible as they are required to document and report on their citizenship activities'.

On the other hand, the central theme of stakeholder theory is that businesses have obligations towards a broader group of stakeholders than just shareholders (Donaldson and Preston 1995, 87; Hillenbrand and Money 2007, 266). It therefore offers a new way in which to organise thinking about businesses' responsibility, by suggesting that the needs of shareholders cannot be met without satisfying (to some degree) the needs of other stakeholders (Jamali 2008, 217). Stakeholders identified in the literature include employees, customers, investors, suppliers and shareholders, the media, trade associations, non-governmental organisations and other interest groups (Maignan, Ferrell and Ferrell 2005, 959). Stakeholder theory posits that organisations can change their social behaviour in response to pressure from salient stakeholder groups (Lee 2011, 284; Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997, 859). According to Mitchell et al. (1997, 864), the identification of salient stakeholders and their impact on the firm's decisions at any time is based on stakeholders possessing one (or a combination) of the following relationship attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. Mitchell et al. (ibid, 854) explain this as meaning that <(1) the stakeholder has the power to influence the firm; (2) the stakeholder has a legitimate relationship with the firm; and (3) the stakeholder has an urgent claim on the firm>. Within this framework of relationship attributes, stakeholders are able to influence firms' decisions and actions, and thus stakeholder influences can compel firms to conform to their stakeholders' expectations of accountability by reporting their sustainability performances (Hahn and Kühnen 2013, 5). The ability of stakeholders to exert such

influence on firms' behaviour is intrinsic to the classic definition of stakeholders (see Freeman 1984, 52) who are defined as any group or individual who can affect/ is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Guzman and Becker-Olsen (2010) state, for example, that consumer actions have been instrumental in causing McDonald's to use recyclable packaging, while Starbucks had to move to more fair-trade suppliers following consumer boycotts. The emergence of socially responsible investors (SRI) may also be a coercive factor in firms reporting more thoroughly on their sustainability performances – especially in their annual reports.

The foregoing discussion of the institutional and stakeholder theories have shed light on the fact that institutions and stakeholders serve as sources of pressure that can influence organisational behaviour through various mechanisms. Indeed, Lee (2011, 668) argues that 'the two dimensions are interdependent in that stakeholders draw legitimacy and power from institutions, and institutions are often actualised through stakeholder mechanisms'. Citing Greif (2006), Lee (2011, 284) argues that although institutions may have had enormous influence on the behaviour of firms, without concrete actors to activate institutional mechanisms, institutions remain distal mechanisms that can be ignored by organisations. In addition, he argues that empirical studies point to the critical role of social actors as interpreters and conduits of institutional pressure. On the other hand, Fortanier et al. (2011, 668) argue that 'institutional differences also play out in the relation of a firm with its stakeholders'. This is because institutions have the ability to strengthen stakeholder claims by serving as sources of legitimacy and normative authority (Lee 2011, 285). As such, the availability and/or effectiveness of institutions influence stakeholders' abilities to make claims on organisations. In essence, the two dimensions (institutions and stakeholders) are interdependent in that stakeholders draw legitimacy and power from institutions, while institutions are often actualised through stakeholder mechanisms (ibid.).

In a more illustrative sense, stakeholders like governments – through formal mechanisms such as regulations or stakeholders like communities through informal institutions (e.g. cultural norms) – can compel organisations towards isomorphic conformity in relation to sustainability reporting in the organisations' bid to gain legitimacy or social acceptance. Additionally, normative pressures toward sustainability reporting from stakeholders (such as professional accounting associations) can be enforced through professional codes of conduct or ethical codes. In line with mimetic isomorphism, Miles (2012, 146) argues that, in the face of uncertainty, managers of organisations can get trapped in 'doing what everybody is doing'. This raises the possibility that in the face of uncertainty about whether or not to engage in and report sustainability performance, managers may succumb to competitive pressure and mimic the sustainability reporting of their competitors. In essence, the preceding discussions point to the fact that organisations are compelled by the interplay between stakeholders and institutions to undertake and report their

sustainability performances. As such, the imperative for sustainability reporting by organisations may be derived from the interplay between stakeholders and institutions.

3. UNIVERSITIES AND THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IMPERATIVE

Institutions of higher learning (particularly universities) are important to the global drive for sustainable development. According to a conference report on the 4th UNESCO chair conference on Higher Education for Sustainable Development (HESD), 'the university campus is an important testing field for change – not only for new knowledge but also for possible futures. The campus can be a site showcasing innovative examples of sustainability' (Muller-Christ, Sterling and Van Dam-Mieras et al. 2014, 135). According to Krizek, Newport and White et al. (2012), universities' sustainability practices can include: chairing academic programmes (undergraduate and graduate); managing student-led efforts; directing campus-wide research institutes; interacting with campus operations (e.g., housing and dining, facilities management (FM); participating in campus-wide sustainability steering committees; and teaching sustainability-focused courses. These sustainability performances may be reported in newspapers, on television and websites, in annual reports or in stand-alone environmental or sustainability reports (Hinson, Boateng and Madichie 2010, 28; Lozano 2011, 68).

Universities are exposed to the interests of various stakeholders including government, stakeholders, funding agencies as well as university ranking establishments (Muller-Christ et al. 2014, 136; Tilbury, Crawley and Berry 2004, 4). Indeed, rankings such as the Beyond Grey Pinstripes biennial surveys, for instance, consider social and environmental impact in their ranking of business schools (Tilbury et al. 2004, 4). In line with the preceding theoretical discussions relating to the interplay between stakeholders and institutions, it is expected that in an attempt to satisfy various stakeholder demands, universities as organisations will report their efforts at sustainability in order to retain legitimacy and to ensure social acceptance. In a more illustrative sense, universities may be under normative pressure from higher education associations and other international mechanisms (like sustainability declarations and other agreements such as the Stockholm Declaration; United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainability Development) or ranking institutions (such as Beyond Grey Pinstripes biennial surveys) to report their sustainability performance. Universities could also follow mimetic processes as a result of competitive pressure from other universities already engaging in sustainability reporting, and as such engage in reporting their own sustainability performances.

Numerous universities are now taking up the practice of sustainability reporting, yet some, like La Trobe University, rank high for the quality of their sustainability

reports (CorporateRegister.com 2013, 8). However, few studies exist on sustainability reporting in higher education institutions (Fonseca et al. 2011, 23). This study is therefore positioned to contribute to the understanding of the extent and content of universities' sustainability reporting from a developing economy context, where sustainability might not be high on the agenda (Guzman and Becker-Olsen 2010) and where authors like Nkamnebe (2011, 226) have called for increased research into the concept of sustainability as a whole.

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This study adopts Fonseca et al.'s (2011, 26) sustainability reporting framework in analysing the state of sustainability reporting in Ghanaian universities. Fonseca et al's framework is a combination of the GRI guidelines and Campus Sustainability Assessment tools. The adoption of the framework is justified on the basis that the GRI guidelines represent a widely recognised sustainability reporting framework, the usefulness of which is acknowledged by many corporations (Leszczynska 2012, 916). Additionally, the GRI guidelines offer core content for reporting what is relevant to all organisations, and indicator protocols that advise on definition, scope, and compilation methods to help organisations do meaningful and comparable reporting on indicators (Fonseca et al. 2011, 27). Also, to cater for the peculiarities imposed by the research context, the Fonseca framework encompasses indicators relating to the incorporation of sustainability in research and curriculum development.

The framework consists of ten categories with 56 indicators. The categories include organisational profile and governance; reporting approach; economic performance; environmental performance; social performance; human rights issues; societal issues; research; curriculum and teaching; green buildings and procurement. The organisational profile and governance dimension relate to disclosures that set the overall context for understanding organisational performance, such as organisational strategy, profile and governance structure (GRI guidelines 2000–2011, 5). Key performance indicators include: a statement from the president; a description of the organisation; the governance structure or processes; commitments to external sustainability initiatives and stakeholder engagement (Fonseca et al. 2011, 29). Reporting approach disclosure considers issues bordering on the reporting period, report scope and boundary reporting standards/guidelines, as well as third-party statements (external assurance). The economic performance disclosure, on the other hand, considers issues like the organisation's impact on the economic conditions of its stakeholders and on economic systems at the local, national and global levels. Key performance indicators include: economic performance, contribution to local economy, and indirect economic impact. The environmental performance disclosure focuses on universities' impacts on living and non-living natural systems, including ecosystems, land, air and water (GRI guidelines 2000–2011, 27), while social

28

performance considers issues bordering on the impacts the university has on the social systems within which it operates, such as issues relating to labour practices and decent work, human rights and society.

The research performance disclosure focuses attention on policy issues relating to sustainability as regards research; research centres/laboratories; research programmes and projects; incentives for sustainability research, funding and grants; and academic production. Curriculum and teaching disclosure, on the other hand, focuses on curriculum sustainability-related policy information; courses relating to sustainability; students taking sustainability-related courses; sustainability literacy assessment; sustainability-related degree programmes; non-curricular teaching initiatives relating to sustainability; and scholarships offered to sustainability-related education, while the green buildings and procurement disclosure considers issues like green buildings and renovations; green spaces; food services; recycled paper; green electronics and green furniture. The framework in Figure 1 represents an attempt to meet the expectations of different groups of stakeholders, including employees, students, the community and society in general.
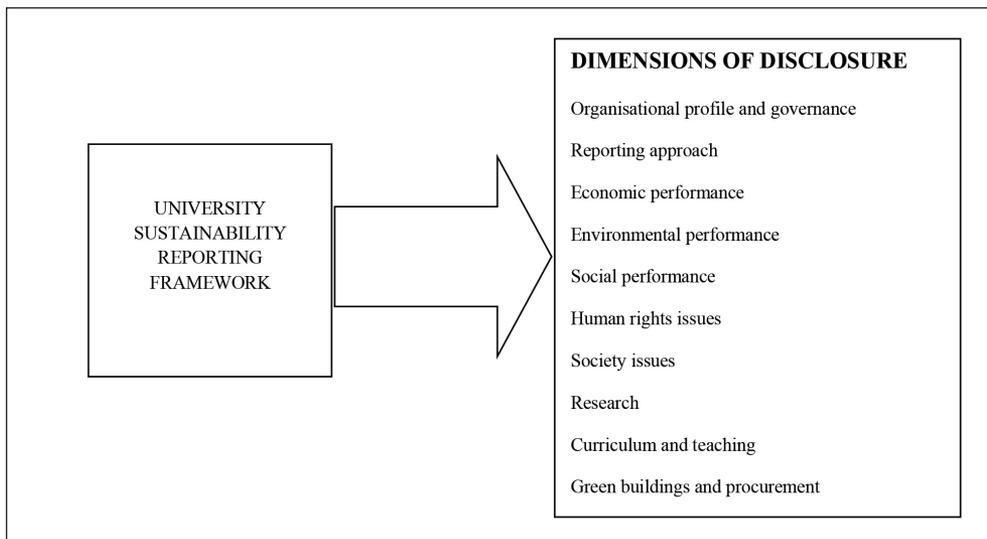
Figure 1:   Framework for university sustainability reporting

Source: Adopted from Fonseca et al. (2011)

5. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts content analysis of university websites and annual reports to evaluate the level of sustainability reporting among Ghanaian universities.

Despite the fact that newspapers, television, websites, annual reports or stand-alone environmental/sustainability reports were potential avenues for sustainability reporting by the investigated universities (Hinson et al. 2010, 28; Lozano 2011, 68), websites and annual reports were employed in this study. The latter two types of media provide a more readily available and accessible source of information for content analysis compared to newspapers and television, and were especially useful in this study since none of the universities investigated published a stand-alone sustainability or environmental report. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005, 1278) describe it, content analysis is 'a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns'. Content analysis has also been argued to refer to 'any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings' (Patton 2002, 453). Content analysis has been employed in various studies, including those of Waters and Tindall (2010, 372) and Hinson et al. (2010, 498), the latter of whom investigated sustainability reportage among banks in Ghana. This study also adopted the cross-sectional sampling technique advocated by Fonseca et al. (2011, 26), which selects the largest companies from particular sectors, nations or regions, according to criteria such as revenue or market capitalisation. In the light of their superior financial resources, large organisations' reports are believed to indicate best practices and trends within their group; as such, following Fonseca et al. (ibid, 27), this study selected the six largest Ghanaian universities by student enrolment, which provides an indirect indication of campus area, endowment, and intensity of teaching and research.

Data collection took place from March 23, 2012 and April 23, 2012. First, the locations of the websites of the sampled universities were identified. The searches also focused on internal search engines and on web menus relating to university administration, governance, accountability, ethics policies, finance and sustainability offices/projects. In the case of the unavailability of such links, popular search engines such as Google and Yahoo! were used to locate the homepage of the universities. In situations where the annual reports of these universities could not be retrieved via the abovementioned search engines, the researchers contacted their public affairs directorate or related offices for the documents. These approaches are consistent with the methods used in similar studies (cf. Fonseca et al. 2011, 26; Hinson et al. 2010, 504–506).

Following Fonseca et al. (2011, 26), this article also adopted a tick-box framework inspired by the GRI G3 guidelines as well as by campus sustainability assessment tools. In addition to its ease of application, the tick-box framework allows for greater objectivity. The adoption of tick-boxes instead of a more sophisticated rating system is explained by the exploratory nature of this study (ibid.) which is aimed at providing an initial description of current practice, and may lay the foundation for future studies

to eventually refine or elaborate on the findings contained herein. Issues raised on the sustainability reporting posture of the selected universities as regards the ten dimensions of this study's adopted framework (with its 56 indicators) were analysed separately within each case and then the findings were compared across all the cases, which is referred to as cross-case analysis (Hinson et al. 2010, 506).

6. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1. Sustainability reporting posture in selected universities <stance?>

This study found that the six Ghanaian public universities do not publish stand-alone sustainability reports; rather their reports on sustainability practices were contained in annual reports and on their official websites. These annual reports were issued in fulfilment of a statutory provision which enjoins the vice-chancellors (as administrative heads of the universities) to report, once a year, to the convocation on the state of the university and, as such, were drawn up in response to institutionalised demands by the university's stakeholders. It may therefore be inferred that the feedback on sustainability performance contained in these annual reports are a response to coercive pressures from salient stakeholders in Ghanaian universities, exercised through statutory/coercive institutions. The <same> reports were <subsequently?> made available on the universities' websites. It must be emphasised that these annual reports did not, however, explicitly claim to address the sustainability performance of the university, and as such contradict Fonseca et al's (2011, 28) findings which indicate that all seven universities investigated in their study explicitly claimed to be addressing 'sustainability' performance.

The present study found that, although the Ghanaian public universities did not explicitly report on their sustainability performance, the content of their annual reports and official websites contained information consistent with the key dimensions of standard sustainability reporting, as advocated by Fonseca et al. (ibid, 26). For instance, based on the analysis of the annual reports and the websites using Fonseca's framework, the highest reporter, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology's (KNUST), disclosed information on 35 (representing 62.50%) of the 56 indicators advocated by Fonseca et al. (ibid.). This figure is higher than that of the University of British Columbia (UBC), which was found to be highest reporter on sustainability performance in Fonseca et al. (ibid, 30) (disclosing information on 30 of the 56 indicators), although UBC claimed to be explicitly addressing and reporting sustainability performance. The results (as percentages) of the sustainability categories, as reported for the various universities investigated in this study, are presented next.

Table 1:   Framework's categories and indicators addressed by universities

Category and indicators	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UMT	UDS	Percentage (%) of universities reporting
Organisational profile and governance							
Statement from the president	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Description of the organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Governance structure or processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Commitment to external sustainability initiatives	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Stakeholder engagement	✓	✓	✓	–	✓	–	66.7
Reporting approach							
Reporting period	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Report scope and boundary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Reporting standard guidelines	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Third-party statement (external assurance)	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Economic performance							
Economic performance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100

Category and indicators	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UMT	UDS	Percentage (%) of universities reporting
Contribution to local community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Indirect economic impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Environmental performance							
Materials	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Energy	-	✓	-	-	-	-	16.7
Water	-	✓	-		-	-	16.7
Biodiversity	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Emissions, effluents, and waste	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Compliance with environmental legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Transportation	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Environmental expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Social performance							
Employment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Labour/ management relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Occupational health and safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100

Category and indicators	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UMT	UDS	Percentage (%) of universities reporting
Training and education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Diversity and opportunity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Human rights							
Investment and procurement policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Non-discrimination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	83.3
Child labour and forced labour	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Security practices	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Indigenous rights	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Society issues							
Impacts on community	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	66.7
Corruption	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Public policy	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Anti-competitive behaviour	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Compliance with general legislation	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	50.0

Category and indicators	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UMT	UDS	Percentage (%) of universities reporting
Research							
Policies related to sustainability in research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Research centres/ labs related to sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Sustainability-related research programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Incentives to sustainability research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Funds and grants for sustainability research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Academic production related to sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Sustainability related research projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Curriculum and teaching							
Policies related to sustainability in curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Courses related to sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Students taking sustainability-related courses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Sustainability literacy assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100

Category and indicators	UG	KNUST	UCC	UEW	UMT	UDS	Percentage (%) of universities reporting
Degree programs related to sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Non-curricular teaching initiatives related to sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Scholarships offered to sustainability related education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Total score	33	35	31	31	31	31	
Total percentage reported	58.9	62.5	55.4	55.4	55.4	55.4	

Key: ✓ - addressed

From Table 1 it is evident that KNUST gave the most comprehensive reportage on sustainability performance among the six universities examined. It disclosed information on 35 (62.5%) of the 56 analysed indicators. This is followed by the University of Ghana (UG), which disclosed information on 33 (58.9%) indicators. The remaining four universities – University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education Winneba (UEW), University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) and University for Development Studies (UDS) – each scored 55.4 per cent, representing coverage on 31 indicators. On the average, each university reported on 32 indicators, thus scoring 57.2 per cent.

These findings seem to contradict observations that, among the laggards in sustainability reporting are players in the educational sector, particularly universities (CorporateRegister.com 2008 cited in Fonseca et al. 2011, 23). This is because, in the case of Ghanaian public universities, as the findings suggest, all six universities analysed disclosed information on their sustainability performance. Perhaps what seems to be driving reporting practices in Ghanaian public universities is growing recognition of public sector accountability (Sciulli 2011), which might be exerting a kind of coercive pressure from societal stakeholders on universities, thereby prompting the latter to communicate their sustainability performances to key stakeholders (Fonseca et al. 2011, 22).

Stakeholder inclusiveness is an important principle of sustainability reporting, as advocated by the study's framework. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of Ghanaian public universities (four of the six) report on their stakeholder engagement, clearly outlining the various stakeholders they engage with, and providing a basis for engaging with those stakeholders. Perhaps the level of such interaction is borne out of a recognition that the different stakeholder groups offer a variety of resources that are essential to the universities' long-term success (Maignan et al. 2005, 960). Also, the universities seem to realise that cultivating a stakeholder-friendly culture that is responsive to the common needs of all stakeholders, can be a source of competitive advantage for them (Leap and Loughry 2004, 27), as can be inferred from the following statement on one of the universities' websites:

In line with stakeholder engagement, a major strategic partner was singled out for special attention due to the key role they play in projecting the University to the outside community and this is the media. An Annual Media Soiree has been initiated which brings management face to face with the media. (KNUST)

7. KEY DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING AMONG GHANAIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Figure 2 presents the overall results of the participating universities' sustainability reporting on the ten dimensions outlined earlier.
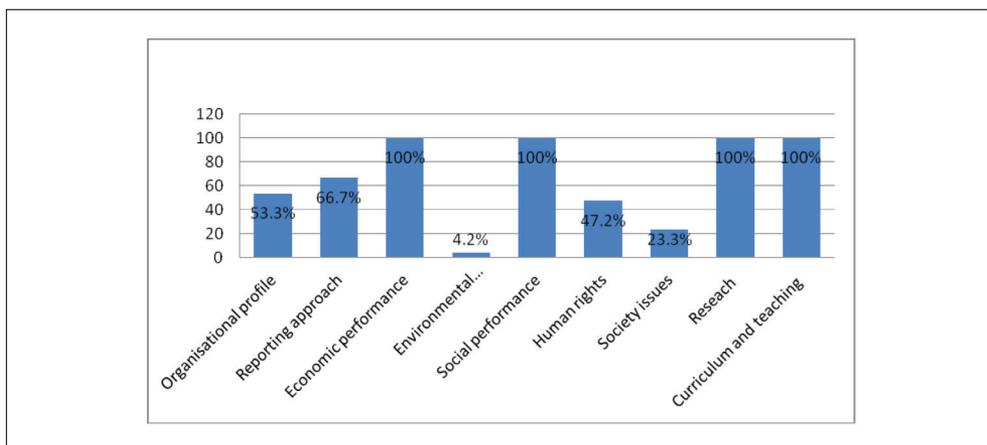
Figure 2: Percentage sustainability reportage on all dimensions among selected universities

Figure 2 shows that there is varied coverage of the sustainability dimensions. In general, the strongest focus is on the economic, social, research, and curriculum and teaching dimensions. There was a tendency among all six universities to disclose

information relating to the abovementioned categories, as demonstrated by them reporting on sustainability practices related to each indicator within the respective categories. Disclosure on information in the social category, for example, revealed issues related to diversity within the university, as indicated in the following statement from the University of Ghana website:

At present, the University welcomes a diverse student body of nearly 45,000 from across all of Ghana and more than 70 countries and territories. With over 200 programmes of study, the University attracts high achieving students from diverse educational and social backgrounds.

Issues disclosed in the research domain, for example, included evidence of sustainability research engagements, as indicated in the following quote from the KNUST website:

The Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) is one of the four research centres of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR)…BIRD engages in multi-disciplinary consultancy and research on contemporary rural development issues aimed at providing a better understanding of how development policies and processes of social, economic and environmental change affect different groups and stakeholders in rural areas. BIRD has played a fundamental role in the economic and social development in rural areas in Ghana over the past 18 years.

In relation to the curriculum and teaching dimensions, the UCC reports:

In response to the changing needs of society and those of the entire Ghanaian education enterprise, the University of Cape Coast has, over the last several years, progressively added to its traditional functions, the training of educational planners … environmentalists, and experts in … water and sanitation.

UMaT reports:

Successful mining engineers from UMaT have the requisite qualities to plan, design and evolve satisfactory solutions to the complex issues associated with mining, operate the mines profitably in the face of the ever changing global economic and social problems as well as to ensure that the mines are operated in an environmentally friendly manner.

With respect to the categories reported by the Ghanaian universities, the reporting of the economic, social, research, and curriculum and teaching dimensions was followed in magnitude by disclosures on reporting approach (66.7%), organisational profile and governance (53.3%), and human rights (47.2%) respectively. The dimensions with minimal disclosure of information were societal issues (23.3%), environmental performance (4.2%), and green building and procurement (0%) respectively. These partly confirm Fonseca et al's (2011, 30) study which found that society-related issues were among the dimensions least addressed.

The Ghanaian public universities' reportage on the economic dimension might be a result of the present study relying on the information available in their annual

reports; a primary avenue for communicating information related to economic performance. This, however, contradicts Fonseca et al's (ibid.) findings which list economic issues as among the dimensions least addressed by universities – this may be attributed to universities in the Fonseca (ibid, 28) study having stand-alone sustainability reports in addition to annual reports. Similarly, consistent with the Fonseca et al. (ibid, 30) findings, the results from this study revealed that none of the reports included a third-party assurance statement, which is deemed an important requirement for sustainability reports (GRI 2012, 66).

There was no disclosure regarding the type of reporting standard used by the universities, or of the green buildings and procurement dimensions. The comprehensive report on the research and the curriculum and teaching dimensions seemed to point to the fact that Ghanaian universities' reporting on sustainability performance is partly in line with key dimensions advocated by the campus sustainability assessment tool. This notwithstanding, most of the indicators in the GRI guidelines were fairly covered in the universities' annual reports and websites.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This exploratory study aimed to evaluate the extent to which Ghanaian universities report on their sustainability performance. The study employed institutional and stakeholder theories to explain the sustainability reporting imperative among organisations – particularly universities. The study employed qualitative content analysis of annual reports and university websites to explore whether Ghanaian universities report on their sustainability performance and disclose the key dimensions of sustainability. A conceptual framework (see Fonseca et al. 2011, 26) was adopted as the basis of the study's analyses.

First, with respect to the objectives of this study, it can be concluded that Ghanaian public universities appreciate their role in sustainable development. Consequently, the universities take steps to disclose information on their performance through annual reports and websites, with the key motive of communicating their efforts and sustainability progress to their stakeholders. Despite some progress, however, it appears that sustainability reporting in Ghanaian universities is still in the early stages, since none of the public universities investigated had a stand-alone sustainability report, nor did they explicitly state (in any form) that they were engaging in sustainability reporting. Also, the findings of the study revealed the relevance and applicability of Fonseca et al's (2011, 26) framework for sustainability reporting in Ghanaian public universities, hence there is the possibility of extending the use of the framework into other developing economies, in Africa in particular.

The findings of the study further pointed to the fact that annual reports, which contained the sustainability performance disclosures of the selected universities, are published in fulfilment of a statutory provision which enjoins the vice-chancellors to

report, once a year, to the convocation on the state of the university. As such, reporting on sustainability performances in annual reports may occur in response to the institutionalised (coercive) demands of the universities' stakeholders. Furthermore, the study established that such efforts towards sustainability reporting may also be in response to growing recognition of public sector accountability, and as such may be the result of coercive pressures stemming from societal expectations of accountability. It can therefore be inferred that sustainability reporting among Ghanaian universities is triggered by the coercive pressures exerted by the universities' stakeholders.

Given these conclusions, this study recommends that key stakeholders further encourage universities, through their institutionalised requirements, to explicitly address sustainability issues in their reporting as this will increase their impact, following their recognition as leaders of thought and practice. Governments, which are key stakeholders of tertiary education in developing economies such as Ghana, can initiate or increase the practice amongst institutions of higher learning by employing measures such as 'soft' regulations (Mussari and Monfardini 2010, 491) on sustainability reporting, through coercive isomorphism. Universities should also learn from the experiences of other corporate sustainability reportees, and incorporate <their know-how> into their own endeavours as learning organisations – this, to better align their systems with best-practice sustainability efforts, especially if such universities aim to attain 'world-class status'.

This study contributes to existing literature on sustainability reporting among universities. However, the focus here was on public universities in Ghana, which exhibit similar leadership and governance structures. Future studies that conduct comparative analyses of sustainability reporting across public and private universities may reveal interesting findings. In addition, a study that explores an understanding of the factors that encourage university administrations to value, assess and report on sustainability would be insightful.

REFERENCES

Carroll, A. B. and K. M. Shabana. 2010. 'The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Review of Concepts, Research and Practice.' *International Journal of Management Reviews* 12: 85–105.

CorporateRegister.com. 2008. 'CR Reporting Awards: Global Winners and Reporting Trends' (accessed <month day, year>).

Corporate Register.com. 2013. 'CR Reporting Awards '13: 2013 Global Winners.' pp. 1–28. (accessed <month day, year>).

DiMaggio, P. J. and W. W. Powell. 1983. 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organisational Fields.' *American Sociological Review* 48: 147–160.

Donaldson, T. and L. E. E. Preston. 1995. 'The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation: Concepts, Evidence, and Implications.' *The Academy of Management Review* 20 (1): 65–91.

Emanuel, R. and J. N. Adams. 2011. 'College Students' Perceptions of Campus Sustainability.' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 12 (1): 79–92.

Fonseca, A., A. Macdonald, E. Dandy and P. Valenti. 2011. 'The State of Sustainability Reporting at Canadian Universities.' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 12 (1): 22–40.

Fortainier, F., A. Kolk and J. Pinkse. 2011. 'Harmonisation in CSR Reporting.' *Management International Review* 51 (5): 665–696.

Freeman, R. 1984. *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder's Approach*. Boston, MA: Pitman.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). 2012. *Annual Report 2011 /12*. pp. 1–70. Amsterdam: GRI.

Global Reporting Initiative. 2000–2011. 'Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.' www.globalreporting.org/guidelines/www.globalreporting.org/reporting/latestguidelines/g31 guidelines/Pages/default.aspx (accessed March 25, 2012).

Guzman, F. and K. Becker-Oslen. 2010. 'Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility: A Brand-Building Tool.' In *Innovative CSR: From Risk Management to Value Creation*, ed. C. Louche, S. O. Idowu and L. W. Filho, 197–219. Sheffield: Greenleaf.

Hahn, R. and M. Kühnen. 2013. 'Determinants of Sustainability Reporting: A Review of Results, Trends, Theory and Opportunities In An Expanding Field of Research.' *Journal of Cleaner Production* 59: 5–21.

Hillenbrand, K. and K. Money. 2007. 'Corporate Responsibility and Corporate Reputation: Two Separate Concepts or Two Sides of the Same Coin?' *Corporate Reputation Review* 10 (4): 261–277.

Hinson, R., R. Boateng and N. Madichie. 2010. 'Corporate Social Responsibility Activity Reportage on Bank Websites in Ghana.' *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 28 (7): 498–518.

Hsieh, H. F. and S. E. Shannon. 2005. 'Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis.' *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–1288.

Jamali, D. 2008. 'A Stakeholder Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility: A Fresh Perspective into Theory and Practice.' *Journal of Business Ethics* 82: 213–231.

KPMG. 2011. *KPMG International Survey of Corporate Responsibility Reporting 2011*. Amsterdam: KPMG.

Krizek, K. J., D. Newport, J. White and A. R. Townsend. 2012. 'Higher Education's Sustainability Imperative: How to Practically Respond?' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 13 (1): 19–33.

Leap, T. and M. L. Loughry. 2004. 'The Stakeholder-Friendly Firm.' *Business Horizons* 47 (2): 27–32.

Lee, M.-D. P. 2011. 'Configuration of External Influences: The Combined Effects of Institutions and Stakeholders on Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies.' *Journal of Business Ethics* 102 (2): 281–298.

Leszczynska, A. 2012. 'Towards Shareholders' Value: An Analysis of Sustainability Reports.' A pre-print paper of Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Lozano, R. 2011. 'The State of Sustainability Reporting in Universities.' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 12 (1): 67–78.

Maignan, I., O. C. Ferrell and L. Ferrell. 2005. 'A Stakeholder Model for Implementing Social Responsibility in Marketing.' *European Journal of Marketing* 39 (9): 956–977.

Miles, J. A. 2012. *Management and Organisation Theory*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mitchell, R. K., B. R. Agle and D. J. Wood. 1997. 'Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Count.' *Academy of Management Review* 22 (4): 853–886.

Muller-Christ, G., S. Sterling, R. van Dam-Mieras, M. Adomßent, D. Fischer and M. Rieckmann. 2014. 'The Role of Campus, Curriculum, and Community in Higher Education for Sustainable Development – A Conference Report.' *Journal of Cleaner Production* 62: 134–137.

Mussari, R. and P. Monfardini. 2010. 'Practices of Social Reporting in Public Sector and Non-Profit Organizations.' *Public Management Review* 12 (4): 487–492.

Nkamnebe, A. D. 2011. 'Sustainability Marketing in the Emerging Markets: Imperatives, Challenges and Agenda Setting.' *International Journal of Emerging Markets* 6 (3): 217–232.

Palma, L. C., L. M. de Oliveira and K. R. Viacava. 2011. 'Sustainability in Brazilian Federal Universities.' *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 12 (3): 250–258.

Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Porter, M. E. and M. R. Kramer. 2006. 'Strategy and Society: The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility.' *Harvard Business Review* 84 (12): 78–92.

Sciulli, N. 2011. 'The Views of Managers from a Local Coastal Council on Sustainability Reporting Issues: An Australian-Based Case Study.' *Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management* 8 (2): 139–160.

Tilbury, D., C. Crawley and F. Berry. 2004. *Education About and for Sustainability in Australian Business Schools*. Report prepared by the Australian Research Institute in Education for Sustainability (ARIES) and Arup Sustainability for the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage. Canberra: <printers>.

Vaughter, P., T. Wright, M. McKenzie and L. Lidstone. 2013. 'Greening the Ivory Tower: A Review of Educational Research on Sustainability in Post-Secondary Education.' *Sustainability* 5 (5): 2252–2271.

Waters, R. D. and N. T. J. Tindall. 2010. 'Marketing Churches on the Internet: An Analysis of the Dialogic Potential of Christian Websites.' *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 15: 369–381.

EVALUATING AUTHORIAL 'OBJECTIVITY' AND 'STANCETAKING' IN REPORTING THE MAKING OF A NEW CONSTITUTION IN ZIMBABWEAN NEWSPAPERS

Collen Sabao
Department of African Languages
Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa
16836243@sun.ac.za
and
Department of English and Communication
Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe, sabaoc@msu.ac.zw

Marianna Visser
Department of African Languages
Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa
mwv@sun.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe held 'fresh' elections on July 31, 2013 under a new constitution. This was in line with the provisions of the Global Political Agreement (GPA), a political power-sharing compromise signed between Zimbabwe's three main political parties, following the heavily disputed 2008 harmonised presidential

43

and parliamentary elections. The GPA established in Zimbabwe a Government of National Unity (GNU). In the road to making a new constitution, political differences and party politicking always seemed to take precedence over national interest. This political polarity in Zimbabwe resulted in the heavy polarity of the media, especially along political ideological grounds. The new constitution-making process and all its problems received heavy coverage in almost all national newspapers. This article analyses the discourse-linguistic notion of 'objectivity' in 'hard' news reports on the new constitution-making process by comparing the textuality of 'hard' news reports from two Zimbabwean national daily newspapers: the government-owned and controlled *Herald* and the privately owned *Newsday*. Focusing on how language and linguistic resources are used evaluatively in ways that betray authorial attitudes and bias in news reporting, the article examines how the news reports uphold or flout the 'objectivity' ideal as explicated through the 'reporter voice' configuration, and within Appraisal Theory.

Keywords: Appraisal Theory, constitution, elections, 'hard' news, objectivity, Zimbabwe

1. INTRODUCTION

The fundamental aim of this article is to examine, through the analysis of news reports on the making of a 'new' constitution in Zimbabwe, how the notion of 'objectivity/neutrality' in 'hard' news reports can also be accounted for through linguistic theoretical principles. As such, the study evaluates how a linguistically based configuration of Appraisal Theory can be a useful theoretical tool in analysing the 'objectivity/neutrality' ideal in the media genre of 'hard' news reporting. Studies on 'objectivity' have historically largely been undertaken within journalistic studies and have been diverse, differing mainly in terms of theoretical explanation. Theories informing such studies include Lipman's (1922) Public Opinion Theory (c.f. Klaehn 2005), McCombs and Shaw's (1972) Agenda-Setting Theory (c.f. McCombs 2004; Miller 2005), Herman and Chomsky's (1988) Propaganda Model (c.f. Chomsky 2002; Klaehn 2005) and Habermas' (1991) Public Sphere Theory (c.f. McCombs 2004). In examining the discourse-linguistic notion of 'objectivity' in 'hard' news reports on the new constitution making process in Zimbabwe, this article departs from such journalistic based theoretic perspectives to a linguistic discourse approach. It presents evidence that the linguistic discourse-analytical framework of Appraisal Theory provides alternative ways of analysing 'objectivity' and ideological bias in 'hard' news reports.

The notion of 'objectivity/neutrality', encapsulated under journalistic ethics (Ward 2009), continues to be a subject of debate and controversy within journalistic circles. Lukin (2005), for example, argues that despite a long history of debate, 'bias'

44

and related terms like 'objectivity', 'impartiality' and 'balance' remain difficult to define and operationalise. Subsequently, the defining parameters for 'objectivity' in media have remained somehow elusive. Hampton (2008), for instance, argues that 'objectivity' as a journalistic norm constitutes both a claim to professional distinction and an ideal of even-handedness and craftsmanship. In other words, journalists have to relate to what is. They have to separate truth from falsehood (Bresser 1992). In defining 'objectivity' as it relates to media, Cunningham (2003) concedes that it is an elusive concept, far too difficult to describe and define, and subject to individual understandings of notions of 'truth', 'fairness', 'balance' and 'facticity'.

Departing from journalism-based theoretical configurations in this study is not, however, tantamount to trivialising their analytical potential. Instead, this study merely seeks to explicate the analytical potential that a linguistics-based configuration has as an alternative analytical tool. Within systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and Appraisal Theory, the notion of objectivity is explicated through a configuration known as the 'reporter voice' – a configuration through which we can identify rhetorical markers by which a journalist implicitly or explicitly selects languages in order to win an audience over to his/her point of view. The 'reporter voice' is theorised in this study as a configuration that establishes a taxonomy for analysing the proliferation of authorial attitudinal and evaluative meanings in news texts, based on the identification of established/establishable key evaluative and attitudinal meanings that identify the writer with establishable ideological leanings (Iedema, Feez and White 1994; Lukin 2005; Martin and White 2005; Tran and Thomson 2008; White 2000 and 2005).

2. BACKGROUND

One of the most 'controversial' issues in Zimbabwe's recent political dispensation, which was characterised by a Government of National Unity (GNU), was the holding of 'fresh' elections under a new constitution, and doing so before June 2013.[1] Political governance in Zimbabwe was characterised by a GNU which arose from the heavily contested 2008 presidential elections and was legitimated by a what is known as the Global Political Agreement (GPA), signed between Zimbabwe's three major political parties – the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), led by incumbent president Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and the two factions of the Movement for Democratic Change[2] (MDC) – MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC-M led by Professor Arthur Mutambara. One of the agreements flowing from the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the GPA, was that the initial lifespan of the GNU was to be 18 months,[3] after which period the country would hold 'fresh' elections under a new constitution. The new constitution-making process would be guided by Article VI of the GPA, signed by ZANU-PF and the two MDC formations in September 2008. The 18-month time frame would see

the drafting of the new constitution, the holding of a referendum, and the possible subsequent promulgation of the constitution as the country's supreme law. The new constitution would also incorporate electoral law reforms to guide the holding of new elections. The new constitution-making process is/was spearheaded by the Parliamentary Select Committee on the New Constitution (COPAC), comprising (to enhance transparency) members of parliament from the three parties to the GNU.

The recently replaced constitution of Zimbabwe is the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution, drafted on the eve of Zimbabwe's independence, which made political concessions to protect the interests of the former colonial masters as well as the new black leadership of the country. The constitution (a product of the compromise agreement reached at the Lancaster House Conference in 1979 between the outgoing colonial government and the incoming nationalist government at the end of the war of liberation), is widely regarded as inadequate and as having numerous shortcomings that need to be addressed (despite it having been amended a record 19 times).[4] The need for a new constitution in Zimbabwe is summarised in the following background to the process:

> Zimbabwe's current constitution was crafted in 1979 under the Lancaster House agreement and has succumbed to a record of 19 Amendments to date. Attempts to craft a new constitution in the year 2000 were rejected by the people of Zimbabwe in a referendum. Various interlocking factors help to explain the 'no vote'. Amongst them was the lack of wider consultation with the responsible committee alleged to be purely elitist (500 members comprising mostly MPs) and a perception that it was a ZANU-PF attempt to smuggle a Constitution of its liking. Thus the search for a viable, acceptable and a credible constitution in Zimbabwe continues as evidenced by Constitutional Amendment number 19 which legalised the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008. Amongst other things, the GPA stated the need for a people driven and people oriented constitution in Zimbabwe. As such, since June 2010 the country has embarked on a drive towards the constitution making process.[5]

It is against this background that the GNU set up COPAC to spearhead the crafting of a new constitution for the republic.

3. CONTEXTUALISING THE 'NEW' CONSTITUTION-MAKING PROGRAMME AND 'FRESH' ELECTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWEAN POLITICS

The process of drafting a new constitution and the subsequent holding of 'fresh' elections in Zimbabwe has been characterised by numerous twists and turns. The 'controversies' surrounding these two important national processes are largely grounded in differences (mainly political in nature) between the principal parties to the GNU, specifically the MDC-T and ZANU-PF. Part of the agreement to the constitution clause in the GPA is that all three parties to the agreement would participate in the new constitution-making process, to ensure transparency. This arrangement

accounts for the composition of COPAC which has equal representation from all the three signatory political parties. Because of the political tension characterising relations between the parties prior to the signing of the GPA, conflicts of interest and 'controversies' continued to arise in the process, with each party seemingly wanting to protect its own political interests and agendas.

In light of this political diatribe, it can be observed that during the period under review, there were numerous setbacks in the constitution-making exercise, most of which were political in nature. Amongst the controversial issues derailing the constitution-making process at one point or another were inadequate funding, disagreements about data collection mechanisms, and disputes around technical issues related to provisions in the new constitution. The first draft of the constitution was only completed and made public in July 2012, two years behind schedule. Because the constitution-making process took longer than had originally been planned for in the GPA, ZANU-PF became impatient and began questioning and challenging the legitimacy of the continued existence of the GNU. ZANU-PF subsequently, on numerous occasions, officially indicated that elections would be held in 2012 – with or without a new constitution – and that it would 'soon withdraw from the dysfunctional Inclusive Government'.[6] A case in point is Robert Mugabe going on record with his views on the issue:

> **President** Robert Mugabe has said this year [2012] he will exercise his power and call for elections resulting in another government with or without a new constitution. Addressing the media on the occasion of his 88th birthday President Mugabe who is also the First Secretary and President of ZANU-PF said the constitution – making process was supposed to take only 18 months from the time of the inception of the inclusive Government but those involved in the process were deliberately moving at a snail's pace.[7]

The ZANU-PF position has always been met with discord by the two other parties to the GPA, who argue that the ZANU-PF's incessant threats to hold new elections were because the party realised full well that the current constitution favoured them. ZANU-PF is on record as having justified its continuous demands for immediate elections given that, according to them, the mandate of the GNU had expired.[8] Accordingly, these demands have always been met with hostility from the two MDC-T formations, the South African Development Community (SADC), the European Union (EU) and the United States (US), who all expressed fears that holding elections under the current constitution would present ZANU-PF with an opportunity to 'steal the elections again' and would perpetuate Mugabe's presidency. The following sentiments constitute an attempt to summarise the political environment in Zimbabwe with regard to the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of fresh elections:

> The political situation is fragile, with growing fears the country may be heading toward new repression and conflict as the era dominated by the 88-year-old President Robert Mugabe

comes inevitably closer to an end, and elections draw nearer. Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) claims the GPA and subsequent negotiated reform process have run their course, and conditions are conducive to a free and fair vote. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations disagree but do not specify what they consider to be the minimum necessary reforms. SADC and most international observers believe the foundation for free and fair elections has not yet been laid. There has been some economic and social progress, but major deficits and deadlock persist on core reforms and implementation of some already agreed matters. Most significantly, ZANU-PF retains full control of the security apparatus, raising legitimate fears elections could lead to a repeat of the 2008 violence and refusal to accept the democratic will of the people.[9]

It is significant to note that the new constitution-making process and the holding of free and fair elections is also a condition tied to the EU- and US-imposed 'sanctions'[10] against Zimbabwe's ruling elite. As part of the conditions that the EU and the US stipulate for the lifting of sanctions, Zimbabwe must hold free and fair election in an environment that fosters the proliferation of both political freedom and tolerance. In this regard, the US has expressed that it will only consider debt relief, financial assistance and technical support for Zimbabwe when (a) the rule of law has been restored; (b) free and fair elections are held; (c) the government exhibits a commitment to transparent land reform; (d) the government fulfils the terms of an agreement to end the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and (e) the military and national police become subordinate to civilian government.[11] The drafting and subsequent promulgation of the new constitution is thus seen as pertinent to the creation of an environment conducive to free and fair elections.

The ZANU-PF position as regards the holding of elections is linked to the party's position on the continued EU and US 'sanctions'. ZANU-PF argues that as long as sanctions remain in effect, they see no reason to appease EU and US demands for political reform. On the other hand, the two MDC formations maintain that they are ready for elections, as long as there are major legislative and political reforms to represent visible guarantees for free and fair elections. Such an environment, they maintain, must be characterised by a level political playing field and by political tolerance, i.e., an end to the intimidation of their supporters and to the use of state security agencies to intimidate voters to vote for ZANU-PF.

4. THE GNU, THE CONSTITUTION-MAKING PROCESS AND 'FRESH' ELECTIONS

Because of the violence and political animosity that characterised the campaigning period prior to and after the 2008 elections (preceding the formation of the GNU), the new constitution-making process and the subsequent holding of 'fresh' elections (expected at the conclusion of the drafting of the new constitution) form the basis of agreements reached between the principals to the GPA. This is largely because the

political wars and tensions arising from the 2008 elections were based on electoral irregularities as well as claims by the MDC-T that the elections had been held under a 'not-so-conducive environment characterised by intimidation, lack of political tolerance, violence and gross human rights violations' (<ref>).

The two MDC formations contended that the only approach to resolving the political impasse post-elections was to hold fresh elections, only this time under a new constitution which guaranteed a level political playing field. This difference of opinion explains why, despite incessant calls by ZANU-PF for elections to be held immediately, the two MDC formations insisted they would only participate in elections after a new constitution has been drafted and promulgated into law. ZANU-PF maintained that general elections would be held during 2012, without fail, upon completion of the constitution-making process which was then underway.[12] South Africa, as SADC mediator to the political impasse in Zimbabwe, through its representative, President Jacob Zuma, also insisted that a new constitution alone was not sufficient and that conditions guaranteeing free and fair elections had to be met before fresh elections could be held.

Contrary to ZANU-PF's stance, the South African facilitation team to the political crisis in Zimbabwe reiterated that polls could only be held when all the provisions of the GPA and the election roadmap were fulfilled. The team's comments came in the wake of declarations by ZANU-PF's politburo that elections would be held in 2012 no matter what.[13] SADC and most international observers concurred that the foundations for free and fair elections had not yet been laid. While acknowledging that there had been some economic and social progress, they argued that major deficits and deadlocks persisted on core reforms and on the implementation of already agreed-to matters. Most significantly, ZANU-PF retained full control of the security apparatus, raising legitimate fears that elections might lead to a repeat of the 2008 violence and the regime's refusal to accept the democratic will of the people.[14] Such a scenario is one of the stumbling blocks which it is hoped the new constitution will resolve.

The position of the two MDC formations was clearly articulated in their concerns that ZANU-PF was largely responsible for the problems COPAC was facing – problems that derailed any progress made in the constitution-making process to delay its anticipated completion within the predetermined 18 months. Two major problems were underfunding and political meddling. A critical analysis of the constitution-making process to date shows that it has been marred by numerous errors and inconsistencies.[15] Delays, as well as poor financial and logistical arrangements have backed this claim. In addition to suppressing people's views at the outreach stage, the collation stage has been viewed as an indirect attempt by political parties to influence the content, thus further reducing the credibility of the whole process.[16] The MDCs' sentiments can be summarised as follows:

> The Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee appears to be dogged with financial constraints because ZANU-PF is against donor funding for the initiative arguing that foreign funding will result in foreign interference with the manner and outcome of the process. This however is a frivolous excuse that ZANU-PF is using to delay completion of the project which will signal the start of moves to dissolve the coalition government and preparations for general elections the party knows it will lose. In all the funding excuses the Minister of Finance has been notable by his silence over the matter which indicates that he may be in possession of adequate funds for the project but is unwilling to channel them for disbursement through the RBZ with its disrepute in handling public funds.[17]

In the context of such politicking around problems encountered in the constitution-making process – a process largely characterised by political mudslinging and blame games regarding COPAC's problems – it is important to note that COPAC, through all these trials and tribulations, admitted only to financial challenges and hardly any administrative or implementation challenges arising from political differences and/or the pursuit of political interests by the parties to the GNU.

The constitution-making process was plagued by numerous setbacks, both financial and political. First, the GNU did not have sufficient finances to meet the exorbitant costs of creating a new constitution. Despite this, ZANU-PF insisted it would not accept foreign funding for the process, thereby creating discord with the other two parties within the GNU and further delaying the commencement of the exercise. The party, through its leader Robert Mugabe, is on record as having refused funding for the constitution-making process from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other donors, claiming that foreign funding would compromise the country's capacity to determine its own destiny[18] and would allow continued external influence in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe as a sovereign nation. The two MDC formations, reacting to such posturing, contended that ZANU-PF was deliberately stalling the process because it was not sincere about implementing the reforms outlined by the GPA. Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai is on record as intimating that this was a ZANU-PF stalling tactic, despite both MDC formations and the ruling party having 'agreed to a raft of reforms, including amending electoral and media laws and drafting a new constitution, to pave way for free and fair elections'.[19] Interestingly, though, the whole exercise was eventually funded by the UNDP through an injection of US$21.2 million, which the UNDP described as 'a voluntary grant from donors towards the national constitution-making process'.[20]

Other setbacks included intra-party squabbles and allegations of information being 'smuggled' into the constitution.[21] Critics have also been quick to express fears that the constitution-making process runs the risk of becoming a political agreement instead of a national legal instrument. Such critics argue that Zimbabwe must eschew the practice and belief that the constitution is some kind of political pact between existing political parties.[22] Because of the political impasse backgrounding the constitution-making exercise, the process inevitably became a politically charged

enterprise seemingly geared towards settling political scores, seeking political control and garnering political mileage. In this respect there has been criticism of the constitution-making exercise as well as of the draft constitution, for not reflecting the wishes of the people (as espoused by the GPA) but for merely being a result of political negotiations and compromises between the three parties to the GPA. News reports on the exercise and related issues thus, due to the highly politically polarised nature of the media in Zimbabwe, also evince the 'political wars' that characterised the process. Within the prevailing context (established above), the following constitutes an analysis of news reports on the problems and challenges COPAC encountered during the new constitution-making exercise.

5. THE STRUCTURE AND TEXTUALITY OF 'HARD' NEWS REPORTS

The 'hard' news report is one that is characterised by facticity, reporting nothing but the facts. It must be seen to steer clear of expressing any authorial subjectivities. Of course, while such news and editorials draw resources and contexts from similar experiential scenes, the difference between the news report and the editorial is evident in the choice of linguistic resources used to achieve their different communicative purposes (McCabe and Heilman 2007). 'A ['hard' news] report purportedly has the mission of presenting events that took place out there in the world in as objective a way possible, while an editorialist had the express purpose of providing commentary, or evaluating those events' (<ref>). Typically, editorials are thus characterised by an overt presence of interpersonal devices, whereas news reports, on the other hand, while not entirely disguising authorial presence and evaluations, attempt to do so and are not typically characterised by a high proliferation of overt interpersonal authorial subjectivities and subjective authorial evaluative expressions, i.e., linguistic resources.

'Hard' news reports must typically report news in as dispassionate a manner as possible. They must be strictly 'objective' texts which are constructed 'in such a way that there [is] no explicit linguistic evidence of the authors' value judgments' (<ref>). McCabe and Heilman (2007) explain that when an author writes an event/'hard' news report, s/he tends not to linguistically encode any value judgements. 'Hard' news articles must thus attempt to project an aura of 'objectivity' when compared to editorials/commentaries which are concerned with airing opinions, but this is not always the case as they often are loaded with attitudinal meanings (both inscribed and/or invoked authorial evaluations as well as attributed inscribed and/or invoked evaluations). From a journalistic and a linguistic perspective, the 'hard' news report can be graphically depicted by means of an inverted pyramid or through an orbital structure (see Figures 1 and 2).
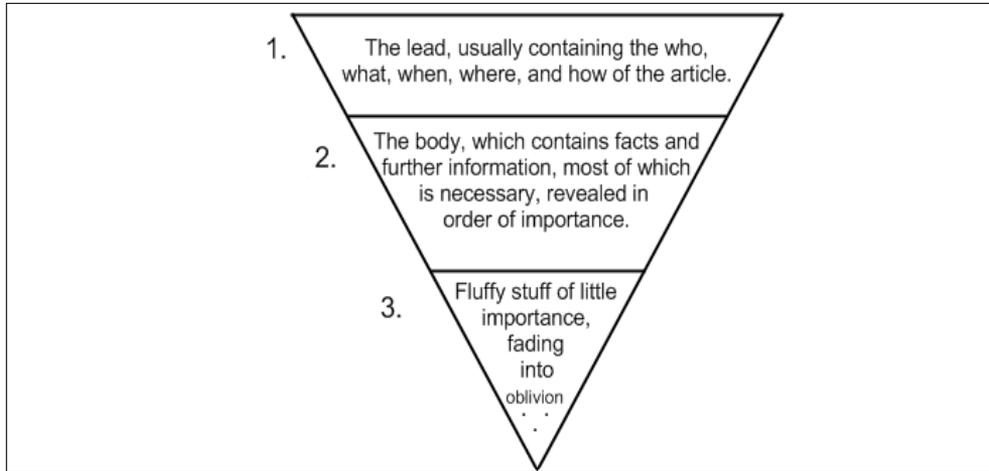
Figure 1: The inverted pyramid structure

Source: < >

According to Thomson, White and Kitley (2008), the inverted pyramid is a configuration by which the most important information in the news/news report comes first. Progressively after that, the report develops gradually through to what is least important. Thomson et al. (ibid, 1) argue in this regard that 'it is frequently held that authorial neutrality and the inverted pyramid structure are key factors in the distinction and uniqueness and distinctiveness of the modern hard news report as a text type'.

In this regard, White and Thomson (2008, <page>) reflect that any assessment of what constitutes the 'most important' or 'least important' aspects of the news/news report is 'both culturally and ideologically relative', i.e., subject to authorial evaluation and judgement.
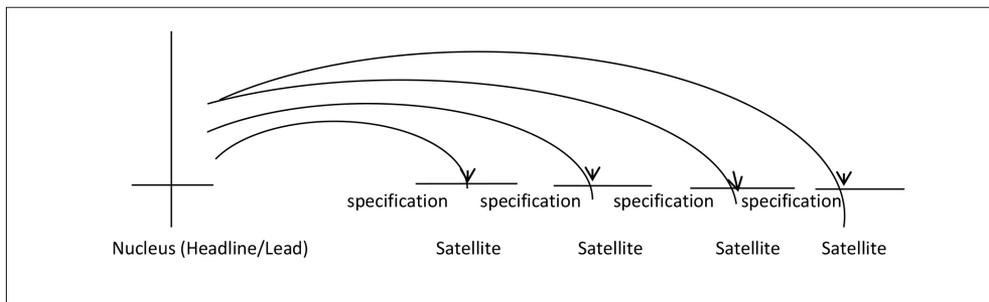
Figure 2: Orbital Structure of 'hard news' (Adapted from White and Thomson, 2008)

The textual organisation of 'hard news', as represented in the orbital structure (see White and Thomson 2008), means that a news report can be divided into two sections: the headline/lead and the body. The headline forms 'the nucleus': the summary of the concerns of the news report summated in both the headline and the opening sentence/paragraph. The body, according to White and Thomson (2008) (see also Thomson et al. 2008), is not chronologically organised but comprises different sections which act as 'satellites'. These satellites serve to elaborate on the 'claims' made by the headline in a variety of establishable ways through an 'orbital' textual organisation of the 'hard news' report (see Iedema et al. 1994; White 2000a). Such news report satellites perform one of five broad functions:

- *Elaboration or reiteration*: One sentence or a group of sentences provides more detailed description or exemplification of information presented in the headline/lead, or acts to restate it or describe the material in the headline/lead in different terms;

- *Causes*: One or more sentences describe the causes or reason for some aspect of the 'crisis point' presented in the headline/lead;

- *Consequences*: One or more sentences describe the consequences flowing from some element of the crisis point of the headline/lead;

- *Contextualisation*: One or more sentences places some aspect of the crisis point of the headline/lead in a temporal, spatial or social context. For example, the geographical setting will be described in some detail or the 'crisis point' will be located in the context of preceding, simultaneous or subsequent events. Prior events of a similar nature may be described for the purpose of comparison; and

- *Attitudinal assessment/Appraisal*: Some form of judgement or evaluation is passed on some element of the headline/lead. (Iedema et al. 1994)

6. THEORY: APPRAISAL, THE 'REPORTER VOICE' AND EVALUATIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

Appraisal Theory is a framework that developed from SFL, which is concerned with the processes of meaning making through language use within a social context(s). The theory also postulates that three kinds of meaning are generated through these different meaning-making processes, categorically referred to as the *metafunctions* of language: the *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual* functions of language. Couched with SFL, the appraisal framework is concerned with how writers/speakers approve/disapprove, enthuse/abhor, applaud/criticise; it also deals with the construction by texts of communities of shared feelings and values, and with the linguistic mechanisms for the sharing of emotions, tastes and normative assessments. It is concerned with how writers/speakers construe for themselves particular authorial

identities or personae, with how they align or fail to align themselves with actual or potential respondents, and with how they construct for their texts an intended or ideal audience (Martin and White 2005, 1). Appraisal, and its configurations 'reporter voice' and orbital structure, inform the analysis of newspaper texts in the current study. White (2002) defines Appraisal Theory as

> concerned with the linguistic resources by which texts/speakers come to express, negotiate and naturalise particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions. Within this broad scope, the theory is concerned more particularly with the language of evaluation, attitude and emotion, and with a set of resources which explicitly position a text's proposals and propositions interpersonally. That is, it is concerned with those meanings which vary the terms of the speaker's engagement with their utterances, which vary what is at stake interpersonally both in individual utterances and as the texts unfolds cumulatively.

From the definition provided by White (2000) we discern that the theory is concerned with the resources with which we can understand how speakers/writers construe for themselves particular authorial identities, through the way(s) in which they align with or dissociate themselves from actual or potential respondents and/or audiences (Martin and Rose 2003). The framework is thus concerned with the analysis of the way(s) in which the subjective presence of the author is visible through how s/he 'adopts' a position with regard to the material s/he is presenting (speaking/writing about), as well as those with whom s/he is communicating. Bednarek (2006), for example, argues that the appraisal analysis provides revelations for and of the context as well as 'the interpersonal character of evaluation as well as the communicative importance of evaluation itself'. Martin and White (2005) shed more light on this when they argue that Appraisal Theory is a major discourse-semantic resource which construes interpersonal meanings.

Within the appraisal theoretical framework, the notion of 'reporter voice' references a configuration used to identify those rhetorical markers by which a journalist implicitly or explicitly selects languages in order to win over an audience to his/her point of view. It is concerned with identifying 'the linguistic resources by which [journalists/reporters] come to express, negotiate and naturalise particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions' (White 2002, <page>). 'Hard' news texts that conform to the configuration must thus <exhibit a refrain> <exhibit or refrain?> from expressing highly attitudinal meanings – meanings that express explicitly or implicitly authorial evaluations and/or ideological bias. Typically, such news reports, while not entirely disguising authorial presence and evaluations, attempt to do so and are not typically characterised by a high proliferation of overt interpersonal authorial subjectivities and subjective authorial evaluative expressions, as is the case with commentaries/editorials. 'Hard news' articles conforming to the 'reporter voice' configuration must thus attempt to project an aura of objectivity compared to editorials/commentaries whose concerns are to air opinions. They must refrain from expressing attitudinal meanings – occurring as both inscribed (explicit)

and/or invoked (tokenised/implicit) authorial evaluations, as well as attributed inscribed and/or invoked evaluations.

The notion of the 'reporter voice' in news discourse is largely interested in identifying and analysing texts which are not saturated with overt instances of explicit authorial judgement (Caffarel and Rechniewski 2008). Such configurations are expressed schematically by White (2005) as follows:
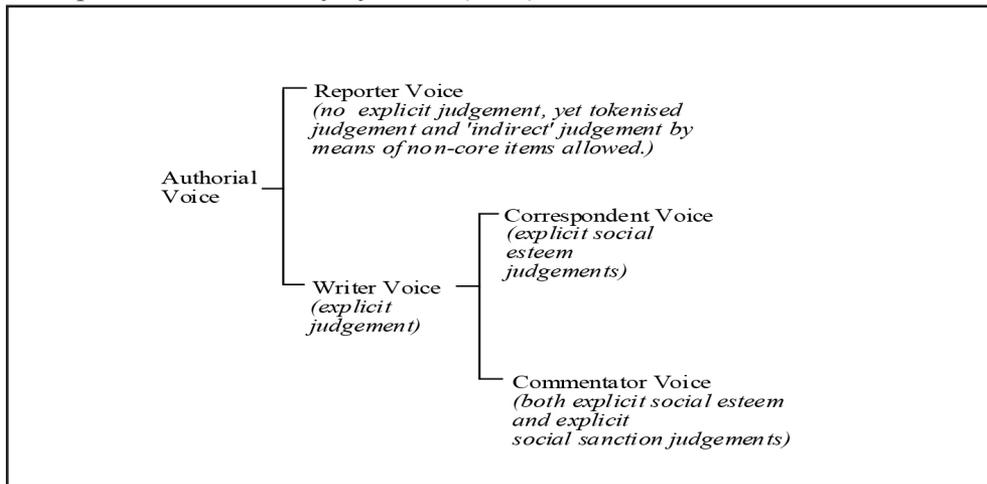
Figure 3: The reporter voice
Source: Adapted from White (2005)

7. ANALYSING 'HARD' NEWS REPORTS ON PROBLEMS IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION-MAKING PROCESS IN ZIMBABWEAN NEWSPAPERS

In analysing the proliferation of attitudinal evaluative meanings, the study makes use of the analytical key proposed by Tran and Thomson (2008, 55) which is reproduced here.

7.1. Case 1: **The Herald**

Table 1:   Analysis of excerpt from the *Herald* (March 29, 2012)

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
001	Zanu-PF insists [ap/j]<ack> draft Constitution must reflect people's views Tendai Mugabe: Senior Reporter	Nucleus: Headline (Appraised proposition: that the draft of the new constitution is not reflecting the people's views and thus must be people driven and reflect popular opinion)
005	Zanu-PF insists [ap/j] that <ack> the draft Constitution should reflect the people's views as captured during the outreach programme.	Nucleus: Lead Lead/Elaboration (Restates propositions made by the nucleus)
010	Addressing journalists after the party's Politburo meeting in Harare yesterday, party spokesperson Cde Rugare Gumbo said <ack> they received a progress report on the constitution-making process from Cde Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana.	Satellite 1: Contextualisation (The prior situation forming the background to the propositions made in nucleus)
	He said <ack> Zanu-PF had taken a position that the new Constitution should not divert from the views of the people [j].	Satellite 2: Elaboration (Specifies what draft must not/do. Expansion of nucleus' propositions – provides further clarification)
015	Cde Gumbo said Politburo members noted that drafters tampered [j] with the views and aspirations of the people.	Satellite 3: Justification (Reason why ZANU PF insists on the position)
020	He called on the Copac team to produce an outreach report showing the people's views. Cde Gumbo said <ack> it was resolved [j/ap] that if the three parties in the Constitution-making process continue to disagree, the outreach report should be taken to the GPA principals.	Satellite 4: Justification (Reasons why the constitution diverts from the views of people – political differences between parties in the drafting of constitution)
025	<ack> 'Cde Mangwana said they held a meeting with the drafters yesterday, where they did two chapters of the revised draft. We noted that there is still a lot of work to be done [1st af].	Satellite 5: Contextualisation (Further reason backgrounding the context of the propositions of the headline and lead)

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
030	<ack> "However, the party took a strong position [ap/j] that the draft must reflect the outreach programme [ap].	Satellite 6: Elaboration (Restates/re-emphasizes on the ZANU PF position and the propositions of the nucleus on what draft must not/do)
	'If those guys (MDC formations) are difficult [j], our team should produce the outreach report showing what people said and give it to the principals for determination,' <ack> he said	Satellite 7: Cause and Effect (Indicates consequences of the primary proposals)
035 040	Cde Gumbo said <ack> the MDC formations were insisting [ap/j] on certain issues that were rejected by people [j] during the outreach programme such as dual citizenship, devolution, powers of the Attorney General's Office and one Vice President.	Satellite 8: Contextualisation (Context/reasons for making the claims/propositions in the lead and headline)
	He said <ack> the formations were saying Zimbabwe should have either one vice president or have a prime minister.	Satellite 8: Contextualisation (Context/further reasons for the claims/propositions in the lead and headline)
045	Cde Gumbo said <ack> Zanu-PF was of the view that it should not continue to persuade the MDC formations on issues that were settled by the outreach programme.	Satellite 9: Elaboration (States reasons/context for ZANU PF adopting the position established in the propositions of the headline and lead)
050	He said <ack> the principals should take over the constitution-making process because the management committee seemed to be dithering [j] on issues Copac failed to resolve [ap/j].	Satellite 10: Contextualisation (States context in which the main propositions are made. Specifies ensuing context)
055	<ack> 'Absolutely [1st af], the principals should take over the process because the management committee seems to be vacillating [j]. We cannot continue to wait any longer [1st af].'	Satellite 10: Contextualisation (States context in which the main propositions are made. Specifies ensuing context)
	He said <ack> the Politburo also received a report on the party's ongoing District Coordinating Committee elections.	Satellite 11: Elaboration (Provides exemplification of ZANU PF's democratic tendencies and context for making the propositions)

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
060	He said <ack> national commissar Cde Webster Shamu presented a report where he expressed satisfaction [3rd af] with the way the DCC elections were held in Mashonaland Central and in Chipinge.	Satellite 11: Elaboration (Provides exemplification of ZANU PF's democratic tendencies and context for making the propositions)
065	Cde Gumbo said <ack> the DCC elections in Midlands will be held today and tomorrow. He said <ack> the party's primary elections will follow once dates of general elections are known.	Satellite 11: Elaboration (Provides exemplification of ZANU PF's democratic tendencies and context for making the propositions)

7.1.1. Appraisal and satellite structure analysis

The news report deems the constitution-making exercise, sanctioned under the GPA as needing to be people driven, not to be. The news report thus espouses these evaluations largely from the position of ZANU-PF, which is cited as the major external voice in the story. The position espoused by the news report, largely expressed through attributed material, is that the committee tasked with drafting the constitution is disregarding the views of the people, as voiced and transcribed during the outreach programme. This is largely expressed through attributed material (attributed inscriptions and attributed tokens) which negatively evaluates the constitutional management committee, COPAC, as well as the MDC formations. The context of such evaluations, which are largely of attributed inscribed JUDGEMENT and APRRECIATION resources, is the conviction espoused throughout the news report that the constitution-making project has ceased to be people-oriented and in the process has become heavily politicised. The images created by the news report present ZANU-PF as a party motivated by the desire to safeguard national interests, by assuming a position that insists that the constitution must reflect the **'people's views as captured during the outreach programme'** (005–006).

In terms of evaluative positioning, there is little evidence of overt authorial evaluations. All evaluations in the news reports are expressed through attributed material. The headline and the lead, both of which occur as attributed material, espouse the major propositions of the news report. The larger part of the body of the news report serves to endorse and evaluate these propositions. Because the headline and lead express a ZANU-PF ideological position, the compelling voice of the party spokesperson, Rugare Gumbo, is used to further reinforce this position. It is through this voice that the bulk of the evaluations in the news report are made. First, through this voice, the news report expresses the position that the constitution-making exercise has digressed from the concerns raised during the data-collection exercise. This is expressed through tokenised invocations attributed to the external

voice of Gumbo. Examples are found in expressions in the following excerpts from lines (012–014):

He said <ack> Zanu-PF had taken a position that **the new Constitution should not divert from the views of the people** [ap/j]

As well as from lines (028–030):

<ack> 'However, the party took **<u>a strong position</u>** [ap/j] that **the draft must reflect the outreach programme** [ap].

It is possible to discern from the above that, while they do not overtly signify the propositions established by the headline and the lead, the exhortations expressed by the above tokens signify the existence of a draft that does not capture the concerns of the people as ZANU-PF would want to see it reflected. In short, the invocations above, while acting as tokens of JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION of the constitutional draft, also serve as appraisals and evaluations of the committee responsible for the draft.

There is also, in the news report, evidence of attributed inscribed negative evaluations of those who drafted the draft constitution, of the constitutional management committee as well as the two MDC formations, for allegedly failing to live up to their assigned mandate – creating a people-driven constitution. Through attributed material largely of JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION resources, the two MDC formations are negatively evaluated for '**insisting on certain issues rejected by the people during the outreach programme**' (035–038). Similar negative evaluations are also made of the constitutional management committee who are accused of '**dithering on issues Copac failed to resolve**' (053–054) as well as '**vacillating**' (048–049). Lastly, negative JUDGEMENT evaluations are made of the drafters who caused deviations from the views expressed during the outreach programme by '**tampering with the views and aspirations of the people**' (016–017). It is important to indicate again that all these evaluations are framed in attribution and thus do not reflect authorial evaluative positioning. In the presence of the negative evaluations discussed above, the news report espouses a position that implicitly positively evaluates ZANU-PF as the sole party to the constitutional process which is concerned with respecting the wishes of the people, as well as protecting the people's interests.

In terms of the generic and structural organisation of the news report, there is evidence that the story evinces no instances of explicit authorial expression. The propositions of the news report are drawn from sentiments expressed by an external source, sentiments reinforced and restated in the lead. The body of the news report largely serves to contextualise the propositions of the headline and lead by providing the socio-political background which gave birth to the evaluations of the major propositions of the news report. These subsequent paragraphs also serve to justify

and elaborate on the position assumed by the news report – a position which (as indicated above) is largely framed in attribution.

7.2. Case 2: *Newsday*

Table 2:   nalysis of excerpts from *Newsday* (November 18, 2011)

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
001	Copac discord [ap/j] worsens [ap] Moses Matenga	Nucleus: Headline (Appraised headline: that there is disunity in the constitution making exercise, the process is beleaguered by rifts)
005	There is no end in sight to the confusion [ap/j] that has blighted [ap] the operations of the Parliamentary Constitutional Select Committee (Copac) ever since its inception two years ago.	Nucleus: Lead (Elaboration) (Restates the 'discord' that is in Copac suggested by the lead and provides a historical context.)
010	Yesterday, the co-chairpersons of the committee were as usual, singing from different hymn books [j/ap] — at a Press conference. Douglas Mwonzora and Paul Mangwana representing the main parties, MDC-T and Zanu PF, clashed [ap] on key issues involving the drafting of Zimbabwe's new charter.	Satellite 1: Contextualisation (The social as well as historical context in which the 'discord' exhibits itself.)
015	The Copac Press conference addressed by the three co-chairpersons turned into a circus [ap] as Mwonzora and Mangwana openly clashed [j/ap].	Satellite 2: Elaboration (Restates the confusion and discord in Copac.)
020	Mwonzora said <ack> the rights of minorities needed to be respected in the new constitution, incensing Mangwana who immediately interjected to argue such a position would allow gays and prostitutes to sneak their interests into the constitution.	Satellite 3: Elaboration (Specifies, exemplifies the 'discord' within Copac.)

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
025	The third co-chairperson, Edward Mkhosi of the other MDC formation, tried to save the situation and said: <ack> 'If we feel uncomfortable [3rd af] with gays, let's include that in our constitution and say minority does not mean gays. There is the Gukurahundi for example; it was persecution of a minority.'	Satellite 4: Contextualisation (Further exemplification and contextualisation of reasons for the 'discord' within Copac.)
030	Zanu PF Chief Whip, Jorum Gumbo called the house to order and challenged the Copac chairpersons not to impose their thinking onto the process as it would then cease to be people-driven [j].	Satellite 5: Elaboration (Specification of reasons for 'discord'.)
035	<ack> 'This is a people-driven constitution and the people said what they want in the constitution. We cannot discuss what the people want. Don't take it upon yourselves to discuss and come up with a position.	Satellite 6: Contextualisation (The prior situation. Context in which discord is exhibiting.)
040	'Follow what the people said they want [j/ap],' Gumbo said. Perhaps even more surprising [1st af], Mangwana and Mwonzora differed [ap] even on the position of the constitution-making stage.	Satellite 7: Elaboration (Further specifies and exemplifies the reasons for the 'discord' and the prior situation)
045	Mangwana said <ack> the process was now at the drafting stage while Mwonzora thought otherwise. The MDC-T representative argued the all-stakeholders' conference needed $2 million which he said was not yet there, adding Copac needed $4 million to complete the process.	Satellite 8: Elaboration (Further specifies and exemplifies the reasons for the 'discord' and the prior situation/context)
050	Meanwhile Mangwana, has threatened [j] to fight the independent media and sue his Zanu PF counterpart, Edward Chindori-Chininga, for defamation by alleging that he leaked the document to MDC-T.	Satellite 9: Contextualisation (Intertextual further evidence of prior situation – context of 'discord')
055	Mangwana said <ack> he had instructed his lawyers to sue Chindori-Chininga and newspapers that have called him a liar and a drunkard who negotiates while intoxicated.	Satellite 10: Contextualisation (Specification of intertextual evidence of prior situation – context of 'discord')

61

	APPRAISAL ANALYSIS	ORBITAL STRUCTURE ANALYSIS
060	'Any person who thinks they can make money out of me, I will sue and make money out of them. They say I am a drunkard ; I am a liar [3rd af] who has been lying to the President (Robert Mugabe) and I negotiate while drunk. Anyone who defames me will face the music.'	Satellite 10: Contextualisation (Further specification of intertextual evidence of prior situation – context of 'discord')

7.2.1. Appraisal and satellite structure analysis

The news reports present an authorial evaluative stance that overtly negatively evaluates the relations of the parties to the new constitution-making programme, the political actors involved in the exercise, as well as the new constitution-making exercise itself. Such authorial evaluations, largely occurring as resources of JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION, evince themselves as authorial-inscribed negative evaluations in the headline and the subsequent three paragraphs immediately following the headline, the first of which forms the lead. In evaluating the '**discord**' (001) characterising the nature of the political[23] and working relations between the members of the constitution-making programme committee, the news report makes the proposition that the committee is largely divided on political grounds – a situation which the news reports also suggest adversely affects the smooth running of the process. The authorial evaluative position is initially set out in both the lead and the headline (001–006) as follows:

> Copac discord [ap/j] worsens [ap]

> There is no end in sight to the **confusion** [ap/j] that has **blighted** [ap] the operations of the Parliamentary Constitutional Select Committee (Copac) ever since its inception two years ago.

This authorial position is reinforced further in the subsequent two paragraphs, which also – making use of overt authorial inscriptions – espouses an authorial position that negatively evaluates the relations between members of COPAC coming from different political positions. Inscribed authorial evaluations of the members of the committee, such as '**as usual singing from different hymns books**' (008–009), '**clashed**' (011), '**openly clashed**' (015) as well as their meeting having '**turned into a circus**' (014) evince such an authorial negative evaluative stance.

Structurally, the body of the news report is largely constituted of paragraphs that serve to elaborate on the propositions of the authorial voice through providing exemplifications of such discords. Such elaborations, largely signalling 'discord' between the parties in the constitutional committee, are however attributed materials and merely serve as evidence of such a characterisation of relations. What the news

report largely purports, in expressing such evaluations of the situation in terms of strained relations between the parties, is to make argumentations that the political actors within the constitutional committee seem to be putting the political ideologies and agendas of their respective political parties ahead of the views expressed by 'the people' during the outreach programme. This is evinced by the differences expressed by the political actors, which are also presented in acknowledged material.

The only other instance of inscribed authorial evaluation occurs as an AFFECT resource through which the authorial voice expresses astonishment at the 'discord' between these parties (039–041):

> Perhaps even **more surprising** [1st af], Mangwana and Mwonzora **differed** [ap] even on the position of the constitution-making stage

Consolidated with the sentiments occurring in attribution in the news report (which largely serve as elaborations and contextualisations of the propositions expressed through the authorial voice), the news report can be argued to be chiefly aimed at expressing the conviction that the new constitution-making exercise has largely become a sham – a political warzone characterised by disunity and differences of opinion, culminating in attempts by the political actors serving on the committee to protect the interests of their respective political parties, while in the process compromising the integrity of the process as a whole.

In summary, the structural arrangement of matter/detail in the news report evinces an arrangement through which the headline and the lead contain instances of negative authorial inscriptions. These are followed up and restated/reinforced through inscribed negative evaluations in the preliminary paragraphs immediately following the lead. Through most of the remaining satellite paragraphs (largely those performing the functions of *elaboration* and *contextualisation* of the authorial stance), the news report attempts to establish justification for assumptions of the attitudinally evaluative position that the authorial voice has assumed in the headline/lead as well as in the news story/report in general.

8. COMPARING AUTHORIAL 'OBJECTIVITY' AND STANCE-TAKING IN THE TWO 'HARD' NEWS REPORTS

The notion of discoursal maneuvering is invaluable in undertaking a comparative analysis of the rhetorical as well as generic/structural arrangements of import in Zimbabwean news reports across languages. The two cases analysed here characteristically follow the structural pattern predominantly found in Zimbabwean news reports. Such an arrangement evinces a stylistic maneuvering through which the authorial voice exploits a variety of strategic impersonalisations, in order to

distance itself from the major propositions and attitudinal evaluations of the news report. In that regard, heavy use of attributed materials occurs, through which the larger parts of instances of evaluative language are expressed. There is also evidence of ideologically conditioned biases along political lines, evinced by the manner in which the news reports express negative evaluations towards certain political parties and evaluations which also betray the identities of the political parties which enjoy the editorial support of the publications in question.

The news reports under discussion here largely report on a similar issue, namely the political disparities between the parties to the GPA with regard to the constitution-making exercise. The reports both express the conviction that politicking and political wars threaten to derail the constitution-making programme. Differences, however, between the news reports are largely as regards the ideological positions assumed by the news reports and the authorial voices, in reporting on the political problems involved in the constitution-making process. The *Herald* news report exhibits few (if any) instances of overt authorial evaluations. In maneuvering towards attempting to remain 'neutral', the news report expresses attitudinal evaluations through attribution. As such, all attitudinal evaluations are expressed through attributed material. It is also through attributed material that the main propositions of the news report are developed. On the other hand, there are overt instances of inscribed authorial evaluations in the *Newsday* news report, where the authorial voice assumes an ideological stance that explicitly positions it attitudinally.

In expressing the political differences derailing the constitutional programme, through external voices the *Herald* news report presents a political ideological position that negatively evaluates the two MDC formations, especially the MDC-T, for stalling the constitutional programme by insisting on including '**materials that do not reflect the people's wishes as expressed in the outreach programme**'. As such, while the authorial voice distances itself from such evaluations, the news report positively evaluates ZANU-PF as the party concerned with protecting the wishes of the people. Through maneuvering (in a bid to appear neutral), these evaluations are attributed to external sources, largely from ZANU-PF. The news report thus presents itself as expressed from the position of ZANU-PF. Tactfully, the authorial voice manages to rid itself of subjective evaluations and in the process satisfies the dictates of the 'reporter voice' configuration, since it does not exhibit a high proliferation of authorial attitudinal evaluations. However, it is possible to make observations to the contrary by arguing that it is the authorial voice that assumes a stance (Gales 2010) and elects the intertextual medium of expression (Seghezzi 2007), thus exhibiting traits of 'appraising through the words of others' (Jullian 2011, <page>).

On the other hand, the *Newsday* news report shows little evidence of refraining from ideological subjectivities. The report assumes authorial attitudinal positions that negatively evaluate political parties and politicking as being responsible for delays in finalising the constitutional programme. The authorial positions, which

are explicitly displayed throughout the body of the new report, are initially set out through authorial evaluative inscriptions in the headline and lead. Through the further use of evaluative expressions and appraisal resources exploited in the body of the report, these authorial positions are further endorsed. The position assumed by the news report evinces a conviction that the political parties participating in the constitutional programme have been side-tracked from the mandate of delivering a people-driven constitution (as set out in the GPA) and instead have turned the entire process into a battle of political agendas and political wills.

In terms of rhetorical and structural developments of the textuality of the news reports, it is important to emphasise the manner in which external voices are made use of. Seghezzi (2007) observes that through 'intertextualisation', quotations (both direct and reported speech) serve the purpose of (a) being newsworthy in their own right; (b) making the story more lively; (c) enhancing the credibility of the account; (d) allowing for the interpretation of news events; and (e) allowing the insertion of subjective interpretations and opinions. It is important to note how significant attributions and quotations are in the structural and rhetorical development of new reports in Zimbabwean news reporting cultures.

A heavy use of quotations occurs in the news reports under discussion. The use of such quotations and attributed evaluations differs from report to report. In the *Herald* news report, attributed materials are the means through which the news story unfolds and delivers evaluative expressions. In the *Newsday* news report, quotations and/or attributions serve as satellites for the elaboration, contextualisation, extratextualisation and exemplification of propositions made by the authorial stance. Evaluations are thus largely done through the authorial voice. External voices are called upon as strategic impersonalisations through which negative evaluations of the constitutional process, as well as the politicking by the parties to the process, are made. In the process the quotations not only serve as structural/rhetorical satellites of elaboration, contextualisation and extratextualisation, but are also used as corroborative means to appraise/evaluate the authorial position expressed through the authorial voice.

Grammatical metaphors, as a linguistic aesthetic, are also used to vivify and oftentimes over/dramatise situations. In this context such metaphors are used as an authorial evaluation which, in turn, influences the reading position of the new report. This is because grammatical metaphors are ideologically loaded <linguistic aesthetics/expressions>. As expressed earlier, , the analyses of the rhetorical structure of the 'hard news' reports in Zimbabwean reporting cultures in both English and Shona evince a heavy reliance on external voices. This may be seen as a strategy through which the authorial voice succeeds in distancing itself from ideological subjectivities, by making evaluations through the words of others, i.e., through the use of intertextual resources.

9. CONCLUSION

The article analysed and discussed the evaluative nature of the authorial voice in Zimbabwean news reports on one of the most politically contested/'controversial' issues in the country's contemporary political dispensation: the new constitution-making programme. The programme, as argued here, is a politically contested issue in the country's political dispensation, where a GNU prevails. The process is characterised by political 'wars' and 'contestations', as evident in the blame games and contestations about who is responsible for derailing the constitutional programme, about the technical handling of the constitutional programmes, as well as the content of the draft constitution. The news reports on the new constitution-making process exhibit a trend of polarity along political ideological lines – a situation arising from the political differences characterising the current political administration of the country.

As observed in this discussion, the structuring of 'hard news' reports in Zimbabwean newspapers across languages follows a similar pattern: it is largely characterised by a sequential arrangement of evaluative yet attributed linguistic resources predominantly occurring as quoted materials. These are mainly employed to serve as evaluative expressions, functioning as *elaboration*, *contextualisation* as well as *appraisal* satellites to and/or for the propositions made via the authorial voice. The news reports thus evince a structural arrangement that largely protects the authorial voice by making evaluations through external voices. A very important notion in the appraisal analyses done for news stories in Zimbabwean newspapers is the notion of 'appraising through the words of others' (Jullian 2011, <page>). This further explains why the larger part of evaluative resources, both inscriptions and invocations, are expressed through these external voices. The structural arrangement of the news reports in Zimbabwean newspapers would thus at best be described as a sequential arrangement of quoted material. One of the most notable observations is of an apparent trend cutting across both publications, in which the headlines and leads 'do not merely function as synopses for the major preoccupations of the news reports but are used to establish an evaluative position from which news angles and what is considered to be news worthy is selected' (<ref>). Even a cursory glance at such reports will, however, reveal a trend in which such attributed materials serve as reinforcements and/or elucidations of/to the positions established by the authorial voice in both the headlines and the leads of the bulk of the news reports.

NOTES

1   'Zimbabwe's sanctions standoff', *Crisis Group Africa Briefing* N° 86, February 6, 2012.
2   At the time of signing the MoU the two formations were MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the current Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and MDC-M led by Professor Arthur

Mutambara, currently Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic. The MDC formations were identified by the initial letters of the surnames of their respective leaders.

3 http://www.zanupf.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=191:i-will-call-for-elections-this-year-president

4 http://www.copac.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=619:milestones&catid=40:constitution-timeline-category&Itemid=152

5 'Constitution making process in Zimbabwe: Avenues for effective youth participation' http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/CONSTITUTIONMAKINGPROCESSINZIMBABWE.pdf (accessed August 1, 2012).

6 'I will call for elections this year, President: … **ZANU PF will soon withdraw from the dysfunctional Inclusive Government'** http://www.zanupf.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=191:i-will-call-for-elections-this-year-president (accessed July 13, 2012).

7 Ibid.

8 'ZANU-PF adamant elections should be held this year.' *Herald*, Friday June 10, 2011.

9 'Zimbabwe's sanctions standoff", *Crisis Group Africa Briefing* N° 86, February 6, 2012.

10 The EU and US have always insisted that there were no sanctions against Zimbabwe but merely restrictions on named political actors in the current regime, largely drawn from ZANU-PF. ZANU-PF on the other hand has continually insisted that these 'restrictions' are actually real sanctions against the country.

11 http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/zimb.aspx

12 'ZANU-PF speaks on elections.' *Herald*, Wednesday May 11, 2011.

13 'No elections this year.' *Newsday*, Friday July 15, 2011.

14 'Zimbabwe's sanctions standoff.' *Crisis Group Africa Briefing* N° 86, February 6, 2012.

15 'Constitution making process in Zimbabwe: Avenues for effective youth participation' http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/CONSTITUTIONMAKINGPROCESSINZIMBABWE.pdf (accessed August 1, 2012).

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 'Get UNDP out of Copac.' http://eu.zbc.co.zw/news-categories/top-stories/19487-we-dont-want-undps-assistance-analysts.html

19 'No lifting of sanctions without real reform.' *Zimbabwe Independent*, Thursday May 17, 2012.

20 'Copac money is no debt.' *Newsday*, Monday July 16, 2012.

21 'Constitution-making process stalls as CIO tries to manipulate data.' http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/7201.html (accessed August 2, 2012).

22 http://www.newzimbabwe.com/blog/index.php/author/amagaisa/

23 Again, the discord between these parties to the constitutional committee can only be understood within the context of the politically motivated constitution of members of the committee, as well as the political background that gave rise to such a constitution – the GNU.

REFERENCES

Bednarek, M. 2006. *Evaluation in Media Discourse: Analysis of a Newspaper Corpus.* London: Continuum.

Chomsky, N. 2002. *Media Control: The Spectator Achievements of Propaganda.* 2nd edition. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Du Bois, J. W. 2007. 'The Stance Triangle.' In *Stancetaking in Discourse: Subjectivity, Evaluation, Interaction*, ed. R. Englebretson, 139–182. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Gales, T. A. 2010. 'Ideologies of Violence: A Corpus and Discourse Analytic Approach to Stance in Threatening Communications.' PhD thesis, University of California.

Habermas, J. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press.

Hampton, M. 2008. The 'Objectivity' Ideal and its Limitations in 20th-century British Journalism. *Journalism Studies* 9 (4): 477–493.

Herman, E. and N. Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. <Place>: Pantheon.

Iedema, R., S. Feez and P. R. R. White. 1994. *Media Literacy.* Sydney: Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW Department of School Education.

Jullian, P. M. 2011. 'Appraising through Someone Else's Word: The Evaluative Power of Quotations in News Reports.' *Discourse and Society* 22 (6): 766–780.

Klaehn, J., ed. 2005. *Filtering the News: Essays on Herman and Chomsky's 'Propaganda Model'*. Montreal: Black Rose.

Lipmann, W. 1922. *Public Opinion.* New York: Free Press.

Lukin, A. 2005. 'Mapping Media Bias: A Multidimensional Affair.' *Australian Journalism Review* 27 (1): 139–155.

Martin, J. R. and D. Rose. 2003. *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*. London: Continuum.

Martin, J. R. and P. R. R. White. 2005. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English.* <Place>: Palgrave Macmillan.

McCabe, A. and K. Heilman. 2007. 'Textual and Interpersonal Differences between a News Report and an Editorial.' *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 20: 139–156.

McCombs, M. 2004. *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion.* London: Polity Press.

McCombs, M. E. and D. L. Shaw. 1972. 'The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media.' *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36: 176–187.

Miller, K. 2005. *Communicating Theories: Perspectives, Processes and Contexts*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Seghezzi, N. A. 2007. 'Intertextuality in the News.' *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 20: 195–221.

Thomson, E. A., P. R. R. White and P. Kitley. 2008. '"Objectivity" and "Hard News" Reporting across Cultures: Comparing the News Report in English, French, Japanese and Indonesian Journalism.' *Journalism Studies* 9 (2): 212–228.

Tran, V. T. H. and E. A. Thomson. 2008. 'The Nature of the 'Reporter Voice' in a Vietnamese Hard News Story.' In *Communicating Conflict: Multilingual Case Studies of the News Media*, ed. E. A. Thomson and P. R. R. White, 51–64. London: Continuum.

Ward, S. J. A. 2009. 'Journalism Ethics.' In *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, ed. K. Wahl-Jorgensen and T. Hanitzsch, <pages>. New York and London: Routledge.

White, P. R. R. 2000. 'Media Objectivity and the Rhetoric of News Story Structure.' In *Discourse and Community: Doing Functional Linguistics.* Language in Performance 21, ed. E. Ventola, 379–397. Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.<journal or book?>

White, P. R. R. 2002. 'Appraisal – the Language of Evaluation and Stance.' In *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. J. Verschueren, J. O. Östman, J. Blommaert and C. Bulcaen, 1–23. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

White, P. R. R. 2005. 'The Appraisal Website: The Language of Attitude, Arguability and Interpersonal Positioning.' http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/index.html (accessed April 11, 2011).

White, P. R. R. and E. A. Thomson. 2008. 'The News Story as Rhetoric: Linguistic Approaches to the Analysis of Journalistic Discourse.' In *Communicating Conflict: Multilingual Case Studies of the News Media*, ed. E. A. Thomson and P. R. R. White, 1–23. London: Continuum.

LANGUAGE POLICY, IDEOLOGIES, POWER AND THE ETHIOPIAN MEDIA

Professor Abiodun Salawu
Department of Communication
North-West University Mafikeng Campus, Mmabatho, South Africa
abiodun.salawu@nwu.ac.za

and
Asemahagn Aseres
School of Journalism and Communication
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
asemahagn.aseres@aau.edu.et

ABSTRACT

Ethiopia is one of the very few African countries where the local language press is in the mainstream. Amharic-language newspapers are dominant. This article examines the extent of the dominance of the Amharic press and the factors responsible for this. It also looks at language politics in the country and activism for linguistic human rights, particularly in the media domain. A combination of literature reviews and document analyses were used to obtain data for the study. The Amharic language enjoys a privileged position compared to other indigenous languages of Ethiopia and English. Amharic is the second most widely spoken Semitic language in the world, after Arabic. It is the official working language of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and several states

70

within the federal system. It is also the official language of the military and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tehawado Church. Although it is only indigenous to about 23 per cent of the population, its official status sees it being spoken nationwide. Interestingly, Afan Oromo, a Cushitic language, is indigenous to 33.80 per cent of the population, and thus can be regarded as the largest indigenous language in Ethiopia. While the wide dissemination of local language media in Ethiopia can be explained by the historical fact that the country was never colonised, the emergence of Amharic as the de facto language of the nation and the media is what interests this author. This study discovered that the dominance of Amharic is due to the language policies of successive Ethiopian regimes down the ages which privileged it over other indigenous languages.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is a country in the north-eastern part of Africa. It is highly ethnically and linguistically diverse, with about 80 different languages spoken in its territory (Gebremedhin 2006, 4; Hudson 2004). Smith (2008, 214) asserts that its diversity comes with a varied and contested history relating to issues of ethnicity and language. There are significantly large Ethiopian language groups (Afan Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya) as well as numerous smaller ones (Bogale 2009, 1089). Amharic plays a role as the sometimes contested yet functional lingua franca of the country.

The print media in Ethiopia are predominantly Amharic. In precise terms, 38 of the 42 newspapers and magazines circulating in the country are in Amharic. This author acknowledges that it is problematic to give specific figures of news publications in circulation in Ethiopia at any given time, as proscription of newspapers is a regular and continuous exercise in the country. It is therefore difficult to rely wholly on the website of the supposedly authoritative Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (www.eba.gov.et). Amharic media represent at least 90 per cent of the entire number of the publications in the country. Although Amharic, a Semitic language, is only indigenous to 22.99 per cent (the Amhara ethnic group) of the population, its official status sees it being spoken nationwide. Interestingly, Afan Oromo (or Oromiffa), a Cushitic language, is indigenous to 33.80 per cent of the population, and can thus be regarded as the largest indigenous language in Ethiopia. However, Amharic is unquestionably the dominant language in the country (Smith 2008).

There have been protests among the Oromo people against the dominance of Amharic in politics and media. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF),1 a group agitating for the linguistic and cultural survival of the Oromo, has complained about 'being sidelined in the country's politics and media representation' (OLF 2008), accusing the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government of

suppressing Oromo media. For instance, the Front has described the government as 'a debilitating cancer for the Oromo media' (OLF 2008). As evidence they cite the closure of Wanchif, Seifa Nebelbal and Urji newspapers, Tomar magazine and Oromo Television (temporarily), among numerous other smaller publications and broadcasters.

The potency of Ethiopians' language identity is not in doubt (Smith 2008, 243), and this explains the protests by the OLF. This is further illustrated by violent and deadly protests in the Wolaitta region of southern Ethiopia, against the decision to combine four previously distinct languages of the region – Wolaitta, Gamo, Gofa and Dawro – into one language called Wagagoda (ibid.). The fact is that despite the linguistic homogeneity policy which the Ethiopian government strives to pursue, the preservation of a distinct language identity is paramount for each ethnic group.

The question that interests this study is how the Amharic language, despite its smallness in relation to Oromo as a language, came to be dominant in the public domain – including in the media of Ethiopia – and how language politics play out in the media.

2. ETHIOPIA: HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The civilisation of Axumite is of immense significance in Ethiopian history. The Christian Axumite Empire of Ethiopia reached its zenith in 4A.D. (Paulos and Getachew 2005). At the end of the first millennium, 'an amalgamated Christian state of Zagwe', led by the Agews of the northern central region of Ethiopia, came to power (ibid, 15). Again in the late 13th century, the Zagwe gave way to the dynasty which claimed descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, 'a genealogy providing the legitimacy and continuity so honoured in Ethiopia's subsequent national saga' (ibid.). By the 15th century, the Solomonic dynasty started decaying. This was followed by resistance from a Muslim vassal, the Adal sultanate of the Harar region, to pay tribute and a percentage of its trading profits to the then central government of Ethiopia. In 1527, the Adal leader, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, known in Ethiopian history as Ahmad Gragn ('Ahmad the Left-handed'), equipped with fire-arms and aided by the Ottoman Turks, ravaged the Christian empire that still depended on outmoded weapons of war (Paulos and Getachew 2005). By 1535, Gragn led a vast Islamic empire stretching from Zeila (Seylac) to Massawa (Mistiwa) in present-day Eritrea. After this triumphant march, Gragn was defeated by Emperor Galawdewos in 1543 with the help of Portuguese soldiers.

The clash between the two paved the way for the Oromo population, who were neither Christians nor Muslims, to expand their territory from the Genale, Bale and Borena regions towards the Christian highlands through military force. This was followed by Zemene Mesafent (the period of princes), characterised by feudal

72

anarchy when kings were nominal and actual power was in the hands of landlords. The situation continued for almost 150 years, until the ascension to the throne of Kassa, from Amhara Gondar, who was crowned emperor under the throne name Tewodros II of Ethiopia in 1855.

Following the suicide of Tewodros II in 1868 at the battle of Maqdala, where he refused to surrender to General Napier who had been sent to free British and other European prisoners of the Emperor, Kassa Hailu adopted Yohannes IV as his throne name and became emperor of Ethiopia on January 21, 1872 (Bahru 2002). Yohannes IV, who was subsequently killed while fighting Mahdist forces, was succeeded by the king of Shoa, who became Emperor Menelik II in 1889. He named Addis Ababa the capital of Ethiopia in the same year. Menelik II was an ambitious king who created the present Ethiopia by expanding his terrain <towards all four corners of the continent>.

In 1896, the Italian forces were defeated by the Ethiopians at Adwa, and the treaty of Wichale was annulled. Italy recognised Ethiopia's independence, but retained control over Eritrea.

> Adwa was the greatest military operation between Africans and Europeans since the time of Hannibal. For the victors it was the most decisive, for the vanquished, the most catastrophic, given that the Italian colonialist soldiers were crushed totally and in every way. Indeed, their defeat was extraordinary in scale: their casualty figure was 70%; all their artillery pieces were captured; one out of four of their generals were taken prisoner and two of the remaining as well as almost half of their staff officers were killed on the battlefield. The Battle of Adwa — Reflections on the Historic Victory of Ethiopia against European Colonialism elucidates and scrutinizes this event with the hindsight of over one hundred years. (Paulos and Getachew 2005, 19)

In 1913, Menelik died and was succeeded by his grandson, Lij Iyasu. After an internal power struggle, Lij Iyasu was deposed and was succeeded by Menelik's daughter, Zauditu, who ruled through a regent, Ras Tafari Makonnen. The internal power struggle continued between the queen and the regent, and finally Zauditu died in 1930 and her successor, Ras Tafari Makonnen, became Emperor Haile Selassie I.

Italy, intent on exacting revenge on Ethiopia following the Italian humiliation at the battle of Adwa, invaded Ethiopia again in 1935. In the following year, the Italians captured Addis Ababa, and Haile Selassie fled to Britain to try to exert diplomatic influence on the fascist Italian invaders. The king of Italy was made emperor of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, and all regions in the so-called Italian East Africa. However, Ethiopian patriots who had put up fierce resistance against the Italians reclaimed their independence with the help of Britain in 1941, after five years of occupation. As a result, Emperor Selassie reclaimed his throne at home in Ethiopia.

In the course of Selassie's reign, he encountered strong opposition from farmers, students, the military and other sectors of society, due to the slow pace of change

(Bahru 2002). Starvation and maladministration in the country triggered a new brand of opposition from farmers in Bale and Gojjam provinces, and university students at large. Slogans such as 'land to tailor' <what does this mean?> became popular among Ethiopian university students. The emperor having failed to control the then opposition, the military overthrew Selassie in 1974, secretly killing him while he was in their custody.

The military ruler, Teferi Benti, began steering the country towards a Marxist-economic orientation. However, due to internal conflict among the derg (committee of the military regime), Benti was assassinated for the good of the 'revolution'. Mengistu Haile Mariam came to power in 1977 and the ongoing 'revolution' led to the killing of thousands, with 'white and red terrors' claiming the lives of many young Ethiopians. The Tigrean People's Liberation Front started a war for regional autonomy. Finally, after 17 years of civil war, the military regime was deposed in 1991. The EPRDF captured Addis Ababa and came to power while Mengistu Haile Mariam fled the country. Eritrea, awaiting independence, established a provisional government that year, and gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993.

Meanwhile, history repeated itself with border disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea leading to further violent clashes in 1998. War was declared the following year and it took the lives of more than 70 000 people until a ceasefire was signed between the two countries, with the help of the United Nations in June 2000. In December 2000, the two countries signed a peace agreement at Algeria that enabled prisoners to return to their respective countries.

Significantly, in 1994 the EPRDF administration implemented a federal system that divided the country into regions based on ethnicity (Adejumobi 2007).

2.2.1. LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN ETHIOPIA

There are 73 distinct languages in Ethiopia (Girma 2009), belonging to four language families: Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilo-Saharan. Table 1 shows the total number of mother-tongue speakers of each of the four language families, as well as totals for the most populous language for each group (cf. Smith 2008, 215).

Table 1: Language families in Ethiopia

Language family	No. of speakers	Largest language	No. of speakers
Cushitic	26 469 394	Oromo	16 777 975
Nilo-Saharan	482 212	Gumuz	120 424
Omotic	3 989 694	Wolayta	1 231 674
Semitic	22 511 505	Amharic	17 372 913

Source: Hudson (2003, 94)
Note: The Ethiopian population has grown since the publication of these data.

Based on Ferguson's (1966) scheme for classifying languages into three categories, namely major, minor and special status (McNab 1989), Amharic, Oromigna (Afan Oromo), Tigrigna, English, and 'possibly' Somali are given the status of major languages in Ethiopia (Bender et al. in McNab 1989). The dominant (major) language in Ethiopia is Amharic (Amharigna) (McNab 1989), due to the official status conferred on it as the language of government, business, and, to a large extent, education. As the official language it is learnt and spoken by a large number of Ethiopians, irrespective of their mother-tongue. Oromigna and Tigrigna are designated as major languages on the basis of the number of mother-tongue speakers (ibid.). English is included as a major language on the grounds of its 'crucial position in education, commerce, government and international communication' (ibid, 56). McNab prefers, however, to classify the English language in Ethiopia as a language of special status, since it is not the mother tongue of any Ethiopians, while its use in the country is also strictly formal (McNab 1989.)

Ethiopia's languages can thus be categorised as follows: major languages: Amharic, Oromigna, Tigrigna; minor languages: Afarigna, Gedeoigna, Haidyigna, Kefa-Mochigna, Kembatigna, Kunamigna, Sahoigna, Siltigna, Sidamigna, Somaligna, Wolaitigna; special status languages: Arabic, English and Geez. Arabic and Geez are used for religious purposes, while English and Amharic are used for educational purposes.

3. LANGUAGE POLICY, IDEOLOGIES OF POWER AND LINGUISTIC HUMAN RIGHTS

Three phases characterised the literature on language policy and planning (LPP) research (in Africa), according to Ricento (2000). The first phase (early 1960s) marked the designation of languages of wider communication (such as English) for use in limited, formal and specialised domains, and indigenous languages for general purposes. Sociolinguistic research during this phase held that linguistic homogeneity was more appropriate for furthering the goals of modernisation and Westernisation than linguistic diversity, which was seen as an obstacle (cf. Chibita 2006, 243; Salawu 2007). Similarly, the argument during this phase was that homogeneity or having a 'unifying' language was important for nation-building, which explains the notion of designating as national languages only such languages deemed developed or 'developable'. Some countries in East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya) took this seriously and downplayed the use of the different indigenous languages in the public domain in favour of the lingua franca, Kiswahili.

The second phase (roughly from the early 1970s through the late 1980s) of research indicated a realisation that language policy and planning were not neutral academic exercises, but were informed by political and economic motives related to the interests of key Western nations (Ricento 2000, 14). Research during this

phase demonstrated that favouring colonial languages (English, French, Portuguese) on the continent, as neutral media to aid the development process in developing countries, was informed by the need to further the economic interests of countries in the metropolis, rather than by any inherent superiority of the languages themselves (Ricento in Chibita 2006). Features of the third phase (roughly from the mid-1980s to the present) of LPP research are related to trends such as globalisation, postmodernism and linguistic human rights.

Ricento (2000, 206) notes that while scholars (such as Fishman) in the first period of LLP research were aware of issues of hegemony and ideology, they did not position these ideas as central in processes of language planning and policy, nor did they explore the ways in which 'language policy arbitrarily gives importance to language in the organisation of human societies' (cf. Tollefson 1991, 2). Fishman (1994, 93) admits that language planning tends to reproduce sociocultural and econotechnical inequalities. Critics of classical language planning, such as Tollefson (1991), object to the characterisation (explicitly or implicitly) of language planning as a neutral, often beneficial, problem-solving activity. Ricento (2000, 206) remarks that this is precisely the sort of attitude that post-structural and neo-Marxist critics identify as ideological, and one which easily becomes hegemonic. Spitulnik (1998) contends that the use or non-use of a specific language in a particular context is never value-free. According to her, certain types of power relations are maintained through managing language in the public domain. Thus, she acknowledges the role of the media, law and education in the construction and maintenance of what she calls 'linguistic hegemonies' (Spitulnik 1998, 164–165).

In clear terms, critical approaches to language ideology explore the capacity for language and linguistic ideologies to be used as strategies for maintaining social power and domination (Woolard 1998; Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). Ricento (2000, 205) reveals that Tollefson (1989, 1991), influenced by the critical social theories of Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens and Michel Foucault, has explored the connections between ideologies of power in the modern state and the development of language policies in eight different countries. Scholars such as Wiley (1996, 1998); Giroux (1981); Tollefson (1986, 1991, 1995); Crawford (1989, 1992); Luke, McHoul and Mey (1990); Darder (1991); Cummins (1994); Freeman (1996) and Ricento (1998) have investigated the connection between ideology and language policies in education. Ricento (2000) notes that Lippi-Green (1997) explored the ideologies informing attitudes toward language, and hence language policies, in the United States (US) along with the negative consequences of such (often unofficial) policies for marginalised groups within the education system, the media, the workplace and the judicial system.

Spitulnik (1998) reiterates this notion when she states that underlying attitudes about the inferiority or superiority of languages manifest in policies that either favour or disadvantage different linguistic groups. Woolard (1998, 17) similarly

76

notes that 'rankings of language continue to be invoked to regulate access of speech varieties to prestigious institutional uses and of their speakers to domains of power and privilege'. The media invariably represent one such domain of power. Chibita (2006, 253) remarks that determining which languages may be used in the media and how, can be a powerful instrument of control, and a way to enhance the participation of some members of society while limiting that of others. Spitulnik (1998, 165) lends credence to this when she argues that the distribution of power often influences the distribution of roles for various languages: 'As mass media build the communicative space of the nation-state, all of a nation's languages, dialects, language varieties, and speech communities associated with them, are automatically drawn into relations with one another.'

It is not unusual in linguistically and ethnically diverse settings, therefore, for some languages to have token representation in the media or to be totally absent (Chibita 2006). In somewhat similar vein, Ricento (2000, 204) reveals that critical scholars such as Robert Phillipson examined the links between the imposition of imperial languages, and the fate of indigenous languages and cultures around the world. According to Phillipson (1997), language becomes a vector and means by which an unequal division of power and resources between groups is propagated, thwarting social and economic progress for those who do not learn the language of modernity (and power). In the case of Ethiopia, it is not just about a foreign language (English) but about Amharic, which incidentally is also a local language. Ricento (2000) notes that besides the indirect marginalisation of languages through structural economic and ideological means, more direct methods have been adopted to suppress, through legislation, certain languages in education and in public life. He thus prescribes that the 'cure' for 'linguicism' (a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas and which means the use of language as a vector and means by which an unequal division of power and resources between groups is propagated) and linguistic genocide involves a proactive political and moral response, especially the promotion – and acceptance – of linguistic human rights by states and international bodies as universal principles (ibid, 204). Linguistic human rights include, amongst others, the rights to one's own language in legal, judicial and administrative acts, as well as rights to access education and media in a language understood and freely chosen by those concerned. This panacea is what Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996, 429) refer to as the ecology-of-language paradigm.

4. THE MEDIA IN ETHIOPIA

Printing came into Ethiopia during the reign of Menelik II in the late 19th century (Meseret 2013; subi2000.com). Aimero, the first newspaper (1902–1903), was published in Amharic. Another early newspaper was Le Semeur d'Ethiope (1905–1911) (Tadesse 2000). Radio and television came to Ethiopia in 1935 and

1964 respectively (Gebremedhin 2006; subi2000.com). Television broadcasting remains undeveloped in Ethiopia, as there are only three channels: the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) 1, 2 and 3. Initially, EBC 1 only broadcast for 12 hours on workdays and 18 hours over weekends. It now broadcasts 24 hours a day. EBC 2 broadcasts only two hours and has short area transmission. EBC 1 broadcasts in Tigrigna, Afan Ormo (Oromiffa), Amharic, French, Arabic, Somaligna, Afarigna and English, while EBC 2 only broadcasts to the capital city, Addis Ababa, in Amharic. EBC 3, which is mainly an entertainment channel, broadcasts syndicated programmes 24 hours a day.

Since EBC is the national broadcaster, it allocates airtime for regional television stations to broadcast their programmes. Moreover, through television satellites like Nilesat, Oromia (Oromia TV), Amhara (Amhara TV), and Ethiopian Somali (ES TV), regions now have their own television stations which run independently, broadcasting more than 12 hours a day. Other regions are preparing themselves to open autonomous television stations. Addis Ababa is to launch a television station called Addis TV, to broadcast 18 hours a day on Nilesat satellite.

The national state-run radio broadcaster is EBC Ethiopian National Radio, Radio Ethiopia. Broadcasting in Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, Afar, Somali, Arabic, English and French, Radio Ethiopia claims its signal covers over 80 per cent of Ethiopian territory (Gebremedhin 2006, 16). Another national station is Radio Fana Broadcasting Corporation. Formerly solely owned by the ruling EPRDF, it claims 80 per cent coverage of the country. At regional level there are at least 20 state-owned radio stations, which include the FM Addis 97.1, Addis Ababa City Administration Radio Station (FM 96.3), Amhara Mass media (which includes Amhara radio, FM 96.9, FM 91.4, FM 91.2, FM 88.0, FM 87.9), Harar Station, Metu Station, Voice of Weyanie (Tigriga), Debub mass media (which includes FM 100.9 and FM 92.3) and Dire Dawa FM. There are also seven private commercial FM radio stations, six of which are based in Addis Ababa (Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7, Fana FM 98.1, Afro FM 105.3, Admas FM 101.1 and Abay FM 102.9 on trial now) and one in Mekelle (Dimtsi Woyane Tigray) (EBA 2014).

The print media have flourished in Ethiopia. Besides the two early presses mentioned before, Emperor Haile Selassie I also started an Amharic newspaper with the title Yetor Wore (War News) during the World War I, to counter German propaganda (Tadesse 2000). Berhanena Selam, another Amharic newspaper, was also founded on January 1, 1925 (Skjerdal 2012). There was also a monthly magazine which published in a variety of European languages and Amharic, started by one Mr. Weizinger. L'Ethiopie Commerciale, a French weekly, started in 1932. In 1935, two newspapers were established: the quarterly Kasate Birhan (Light Giver) and a political weekly, Atibiya Kokeb (Morning Star). They were, however, short-lived.

Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 caused a lull in printing activities. At the end of the interregnum, newspapers such as Addis Zemen and Sendek Alamachen

were established in 1941. Addis Zemen, published in Amharic and owned by the Ethiopian national government, still exists and is one of the major newspapers in Ethiopia. Its sister publications (in the same stable) include Ethiopian Herald (English) and Bariisaa (Oromiffa) which are basically appendages to Addis Zemen. While Addis Zemen is a daily, so is the Ethiopian Herald, but it does not appear on Mondays. Bariisaa is a weekly. Addis Zemen is in broadsheet format, while Herald is in Berliner and Bariisaa in tabloid format.

The media policy of the EPRDF government provided impetus for the establishment of more private newspapers in Ethiopia. However, most of these newspapers are Amharic. Such private presses, which deal mainly with social and political issues, are Addis Admas, Reporter and Ethio-Channel. A clampdown on the private press after the 2005 elections saw many journalists being arrested and several newspapers being proscribed by the EPDRF government. Currently, private presses in Ethiopia operate under difficult circumstances, as they have to rely on government printers or the EPRDF press for their printing needs. With this kind of leverage, state presses have, on occasion, refused to print publications that are deemed antagonistic towards the EPRDF government. This kind of scenario stifles independent and opposition press.

Some Amharic weekly newspapers focus on sport, such as Ethio-Sport, League-Sport, Hatrick, World-Sport etc. A number of private newspapers publish in English and other local languages, for example Fortune, Capital, Sub-Saharan Informer, Daily Monitor etc. None of the English publications are dailies, except Daily Monitor. Readership of the English publications is also low compared to their Amharic counterparts.

5. THE ASCENDANCY AND DOMINANCE OF AMHARIC: LANGUAGE POLITICS IN ETHIOPIA

In terms of orthography, Ethiopia has an age-old tradition of writing which is among the most ancient in the world. Literary works were mostly produced by churches and courts of the then Axum civilization (McNab 1989). Bender et al. (in McNab 1989, 93) describe the development of Ethiopian script:

Axum was situated in what is now Tigre province in northern Ethiopia. This area was invaded by Semitic tribes from southern Arabia in the early Christian era, and it is suggested by Bender et al (sic) that the system of writing developed for the Axumite language Geez was an adaptation from the Sabaean script. The Axumite civilization had fallen into decay by the 9th century A.D. and Geez was probably no longer in common usage by the 13th century. However, the Axumites had converted to Christianity in the 4th century A.D. and Geez became the language of the church. By virtue of this and a related literary function, Geez retained a place of central importance in Ethiopian cultural life. Its subsequent history largely paralleled that of Latin in pre-Reformation Europe.

The above excerpt propagates one of two hypotheses on the origin of Ethio-Semitic languages, namely the migration hypothesis. The second is the non-migration hypothesis, which 'considers the Ethio-Semitic languages as ones developed out of that of the South Arabian immigrants' (Girma 2009, 7). The non-migration hypothesis 'holds not only that the Ethio-Semitic people live in their home of origin but also that the languages that they speak are indigenous' (ibid.).

Tigre, Tigrigna, Amharic, Argoba, Harari, Gafat (a dead language) and Gurage are Ethiopian languages which are related to Geez (Hetzron and Bender in Girma 2009). Amharic developed its script based on the Geez syllabary, in which all symbols were retained and new ones were developed (Girma 2009; McNab 1989). The Amharic writing system developed into a core of 33 characters (fidel), with each occurring in a basic form plus six other forms/orders. The seven orders represent syllable combinations consisting of a consonant plus a vowel – a total of 231 characters. There are also further sets of characters representing special features, but only about 20 of these are commonly used (Bender et al. in Girma 2009).

Amharic, a Semitic language related to Arabic and Hebrew, is the second most widely spoken Semitic language next to Arabic. Girma (2009, viii) comprehensively discusses the origin of Amharic by citing the works of other linguistic scholars such as Bender (1983) who is 'the first and so far the only one who tried to give detailed linguistic explanations from theoretical and historical perspectives'. Baye (2000) is also mentioned in this regard.

To date, the origin of Amharic is not known clearly. There are hypotheses formulated by language scholars based on oral traditions and research outputs. One hypothesis which is widely held is Bender's (1983) explanation of Amharic originating as a result of a pidginisation process. This hypothesis claims that Amharic probably originated with a Semitic superstratum and a Cushitic substratum, somewhere in the northwestern highlands of Ethiopia where soldiers spoke a mix of different languages as a common means of communicating, and that this mix spread throughout Ethiopia afterwards by way of military expeditions (Girma 2009). Oral tradition has it that Amharic was created by a group of church scholars, since 'the then dominant languages, Geez and Tigrinya, were not good for communication. Due to this, the scholars decided and gathered to create a language smooth for pronunciation. This group of scholars thus created Amharic from Tigrinya and Geez' (ibid, 3).

Contradicting the pidgin hypothesis, Girma (2009, 5) states that 'there is another one which considers the possibility of the origin of Amharic as a non-pidgin'. However, scholars are still debating the issue (ibid.), and gathering research-based evidence.

Appleyard (2003, 232) notes that 'the original home of Amharic is obviously to be found in the lands covered by the name Amhara, a somewhat flexible term in its

application at different periods, but the earliest occurrences of the name refer to the area east of Abbay between the Bashilo and Weleqa rivers'.

Amharic is spoken by the majority of the Ethiopian population as either a first or a second language. Though it is relatively young compared to (other) Cushitic languages in Ethiopia, it remains the official and dominant language. The question is: Why did it become a dominant language in Ethiopia? To understand this reality, it is crucial to assess the spread and development of the language itself.

According to Girma (2009) there is no consensus on the time when Amharic came to be recognised as the language of administration: it was either during Lalibela (1140–1180) or later during Yikuno Amlak (1270–1285), since it is generally believed that Amharic's golden era began with the reign of the latter in the 13th century. This period can be taken as a significant point in the spread of the Amharic language. The second major expansion of the language started from the end of the 19th century with the reign of Emperor Menelik II (ibid.). Amharic spread to outlying territories in the southern and eastern parts of the country during the emperor's territorial expansion. This geographic expansion was accompanied by the introduction of modern schools, media, new administration systems and towns (ibid.).

> Amharic as a language was highly promoted from the end of the 19th century. When printed books and newspapers were introduced in Ethiopia, it started to replace Ge'ez with the function of a written language. Amharic was used as the language of education and administration and, consequently, developed until the 1990s as the main lingua franca in Ethiopian towns and thus, became part of a greater 'Ethiopian' identity. (Meyer 2006, 132)

Coopers (in McNab 1989, 58) argues that the spread of Amharic occurred in three ways: 'as a lingua franca, as a mother tongue, [or] as superposed variety, that is as a language which displaces the original language in certain functions.' Military conquest, its use as a language of administration, its role as a lingua franca (especially in urban areas) as well as the material benefits connected with the acquisition of Amharic are some of the factors that contributed to its spread in Ethiopia (McNab 1989, 58). Phenomena such as urbanisation, public education, mass communication and nationalism may also have contributed to the recent spread of Amharic (Coopers in McNab 1989, 58).

Household survey data gathered by the Central Statistical Office between 1964 and 1968, from 188 towns and Addis Ababa, were analysed for the Ethiopian Language Survey. The findings support the hypothesis that urbanisation is a factor in the spread of Amharic (McNab 1989, 58–59):

> Not only did a substantial majority of the urban population claim Amharic as either their mother tongue (48 percent in the small towns) or their home language (75 percent in Addis Ababa), but Amharic was the most widely diffused language in urban Ethiopia … the percentage of the urban population claiming Amharic was substantially greater than the

percentage of the national population with Amharic as mother tongue. (Cooper and Horvath in McNab 1989, 58)

Urbanisation and the spread of Amharic can be linked to 'increased access to public education, increased exposure to mass media, and increased likelihood of industrial or other modern sector jobs' (McNab 1989, 58).

Among the Amarigna (Amharic) speaking population slightly over half (55.4%) are Amharas while the remaining 44.6% belonged to different ethnic groups … almost all the Amharas and a great majority of the Gurages, Oromos and Tigrawais have been reported to speak Amharigna at home. On the other hand, the data reveal that the majority of the Aderes and Dorzes speak their mother tongue at home. (Central Statistical Office of Ethiopia 1987, 32)

Research conducted by Meyer and Richer (2003) in various towns (Afar, Amhara, Gambela, Oromia, Somali); and in southern nations, nationalities and peoples (SNNP), regional states and major cities (Addis Ababa, Harar and Dire Dawa) concludes that Amharic is used as lingua franca in every town of Ethiopia.

As noted, the use of Amharic stretches back at least several centuries. Its use outside of the Amhara land is, however, more recent (Smith 2008, 216). Prior to the widespread use of Amharic, the classical language Geez was used, primarily by the religious elite and some educated intellectuals (poets and writers). Though Geez is no longer the mother tongue of anyone, it is still used within the Ethiopian orthodox circle (Bender et al. 1976). Amharic took over from Geez as the lingua franca of Ethiopia from the early 19th century. Influenced by Emperor Tewodros, Amharic became the official written as well as spoken language of the Ethiopian state (Bahru 1991; Girma-Selassie and Appleyard 1979; Pankhurst 1992). It should, however, be noted that written Amharic remained the language of elites throughout the reign of the first three emperors of modern Ethiopia: Tewodros, Yohannes and Menilek II (Smith 2008, 216), mainly because literacy was severely limited at that time.

In the early 20th century, and particularly during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, Amharic orthography became standardised and the language became more widely used in its written form. This became necessary as the emperor strove for political centralisation. In essence, Amharic was developed to the status of a national language during the reign of Haile Selassie:

It was no accident that Haile Selassie became the great champion of a national language. Building a centralized and modern state required taking radical political steps to reduce the power of regional nobility and this was a primary accomplishment of his reign. However, it was not only his state-building vision, but his vision of a nation of Ethiopians, that propelled Haile Selassie towards Amharic. It was the package of policies systematically applied by the regime of Haile Selassie, under the rubric of Amharisation, and prominently including Amharic language acquisition, which explain the tremendous historical significance of language identities and language policy in Ethiopia today. (Smith 2008, 216–217)

82

This language policy became more formalised and accentuated at the end of the Italian occupation in 1941. Amharic became the medium of instruction (MOI) in the first two grades, and by 1950s it was the MOI for all levels of primary school. In addition, Amharic, alongside English, became obligatory in certification examinations and for admission into the only university in the country at that time, Haile Selassie I University. Smith (ibid, 217) remarks that this gave a distinct advantage to native speakers of Amharic. Other languages were suppressed, and it was not legal to teach, publish or use any other indigenous language for public business (Boothe and Walker 1997, 2; Keller 1988, 160; Mekuria 1997).

The reception of Amharic as the national language was not without its difficulties in the regions of southern, eastern and western Ethiopia, where most subjects were non-Semitic speakers and either Muslims or adherents of traditional religions. Emperor Haile Selassie used foreign Christian missionaries to accomplish the dual tasks of language homogenisation and religious conversion. The Imperial Decree 3 of 1944 allowed missionaries to teach in indigenous languages other than Amharic, but only orally and only in the early stages of missionary work, until they and their pupils had learned Amharic (Smith 2008, 218).

There was a deliberate policy of suppressing the Oromo language. Most missions had a policy and practice of promoting local language use, particularly for Bible translation; despite the fact that the missionaries served as catalysts for Haile Selassie's national integration project, some continued to conduct other language development activities. The success of the Bible translation projects sometimes pitted the missionaries and their converts against the imperial government. Smith (ibid.) reports that the successful and prolific Oromo scholar and evangelical Onesimos Nasib, for instance, translated the Bible and other religious literature, and also compiled an Oromo dictionary and translated secular works. As these texts became popular cultural and educational tools they threatened the hegemonic project of Amharisation, and in 1906 Onesimos was banned from preaching and teaching (Bahru 2002; Mekuria 1997, 2002).

The imperial language policy was resented by non-Amharic-speaking ethno-linguistic groups who complained that it contributed to the 'dehumanization and subsequent alienation of groups speaking non-official languages' (McNab 1990, 59). Mekuria (1997) notes that education in particular is a site for humiliation and alienation, contributing to high attrition rates and low levels of literacy among non-Amhara peoples.

The media were another site of humiliation and alienation. Smith (2008, 219) reveals that though there was a small opening in the late 1960s when four ethnic languages – Tigrinya, Tigre, Somali and Afar – began to be broadcast by government-owned radio stations, these were not genuine attempts to reinvent or redefine the content and nature of belonging in the Ethiopian nation-state. Significantly, the continuing ban on the use of Afan Oromo, with by far the largest group of any

83

language speakers in the country, provides compelling evidence that this practice was not intended to allow the flourishing of cultural or linguistic identities (Smith 2008).

With the overthrow of the imperial government of Haile Selassie, there was a movement away from full linguistic domination. But overall, the centralist bent of the regime and the ethnolinguistic composition of the derg(ue) itself helped perpetuate Amharic language dominance at all levels. Although the derg(ue) literacy campaign incorporated Amharic, Tigrinya, Afan Oromo, Somali and Afar, campaign materials were produced in these languages in the Ethiopic/Amharic alphabet called fidel (Markakis 2003, 15), against which there was resistance from non-Semitic languages. Smith (2008, 221) notes that despite substantive changes in language policy under the derg(ue), Amharic knowledge remained a prerequisite of political or economic participation. The 1987 constitution clearly made Amharic the official language of the state.

By the time the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) took over from the derg(ue) in 1991, there had been declining enrolment figures in all levels of education. The new government quickly moved to arrest this tide, through its Ministry of Education (MOE) drafting a policy statement on language which provided for the use of national languages such as Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrayigna, Wolaittigna and Sidamigna in schools. Boothe and Walker (1997, 5) report that studies were to be done on the introduction of another language as an MOI as soon as was feasible, and a national referendum was to be held on the question of a language of national communication, yet such a referendum was never held. By the time of the MOE's 1994 policy statement, the referendum had been shelved completely and Amharic was designated as the 'language of countrywide communication' (Ethiopia MOE 1994, 24). It should, however, be noted that the efforts of the TGE included a policy switch which <recommended> the use of Latin script for Cushitic languages in particular, along with the decentralisation of language choice.

Article 5 of Ethiopia's 1995 constitution under the TGE/EPRDF guarantees that 'all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition. Amharic shall be the working language of the federal government. Members of the federation may by law determine their respective working languages.' This provision is ambiguous, as there is inconsistency in the application of the multilingual policy. The dominance of Amharic and the ambiguous status of English undermine the equity and recognition potential of the use of the other national languages.

6. CONCLUSION

Unlike what obtains in most African nations, the indigenous language press – to be specific, the Amharic press – is in the mainstream in Ethiopia. Amharic is dominant in the domains of media, education, government and commerce, despite the fact

that it is not the language with the greatest number of mother-tongue speakers in Ethiopia. This is due to the language policies of successive regimes down the ages which privileged Amharic over other indigenous languages including Afan Oromo, which has the greatest number of native speakers. This is a position that is ideological and reflective of the power relations among the various languages.

NOTE

1   OLF is deemed a terrorist organisation by the Ethiopian House of Peoples and Representatives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

*Ethiopian first names are used for formal purposes. Therefore, contrary to the tradition of writing an author's second (surname) name for reference, Ethiopians' first names are written.

Adejumobi, A. S. 2007. The History of Ethiopia. Westport, Connecticut and London: Green Press.

Appleyard, D. 2003. 'Amharic: History and Dialectology of Amharic.' In Encyclopedia Aethiopica, vol. 1 (A–C), ed. Siegbert Uhlig, 232–234. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Bahru Zewde.* 1991. A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1885–1974. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Bahru Zewde.* 2002. A History of Modern Ethiopia: 1855–1991. 2nd ed. Oxford: James Curry Ltd., Ohio: Ohio University Press, Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.

Baye Yimam.* 2000 E.C. □□□□□ □□□□ <TS - I DON'T KNOW WHAT FONT THIS IS SO I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE CHARACTERS SHOULD BE> (Amharic Grammar). 2nd edition. Addis Ababa: Birhanina Selam Printing Press.

Bender, M. L. 1983. 'The Origin of Amharic.' Journal of Ethiopian Languages and Literature 1: 41–50.

Bender, M. L., J. D. Bowen, R. L. Cooper and C. A. Ferguson, eds. 1976. Languages in Ethiopia. London: Oxford University Press.

Bogale, B. 2009. 'Language Dissemination in Ethiopia: What Medium of Instruction?' In Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, ed. S. Ege, H.

Aspen, B. Teferra and S. Bekele, 1089–1011. Trondheim: Department of Social Anthropology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Boothe, K., and R. Walker. 1997. 'Mother-Tongue Education in Ethiopia: From Policy to Implementation.' Language Problems and Language Planning 21 (1): 1–19.

Central Statistical Office of Ethiopia. 1987. Office of the Population and Housing Census Committee. Addis Ababa: CSO.

Chibita, M. 2006. 'Our Tongues Count: A Ugandan Perspective on Indigenous Language, Local Content and Democracy.' In Indigenous Language Media in Africa, ed. A. Salawu, 238–270. Lagos: CBAAC.

Cooper, R. L. 1976. 'Government Language Policy.' In Languages in Ethiopia, ed. M. L. Bender, J. D. Bowen, R. L. Cooper and C. A. Ferguson, 187–190. London: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, R. L., and R. Horvath. 1976. 'Language, Migration and Urbanization.' In Language in Ethiopia, ed. B. L. Marvin et al., 191–212. London: Oxford University Press.

Crawford, J. 1989. Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice. Trenton, NJ: Crane Publishing Co.

Crawford, J. 1992. Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of 'English Only'. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

Cummins, J. 1994. 'The Discourse of Disinformation: The Debate on Bilingual Education and Language Rights in the United States.' In Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination, ed. R. Phillipson and T. Skutnabb-Kangas, 159–177. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Darder, A. 1991. Culture and Power in the Classroom. Westport, Connecticut: Bergin and Garvey.

Ethiopia, Ministry of Education. 1994. National Education and training Policy (NETP).

Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA). 2014. 'Broadcasting Sites.' www.eba,gov.et (accessed October 17, 2014).

Ferguson, C. A. 1966. 'National Sociolinguistic Profile Formulas.' In Sociolinguistics, ed. W Bright, 309–324. Hague: Mouton and Co.

Fishman, J. A. 1994. 'Critiques of Language Planning: A Minority Languages Perspective.' Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 15: 91–99.

Freeman, R. D. 1996. 'Dual-Language Planning at Oyster Bilingual School: It's much more than language.' TESOL Quarterly 30: 557–582.

Gebremedhin Simon.* 2006. Ethiopia: Research Findings and Conclusion. London: BBC World Service Trust African Media Development Initiative.

Girma Augachew.* 2009. The Origin of Amharic. Addis Ababa: Center Francais d'Etudes.

Girma-Selassie Asfaw* and D. Appleyard, eds., with E. Ullendorff. 1979. The Amharic Letters of Emperor Theodore of Ethiopia to Queen Victoria and her Special Envoy Preserved in the India Office Library. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Giroux, H. 1981. Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Hetzron, R., and M. L. Bender. 1976. 'The Ethio-Semitic Languages.' In Languages in Ethiopia, ed. M. L. Bender et al., 23–33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hudson, G. 2003. 'Linguistic Analysis of the 1994 Ethiopian Census.' Northeast African Studies 6 (3): 89–108.

Keller, E. J. 1988. Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Luke, A., A. McHoul and J. Mey. 1990. 'On the Limits of Language Planning: Class, State and Power.' In Language Planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific, ed. R. Baldauf and A. Luke, 25–44. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Markakis, J. 2003. 'Ethnic Conflict in Pre-Federal Ethiopia.' Paper presented at Conference on Federalism, Conflict and Peace Building, Addis Ababa University, <dates?>.

McNab, C. 1989. Language Policy and Language Practice: Implementation Dilemmas in Ethiopian Education. Stockholm: Institute of Ethiopian Education, University of Stockholm.

Mekuria Bulcha.* 1997. 'The Politics of Linguistic Homogenisation in Ethiopia and the Conflict over the Status of Afaan Oromoo.' African Affairs 96: 325–352.

Mekuria Bulcha.* 2002. The Making of the Oromo Diaspora: A Historical Sociology of Migration. Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers.

Meseret Chekol.* 2013. The Quest for Press Freedom: One Hundred Years of History of the Media in Ethiopia. Maryland: University Press of America.

Meyer, R. 2006. 'Amharic as Lingua Franca in Ethiopia.' Lissan: Journal of African Languages and Linguistics 20 (1/2): 117–132.

Meyer, R., and R. Richter. 2003. Language Use in Ethiopia from a Network Perspective: Results of a Sociolinguistic Survey Conducted among High School Students. Frankfurt am Main: <publisher>.

OLF (Oromo Liberation Front). 2008. 'Ethiopia's Largest Ethnicity Group Deprived of Linguistic and Cultural Service Media Outlets.'

http://www.oroomoliberationfront.org/Archives/English/Ethiopian%20largest%20ethnicity.php (accessed September 17, 2012).

Pankhurst, S. 1955. Ethiopia: A Cultural History. Great Britain: Fletcher and Son Ltd.

Paulos, M., and M. Getachew, eds. 2005. The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory against European Colonialism. New York: Algora Publishing.

Phillipson, R. 1997. 'Realities and Myths of Linguistic Imperialism.' Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 18: 238–247.

Phillipson, R., and T. Skutnabb-Kangas. 1996. 'English Only Worldwide or Language Ecology?' TESOL Quarterly 30: 429–452.

Ricento, T. 1998. 'National Language Policy in the United States.' In Language and Politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and Realities, ed. T. Ricento and B. Burnaby, 85–112. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ricento, T. 2000. 'Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on Language Planning.' In Ideology, Politics and Language Policies: Focus on English, ed. R. Ricento, 9–24. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Salawu, A. 2007. 'ICTs and Development: A Paradigm Somersault.' In Communication in Global, ICTs & Ecosystem Perspectives – Insights from Nigeria, ed. I. Nwosu and O. Soola, 18–31. Enugu: ACCE, Nigeria Chapter and Precision Publishers Ltd.

Skjerdal, T. S. 2012. 'Competing Loyalties: Journalism Culture in the Ethiopian State Media.' Doctoral thesis, Department of Media and Communication, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo.

Smith, L. 2008. 'The Politics of Contemporary Language Policy in Ethiopia.' Journal of Developing Societies 24 (2): 207–243.

Spitulnik, D. 1998. 'Mediating Unity and Diversity: The Production of Language Ideologies in Zambian Broadcasting.' In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory, ed. B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard and P. V. Kroskrity, 167–188. New York: Oxford University Press.

Subi2000.com. n.d. 'Ethiopian Mass Media.' http://www.subi2000.com/index_files/englisharticle12.htm (accessed September 23, 2013).

Tadesse Zinaye.* 2000, August 10. 'Media in Ethiopia: The Beginning, Developments and Challenges.' Paper presented at the School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, <date>.

Tollefson, J. W. 1986. 'Language Policy and the Radical Left in the Philippines: The New People's Army and its Antecedents.' Language Problems and Language Planning 10: 177–189.

Tollefson, J. W. 1989. Alien Winds: The Reeducation of America's Indochinese Refugees. New York: Praeger.

Tollefson, J. W. 1991. Planning Language, Planning Inequality. New York: Longman.

Tollefson, J. W., ed. 1995. Power and Inequality in Language Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiley, T. 1996. 'English-Only and Standard English Ideologies in the US.' TESOL Quarterly

30: 511–535.

Wiley, T. 1998. 'The Imposition of World War I-Era English-Only Policies and the Fate of German in North America.' In Language and Politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and Realities, ed. T. Ricento and B. Burnaby, 211–241. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Woolard, K. A. 1998. 'Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry.' In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory, ed. B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard and P. V. Kroskrity, 3–47. New York: Oxford University Press.

Woolard, K. A., and B. Schieffelin. 1994. 'Language Ideology.' Annual Review of Anthropology 23: 55–82.

THE SUBALTERN SPEAKS BACK INTO THE IMAGE FACTORY: JUSTINE SACCO'S AIDS TWEET CROSS-POLLINATES SOCIAL AND MASS MEDIA

Prosper Yao Tsikata
E. W. Scripps School of Journalism
Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, United States of America
Pt340808@ohio.edu

ABSTRACT

<author to supply>

Keywords: <author to supply>

1. INTRODUCTION

A few days before the Christmas of 2013, Justine Sacco, a PR executive for IAC, a New York-based media conglomerate, tweeted what she had considered an innocuous message a few minutes before emplaning for South Africa, her country of birth. Her tweet reads as follows:

Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white. (CNN, 2013, December 21)

89

Sacco's terse post provoked a firestorm from social media users that spilled over into the mass media with unimaginable repercussions. As a matter of fact, her brevity is a characteristic of Twitter use. But her conciseness did not fail to reveal the deep historical and political concerns that envelop the themes of her racist remark – Africa, AIDS and white(ness). Her articulation evoked certain images and ways of interpretation among the majority of social media users who responded to her post. The point is that not only do words have an effect, but some words have been implicated in historical and political tensions for their usage. Such words therefore conjure up certain images, ideas, frames and representations that induce specific meanings.

Even though Sacco explicitly pointed out that she was 'just kidding', that failed to mask the essentialising historical frames and the political tensions her words evoked with regard to the politics of identity. Mckerrow (1963, 62) points out that 'speeches [for that matter words] are not rocks dropped in quiescent pools; rather they are rocks skipped across turbulent waters, with each point of contact leaving its trace'. In this regard, a combination of the words: Africa, AIDS and White(ness) cannot go unnoticed in a world that does not suffer from amnesia with regard to its identity politics and history. Each of these words has left its trace in our consciousness and perception. To invoke a combination of these words is, thus, to evoke certain images and frames in the consciousness of media users.

Being a PR executive for a media conglomerate implicates Sacco in a web of media performances and practices that hinge on the careful use of words. These practices are imbued with ethical challenges that make the choice of words an essential part of the day-to-day activity of any PR expert. Words and their manipulators, for that matter, are not innocent bystanders in any publications. From the newsgatherer to the editor and the publisher and the PR executive, the words they put out have implications for their audiences. Even on social media, where individuals lack institutional training and ethos, their words are not innocent. It is in light of the foregoing that Sacco's words must be examined within the historical and contemporary representational frames in which Africans in particular and blacks in general have, over centuries, been cast by Western manipulators of the image factory, vis-à-vis the representation of their own.

In this essay I examine the incident of Sacco's tweet from multiple levels, using the critical communication approach in conjunction with hegemonic framing. I first place the text in a historical context, before positioning it in relation to the HIV/AIDS discourse on Africa. Finally, I explore the repercussions of the text and its articulation for mass media and social media use. This is an attempt to answer the following questions: (a) What are the historical and contemporary frames within which Sacco's text was articulated? (b) What are the implications of her tweet for the mass media and the social media?

2. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO SACCO'S NARRATIVE

Sacco was born in South Africa (SA). It was her father's (father is used consistently for Justine's father, while Sacco is used for Justine) considered view that the ecology of SA was too racist to raise his daughter in. 'I decided to raise her in the US [United States], SA was too racist,' he claimed in an interview with the media (Kaufman 2013, December 22). While Sacco's exact age or date of birth is not public information, this researcher presumes she was born just before or after the demise of apartheid in SA only as speculative measure.

Information about Saccos' childhood – the age at which she left for the US, how often she visited her country of birth, and the school(s) she attended prior to college/university – are also not public information. Going by the publicly displayed information available on her LinkedIn page, Sacco attended Tulane University, a selective private research institution in New Orleans, Louisiana. Thereafter she worked for several corporate organisations as a PR executive: World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), located in Stamford, Connecticut; the Morris and King Company, located in New York City; and then IAC, also based in New York City (LinkedIn n.d.).

A careful examination of the website of these organisations reveals their clientele base to be transnational, multiracial and, indeed, global. In the case of IAC, headquartered in New York, for instance, it has operations in over 100 countries. The company prides itself on being one of 'the world's most admired Internet and retailing companies', based on Fortune magazine's rankings (IAC 2012). Likewise, the King company also professes globalism in its operations. One of the bold and captivating messages on its website reads: 'We work the globe … from Lima to London, Cambodia to Cameroon' (King + Company 2013). For WWE, its operations span over 150 countries, with tens of millions of viewers in the US and around the world. On its website, WWE (2013) underscores diversity and inclusion as its essential corporate goals: 'WWE is committed to leveraging the power of its brand and platforms to help address important social issues worldwide including diversity and inclusion, education, military support and providing hope to those in need.'

There is thus nothing in Sacco's background by way of education or work experience, based on her publicly displayed information, to suggest that her official working environment and educational experience must have predisposed her to such a level of insensitivity about the plight of suffering people. Being in PR implies being aware of 'some unspoken words', and Sacco cannot be deemed ignorant of the effects which words have.

Even though there was nothing in Sacco's background to suggest direct racist influences, she tweeted a comment which many social media users considered to be outright racist and very offensive to the image of Africans and blacks, especially

people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs). This article thus suggests an evaluation of the wider systemic, historical, ideological and political influences of interpellation in order to understand Sacco's tweet.

In London, before emplaning for SA, her country of birth, over Christmas of 2013, Sacco tweeted the unimaginable: 'Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white.'

Unbeknownst to Sacco, what in her considered view was a private joke meant for a few dozen friends on Twitter not only became a matter of public discussion and outrage, but also left a trail of hateful responses from a mob of social media users. Within the 12 hours that she was up in the skies, there was a rapid and massive response to her tweet from social media users. On arrival in SA, Sacco was confronted with her bigotry, which compelled her to close her Twitter account. She subsequently offered an apology to the people of SA in the following words:

> Words cannot express how sorry I am, and how necessary it is for me to apologize to the people of South Africa, who I have offended due to a needless and careless tweet. There is an AIDS crisis taking place in this country, that we read about in America, but do not live with or face on a continuous basis. Unfortunately, it is terribly easy to be cavalier about an epidemic that one has never witnessed firsthand. (Huffington Post, 2013, December 22)

I argue that Sacco's text can only make sense when placed within the wider historical, ideological and contemporary influences of the media. My claim is that Sacco's text is not without precedent and cannot be isolated from its historical, ideological and contemporary context with regard to the three important signifiers she invoked: Africa, AIDS and white(ness). I take the following steps in my analysis: (a) I locate the original text of Sacco's tweet and the text of the ensuing apology; and (b) I gave both texts a close reading by locating them within the historical, ideological and contemporary context of identity politics regarding Africa, AIDS and white(ness). The essential questions, therefore, are: What are the historical and contemporary representational frames implicated in Sacco's articulation? and What are the implications of her tweet for the mass media and social media?

3. HEGEMONIC FRAMES AND THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE

To understand the frames implicated in Sacco's articulation, I deliberately employed the concepts of hegemonic frames and the critical communication approach. While the hegemonic frame provides a framework to understanding Sacco's words, the critical approach provides a sensitising lens to critiquing her words.

The critical communication approach focuses its attention on the communication processes that enact ideologies of power and hegemony with the view to deconstructing them. The critical approach relies 'on a priori theoretical commitments, such as

92

Marxist or neo-Marxist theories, Frankfurt school theory, or feminist theories of critique [of] domination, asymmetry, and distorted communication' (Xu 2013, 389).

Extending the work of Kline (2003) to this understanding, the critical communication approach becomes our sensitising lens in appreciating and understanding the historical, ideological and hegemonic forces that have shaped the intercultural politics of identity, framing and representation of the other in the media. For instance, with regard to Sacco's (mis)representation, this approach directs our gaze to the historical power differentials between Sacco's racial group and that of the people she sought to frame and represent, including how this group has been historically framed and represented. The information content of how people are represented cannot be separated from questions of who produces it and who controls its production (Panos Institute 2001).

Historical evidence abounds regarding the (mis)representation of Africans and blacks as savage, exotic, sexual and brutal (Biko 1979; Fanon 1963; Rodney1972). The media have been implicated in these (mis)representations, but due to a lack of power, the subaltern was unable to challenge such (mis)representations in both colonial and mass media.

According to Xu (2013), the critical approach offers us the possibility of interrogating and challenging these (mis)representations and engaging the world in multiple ways. For Horkheimer and Adomo (1944), it is through these interrogations that we come to understand the interplay of power and access in cultural production, the roots of identities and the source of knowledge about them. It is therefore the aim this article to unravel the visible and invisible power and knowledge structures within which Sacco's articulation was implicated.

Dutta and De Souza (2008) implicate ideology and hegemony as responsible for what we know. This idea is traceable to Gramsci (1971), who underscored hegemony as an interlinked set of values, meanings and discourses by which a 'commonsense' understanding of the world is articulated. While ideology refers to 'the taken-for-granted assumptions about reality that influence the taken-for-granted perceptions of situations and events' (Deetz and Kersten 1983, 162), hegemony signifies the process of manufacturing consent among the subordinated, such that the dominant group can maintain its power (Gramsci 1971). To the extent that the gatekeeping privileges of the mass media allow them to maintain a hold on what is newsworthy and what is not-so-newsworthy, through their agenda-setting role, their complicity in the hegemonic structure as a purveyor of the dominant ideological frames cannot be denied (Carr 2012).

But with a critical agenda at the heart of the critical approach, the ability of the subaltern to resist and challenge Sacco's representation via new media conduits provides food for thought to our understanding of the relationship between the mass media and social media. This relationship has implications for framing and representation. I find that the synergies of the postcolonial and the postmodern,

93

as critical projects, provide specific impetuses in unraveling Sacco's text within the critical communication approach. If the critical approach highlights power differentials in general, the postcolonial places these power differentials in their specific contexts – the dominant versus the subaltern in an interconnected world. Martin and Nakayama (2010, 62) point out that postcolonial scholarship strives to 'provide an historical and international depth to the understanding of cultural power', by situating the phenomena of research interest within the geopolitical arrangements and relations of nations. The postmodern, on the other hand, depicts some of the profound structural changes within society with correlative structural cultural changes. In the case of the postmodern, therefore, we can see disruptions in old communication hierarchies decentering the act of communicating (Banda et al. 2009).

4. HISTORICAL PLACEMENT OF THE TEXT

While there is no evidence within Sacco's educational and work environment to suggest racist influences, her tweet cannot be delinked from the wider political, social and cultural ecology of the US and SA. The historical fodder of the US media is not lacking in the negative and stereotypical representational frames of Africans, blacks and people of colour.

Writing in 2012, the Nigerian Nobel Literature Laureate, Wole Soyinka, traced negative portrayals of the African continent and its people to historical encounters between the people of Africa and European explorers. The latter he termed <manqué littéraire,> e.g., colonial officials and anthropologists who lacked the capacity to comprehend the cultural and religious practices of the people of Africa. He pointed out that 'their frequently naïve literary efforts to cope with strange cultures, histories, and sociologies may not match Shakespeare's stay-at-home conjuration of alien vistas … but they nevertheless contributed to the pool of source materials for subsequent writers, especially of the Victorian Age' (Soyinka 2012, 38). In his estimation, these (mis)representations fed the European mind of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and continues to feed its progeny to this day (Soyinka 2012).

The foregoing does not depart from the general consensus among media critics, which is that the representational frames of imperial and colonial adventures have left an enduring legacy of negative press, serving as frames for uncritical, profit-oriented and ethnically biased media to exploit anytime Africa is in the news (Pahl 1995; Rodney 1972). The media in the US, following the European legacy, have been accused of stereotypical and negative representation of people of African descent and people of colour in general (Wilson and Gutierrez 1985). While Alozie (2007) accuses the entirety of Western media for only being interested in crisis reporting on the African continent, Stroud (2011) posits that the US media still employ pre-

existing colonial and anthropological stereotypes in representing Africa, because it suits the status quo – the preference of corporate America and institutional power.

With this historical overview it is inferable that, while educational institutions and corporates may not be directly implicated in churning out the negative stereotypes that may have influenced Sacco's (mis)perceptions, the media are profoundly implicated in such practices. The irony is that, while Sacco's father thought he was removing his daughter from the racism-infected ecology of SA to a more racially tolerant ecology of the US, Mr Sacco's racial comments might potentially make him question his decision to send her to the US.

Evidently, Sacco did not invent those negative images for the continent of Africa, but only followed the tradition of negative stereotyping of media frames and representations that dates back to precolonial and colonial times. We cannot, however, deny the totalising effects of the use of the African appellation for what is negative and mostly incongruous with the lived realities of the diverse groups of Africans on the continent and in the diasporas.

For Fanon (1963), Soyinka (2012) and Tsikata (2014), the African appellation tends to mask and undermine wide variations in the lived experiences of Africans across the continent and in the diasporas. The African appellation thesis tends to resonate with what Chimamanda Adichie (2009) decries as the dangers of a single story. She notes: 'Before arriving in the United States, I did not consciously identify as African, but in the US whenever Africa came up people turned to me never mind that I know nothing about places like Namibia' (Ted Talks 2009, October 7).

However, frames, like old habits, die hard. According Gitlin (1980, 7) they are 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, presentation, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse'. So, against the grains of expectation that symbol-handlers such as Sacco would employ frames appropriately, she takes us back to historical frames and representations.

5. SACCO AND THE AFRICAN HIV/AIDS DISCOURSE

I make two important observations about Sacco's text as a prelude to discussing its relationship to the HIV/AIDS discourse. First, Sacco employed the African appellation for her so-called AIDS prank: 'Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS …' (CNN, December 21, 2013). In the wake of the firestorm that her text generated, one finds a shift of emphasis with regard to her apology and its intended audiences: 'Words cannot express how sorry I am, and how necessary it is for me to apologize to the people of South Africa …' (Huffington Post 2013, December 22).

It is essential to note that, when remorseful Sacco decided to apologise for her bad tweet, after being bludgeoned by the mob on social media, she dropped the African appellation and directed her message to SA. Sacco must have learned some

vital lessons about the politics of identity, framing and representation with regard to the African continent, in the period between her initial tweet and her apology.

The linguistic repositioning of Sacco – whereby SA becomes the target audience of her apology, rather than the generality of Africa – concurs with a proposition by Tsikata (2014), who argues that, as a matter of fact, current media practices on the African continent, enabled by local media policies, infrastructure and postmodern forces, impose new realities on how the people of the continent frame and represent themselves. While it is not a mindful effort to shed the African appellation, Africans primarily position their national identities as a primary frame of representation, with the possibility of the African appellation as a secondary frame (Tsikata 2014).

Evidently, Sacco's 'voluntary' apology, through which she repositioned her target audience, lends further credence to this proposition. Instead of apologising to Africans, Sacco now chose to apologise to the people of SA as her primary identifiable group and audience.

Turning to the issue of contracting HIV in Africa, I find deep-rooted stereotypes in Sacco's assertion. Essentially, three modes of transmission are identifiable for HIV: sexual intercourse, intravenous blood transfusion and mother-to-child transmission. There are no indications whatsoever that Sacco is a drug user or that she has a medical condition that might necessitate therapeutic clinical infusions requiring needle use or the sharing of a needle through drug use, with the potential of being infected in the process. The possibilities of intravenous blood transfusion and obviously mother-to-child transmission are not relevant, leaving sexual transmission of the disease as her anticipated source of contracting HIV.

Zeroing in on the sexual transmission of the disease brings us to the realm of sexuality with all its mythologies. In SA where Sacco was born, and in the US where she has spent most of her formative years and adult life, there is no paucity of sexual myths about African sexuality. In the US, according to West (1993), racial myths about sex are a taboo topic, which allows sexual myths to thrive. He point out that 'Americans are obsessed and fearful of black sexuality … fear [which] is rooted in visceral feelings about black bodies fueled by sexual myths …' (ibid, 83). For black males in particular he employed pejorative terms, such as 'Bigger Thomas' and 'Jack Jackson' to illustrate (mis)perceptions about black sexuality. The former is 'the mad and mean predatory craver of white women', while the latter is 'the super performer – be it in athletics, entertainment, or sex – who excels others naturally and prefers women of lighter hue' (ibid, 83). This (mis)perception is consistent with historical sexual images of black males. Wilson and Gutierrez (1985) describe this as the 'undisciplined, unrefined, primitive, exotic, inappropriately sexual' misrepresentation of people of colour. Sacco's fear of contracting HIV must, therefore, be borne out of fear of being raped by a black male living with HIV/AIDS, or through any other inappropriate sexual act.

Turning to the media, Garret (2000) describes Western coverage of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa as having fallen into what he terms 'death voyeurism'. This is characterised by the themes of disaster, devastation and hopelessness, which connect to inappropriate African sexual dispositions. For example, milton (2004) accuses the ABC news magazine programme, 'AIDS in Africa: The disappearing society', of dabbling in racialised discourse on HIV/AIDS in Africa. These observations are consonant with her argument that a doxiconic frame has been established by Western media in which HIV/AIDS is firmly structured as a 'black disease' in Western (mis) representations (milton 2004, 101). Cloud (2002, 2) defines doxiconic as 'an image that constitutes, in condensed form, the doxa, or a set of commonsense theories about social relations in the world, or a social collectivity'.

From these images, Sacco must have formed her sexual (mis)perceptions about Africans in particular and blacks in general. Two important assumptions explain this. First, West (1993, 85) points out that 'Victorian morality and racist perceptions die hard'. Second, the mediatory role of the media is implicated. Bartolome and Macedo (1997, 223) note that the 'popular press and the mass media educate more people about issues regarding ethnicity and race than all other sources of education available to US citizens'. This assertion is complemented by Giroux (1997, 301), who argues that 'the electronic media – television, movies, music, and news – have become powerful pedagogical forces even teaching machines in shaping the social imaginations of students in terms of how they view themselves, others, and society'. These perceptual frames are closely linked with power and hegemony as we understand them in media representations, and must have been the basis for Sacco's (mis)perceptions.

These (mis)perceptions must have been further fueled by HIV/AIDS discourse concerning SA in the global media. Epstein (2007) informs us about the virgin rape myth in SA. In 2001, David Potse raped his former girlfriend's nine-month-old daughter, damaging her internal organs and nearly killing her. While Potse was sentenced to life in prison, this narrative quickly assumed mythological proportions. According to Epstein (ibid, 228), 'several journalists – most of them from Europe and the US – reported that SA's epidemic of sexual violence was being fueled by a desperate myth: some African men believed that raping a virgin would cure them of HIV'. She revealed that one BBC journalist reported the Baby Tshepang case as a typical example of the virgin-rape myth.

Numerous facts, however, contradict this assertion. First, there was no evidence that Potse was HIV positive. Second, a study of child-rape victims in Johannesburg depicted far lower infection rates than would have been expected if children were targeted by HIV+ men. Third, very few SA men knew their HIV status (Epstein 2007). Yet, with this myth making its rounds in the media, Sacco's initial American black male sexual (mis)perceptions must have been amplified by the SA virgin-rape myth.

Drawing on these historical frames, I argue that Sacco's employment of the African appellation masks and undermines the wide variations in HIV/AIDS incidents across the African continent. Her linguistic combinations thus play directly into historical misrepresentations of the African HIV/AIDS discourse. As a matter of fact, in employing the African appellation, the peculiar situation of the different countries on the continent is completely lost. A glance at HIV/AIDS distribution rates across the continent shows great variations. From Swaziland, with the highest prevalence rates of the disease at 26.5 per cent, to Senegal, with one of the lowest infection rates at 0.5 per cent, these variations are important. Table 1 shows the HIV/AIDS distribution for selected countries on the African continent.

Table 1:   Table 1: HIV/AIDS distribution in various African countries

Countries	Infection rates (%) (Adults 15 years and over, living with HIV/AIDS)
Senegal	0.5
Madagascar	0.5
Ghana	1.4
Swaziland	26.5
Botswana	23.4
SA	17.9

Source: UNAIDS (2012)

Comparing this statistics with the US reveals interesting variations. With 0.6 per cent national infection rates, the US is in the same ranks as certain African countries such as Senegal and Madagascar. It is also interesting to observe that the nation's capital, Washington DC, with its 3.2 per cent HIV infection rate, recorded more HIV infections in 2012 in proportionate terms than some African countries (PBS 2012, June 11). The blanket employment of the African appellation can, therefore, be misleading, as in the case of Sacco's tweet.

6. SACCO AND WHITENESS

In outlining the conceptual foundation for the study of whiteness, Martin and Davis (2001), drawing on Hasian and Nakayama (2000), point out that whiteness is a deliberate discursive political formation on the part of those whites interested in erecting boundaries to exclude certain groups. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Oriental Exclusion Act are but two examples of prohibitions that illustrate how majority white groups (English, Scottish and German) prevented other ethnic groups from migrating to the US in order to insure their dominance and privilege.

Thinking about Sacco's text in relation to this history, some vital lessons can be learnt from her use of whiteness in connection with HIV/AIDS discourse in Africa. Peggy McIntosh (1998) identifies several of the privileges that come with being white in the US. She believes white privilege is like an invisible knapsack which provides the holder/carrier with advantages they hardly recognise. Even though most whites deny these privileges (as she points out), I believe Sacco's assertion summons an idea of white purity from disease.

By drawing attention to whiteness, Sacco also drew attention to who she is not. The question is: Why would her whiteness matter to her? McIntosh's (1988) 26 conditions of white privilege provide a useful guide for understanding white privilege in an attempt to answer this pressing question. Her ninth allusion, which partly refers to representation of one's race, offers a useful connection to understanding whiteness and blackness in relation to HIV/AIDS. Like historic images of the other, which evoke the binary of 'us versus them' when summoned, polarisation and essentialisation of the HIV/AIDS discourse appear in Sacco's use of whiteness. She homogenises the African continent and its people and essentialises them – 'they are the ones who are diseased and I am clean,' Sacco appears to suggest. The inference is that whiteness equals cleanliness, purity and innocence, while being African is tantamount to being unclean, diseased, and AIDS-infected.

Sacco's sympathisers may erroneously contend that there is nothing wrong with her celebrating her identity as a white person. But Raka Shome (2000) points out that the first strategy of justifying white privilege – in this case, white purity – is to conflate being white with whiteness. While being white is related to an individual's identity, whiteness is an institutionalised system of power and privilege that benefits whites. This position is consonant with Frankenberg's (1993) observation that whiteness is a structural advantage, that accrues to whites, and against which others are measured. The point is that being white is not in itself problematic. If Sacco had just said 'I am white', without the antecedents of Africa and AIDS, I am sure it would not make any meaning to anyone. It might only pass as the celebration of her heritage. But once the antecedents – Africa and AIDS – were summoned, the contentious images of purity and contamination as binaries were evoked.

7. THE SUBALTERN SPEAKS BACK INTO THE IMAGE FACTORY

While there was an avalanche of responses from the general public to Sacco's tweet, I focus on two levels of responses for the purpose of this research. First, individual social media users, in a mob-fashion, responded to Sacco's tweet rapidly and en masse. At the second level, due to the sheer number of responses her tweet had generated, the incident fed into the mainstream mass media – CNN, ABC News, the BBC, Huffington Post, the Guardian and, indeed, all the big names in the news

media.

At the first level, I draw on Appadurai (1996) who highlights the decentering capabilities of the Internet, which are perceived as weakening the mechanisms of power and control from the dominant centres in the metropolis. The weakening of these mechanisms of control also includes the power to frame and represent others <who are on the fringes of> the centres of power. Seen as the progenitor of social media, the Internet empowers individuals without any moorings to mass media institutions whatsoever, to make their voices heard, including giving them the ability to self-represent (Tsikata 2014).

The point is that, at the individual level, the capacity for framing and representation is now a matter of self-determination, especially wherever the network extends. Individuals have been empowered by the Internet not to only self-represent, but also to respond to distasteful representations from other individuals and even the mass media.

In a study investigating information exchange among online social media (OSM) users, Jain et al. (2013) devise the concept of cross-pollination of information. After a close examination of a number of exchanges, they concluded that the information diffusion process across OSM services is analogous to the biological process of cross-pollination. Just as pollen is delivered to a flower from a different plant, with the plants being different in terms of their genetics, a unit of information (analogous to pollen) can be delivered to a different OSM. Jain et al. describe the basic unit of information as the meme, examples of which include a video on YouTube, a tweet on Twitter, and a post on Facebook. Memes appear in two forms: foreign and local. When an embedded universal resource locator (URL) from YouTube is posted on Facebook, it is known as a foreign meme. All other types of meme generated and diffused within the same network or OSM are termed local memes. For cross-pollination of information to occur in OSM, there must be user participation and sharing. In the realm of sharing, there must be originators and spreaders to facilitate the process of diffusion (ibid.).

This article extends the concept to the mass media, whereby postings on Facebook, user-generated comments, YouTube videos and tweets (such as Sacco's) have been adapted and exported to television, newspapers and radio, amongst others. Similar to the human intervention in OSM, the gatekeepers in the mass media have become sensitive to what is trending in social media. Thus, when it becomes necessary the gatekeepers feed on what is trending in OSM, just as OSM also feeds on the mass media.

At the second level, I refer to the ability of the mass media to feed on the firestorm generated by social media users in response to Sacco's text, to demonstrate the 'cross-pollination' of the mass media and new media forms (see Jain et al. 2013). In this case, 'rapidly and massively circulating' user-generated comments on social media not only provide insights into traditional mass media to grow a

story so that it becomes newsworthy, but also force the hands of their operators to heed the call of social media and Internet users for such stories to be featured (Carr 2012, 2826). Like male pollen, the rapidly circulating views on social media potentially pollinate the mass media by compelling their operators to grow a story until it becomes newsworthy. Interactive loops on the websites of traditional mass media allow users to respond to news items via user-generated comments, making it easier to determine the most newsworthy item of the day. This notion is consonant with what Carr (2012) describes as the loss of monopoly by the once-monolithic gatekeepers of the traditional media. Viewing Sacco's text in this light it is evident that her text spread beyond its intended audience, which in this case may have been a few dozen friends on Twitter. The resultant termination of Sacco's appointment at IAC is evidence of how the subaltern can speak back into the image factory, with noteworthy consequences.

The Sacco incident thus demonstrates significant transformations at the intersections of the mass media and the new media. If the imperial and colonial projects, which were openly racist, centered identities of the subaltern, we must remember that the subaltern did not have the facility and the mechanism to respond or undertake self-image redemption. In fact, Sacco's text would not have elicited the response it did in the precolonial, colonial and immediate postcolonial eras. But with the power of social media, which tends to diffuse the power to frame and represent, postcolonial persons are telling their own stories and responding to negative representations which others might attribute to them, as illustrated by the Sacco incident.

If social media users can trigger or prompt traditional mass media producers to feed on what is circulating on social media, then the agenda-setting role which was once the sole preserve of the mass media, through its gatekeeping mechanism, has become somewhat diffuse. It is noted that through its gatekeeping mechanism, the mass media set the agenda and maintain hegemony by deciding which stories, issues and ideas are featured or disallowed from entering the traditional media space (Clayman and Reisner 1998; Livingston and Bennett 2003). Carr (2012) notes that if the aforementioned mechanism of the mass media once made it the sole determinant of what is represented (or not), the social media now undermine this once-important role of the mass media. The atomised nature of the Internet allows social media users to 'circumvent television and print media and, thus, subvert their role in setting the scope of social, political, and economic discussions, exemplified by Sacco's case' (Carr 2012, 2827).

With the cross-pollination of social media and mass media, the potential for the 'good, the bad, and the ugly' to filter through social media into the mass media has been underscored. It is evident that the subaltern can now speak into the image factory, with repercussions.

101

8. CONCLUSIONS

I have pointed out the consistency between Sacco's racial articulation, and the historical hegemonic and ideological frames. From a history of negative and stereotypical portrayals of the other, spanning the imperial and colonial epochs, we come to understand Sacco's text and its articulation. While the US defined Sacco's current dwelling at the time of her tweet, with potentially greater socio-cultural influences, Sacco was not completely unaware of the socio-cultural influences of the media in her native SA. Just like many other transnationals, she must have kept abreast of the story of HIV/AIDS and its myths in her native SA. Her text was, thus, structured in ways that conformed to hegemonic historical frames about whiteness versus blackness, health versus disease, purity versus impurity. My findings also reveal the historical misrepresentation of African sexuality and AIDS in Sacco's articulation.

By this denigrating ideology, Sacco sought to reinforce the essentialising and polarising themes that have characterised racial discourse over the centuries. What is noticeable, however, is the incongruity between her articulation and its context. The text seems to be anachronistic to its audience, its time and its place. With regard to time, it is evident that even if people still harbour such negative stereotypes in their imagination, the times require 'political correctness'. In other words, if Sacco had written or uttered those racial slurs in precolonial and colonial times, she might not have received such harsh censure from her audience. However, unlike precolonial and colonial epochs, when these (mis)representations would have been imposed on the subaltern without the network possibilities for response, disruptions in media hierarchies and greater technological ease have made it possible for the mob to respond. This phenomenon compelled the mass media to feed on the rapidly circulated messages generated on social media in response to Sacco. I describe the stage where the mass media picked up the social media lead as newsworthy as a manifestation of media cross-pollination, whereby the mass media feed on newsworthy comments on social media, and vice versa. More importantly, to the extent that the subaltern could resist the essentialising and polarising signification of Sacco by using social media, I observe the manifestation of critical intervention within the ambit of the subaltern toward resetting subaltern–dominant representations on social media or the correction of historical imbalances in media representations.

Following closely on the ability of social media users to prompt producers in the mass media to feature stories circulating on social media is the issue of privacy. The termination of Sacco's appointment by IAC takes us to another layer of this discourse, namely the problematizing of the private and the public in the current media dispensation. For any future inquiry, it will be of great interest to examine the privacy issues involved in the Sacco incident. The following questions may be of interest: What privacy rules were breached in the Sacco incident? What organisational

principles were affected by this form of communication? What is the position of US law regarding this phenomenon (whereby an individual's social media post becomes a subject of controversy, with repercussions for their organisation)?

Finally, Sacco's rhetorical repositioning is consistent with the emergent complex identity politics regarding how Africans identify, frame and represent themselves. It is interesting to observe the rhetorical repositioning in Sacco's apology. From the African appellation in her initial articulation, there is an interesting shift to a more targeted and direct appeal to the people of SA for forgiveness. What must have accounted for this rhetorical shift is the fact that, between the time of her original text and the time of her apology, Sacco must have been exposed to some important lessons regarding identity politics.

REFERENCES

Alozie, E. 2007. 'What Did They Say? African Media Coverage of the First 100 Days of the Rwandan Crisis.' In The Media and Rwandan Genocide, ed. A. Thompson, 211–230. London: Pluto Press.

Appadurai, A. 1996. Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimension of Globalization. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Banda, F., O. Mudhai, and W. Tettey. 2009. 'Introduction: Media and Democracy in Africa – A Critical Interjection.' In African Media and the Digital Public Sphere, ed. O. Mudhai, F. Banda and W. Tettey, 1–20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bartolome, L. I. and D. P. Macedo. 1997. 'Dancing with Bigotry: The Poisoning of Racial and Ethnic Identities.' Harvard Educational Review 67 (2): 222–246.

Stubb, A. C. R., ed. 1979. I Write What I Like: A Selection of Writings of Steve Biko with a Personal Memoir. New York: Harper & Row.

Callaghan, K. and F. Schnell. 2001. 'Assessing the Democratic Debate: How News Media frame Elite Policy Discourse.' Political Communication 18 (2): 183–212.

Carr, J. 2012. 'No Laughing Matter: The Power of Cyberspace to Subvert Conventional Media Gatekeepers.' International Journal of Communication 6: 2825–2845.

Clayman, S. E. and A. Reisner. 1998. 'Gatekeeping in Action: Editorial Conference and Assessment of Newsworthiness.' American Sociological Review 63 (2): 178–199.

Cloud, D. 2003. '"The Clash of Civilizations" in the Doxiconic Visual Rhetoric on the War on Terror.' Unpublished manuscript.

Crewe, D. 1992. AIDS in South Africa: The Myth and the Reality. London: Penguin Books.

Deetz, S. and A. Kersten. 1983. 'Critical Models of Interpretive Research.' In Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach, ed. L. Putnam and M. Pacanowsky, 147–171. Beverly Hills: Sage.

DeLuca, K. M., S. Lawson, S. and Y. Sun. 2012. 'Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement.' Communication, Culture, Critique 5 (4): 483–509.

Dutta, M. J. and R. de Souza. 2008. 'The Past, Present and Future of Health Development Campaigns: Reflexivity and the Critical-Cultural Approach.' Health Communication 23 (4): 326–339.

Endres, D. and M. Gould. 2009. '"I am Also in the Position to use My Whiteness to Help Them Out": The Communication of Whiteness in Service Learning.' Western State Communication Association 73 (4): 418–436.

Epstein H. 2007. The Invisible Cure: Africa, the West, and the Fight against AIDS. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

Fanon, F. 1963. The Wretched of the Earth. Trans. C. Far. New York: Grove Press.

Frankenberg, R. 1993. White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Garret, L. 2000. 'You Just signed His Death Warrant: AIDS Politics and the Journalist Role.' In HIV/AIDS and the Media, a literature review, ed. J. Stein. Johannesburg: Cadre.

Giroux, H. A. 1997. 'Rewriting the Discourse of Racial Identity: Towards a Pedagogy and Politics of Whiteness.' Harvard Education Review 67 (2): 285–320.

Gitlin, T. 1980. The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Goffman, E. 1974. Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience. New York: Harper & Row.

Gramsci, A. 1971. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. New York: International Publishers.

Hanson, R. 2011. Mass Communication: Living in a Media World. Washington: CQ Press.

Hasian, M., Jr. and T. K. Nakayama. 2000. 'Racial Fictions and Cultural Identity.' In Treading Judgment, ed. J. Sloop and J. McDaniels, 182–195. Boulder: Westview Press.

Horkheimer, M. and T. Adorno. 1944. Dialectic of Enlightenment. Trans. J. Cumming. New York: Herder and Herder.

Huffington Post. 2013, December 22. Justine Sacco apologizes for the AIDS tweet.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/22/justine-sacco-apologizes-aids-tweet_n_4489052.html (accessed June 2, 2014).

InterActive Corp. 2012. 'Overview.' http://iac.com/about/overview (accessed June 4, 2014).

Jamieson, K. H. and N. J. Cappella. 1998. 'The Role of the Press in the Healthcare Reform Debate of 1993–1994.' In The Politics of News, the News of Politics, ed. D. Graber, D. McQuail and P. Norris, 110–131. Washington: CQ Press.

Jain, P., T. Rodrigues, G. Magno, P. Kumaruguru, and V. Almeida. 2013. Cross-Pollination in Online Social Media: A Case Study on Popular Social Networks. Delhi: Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology.

Kaufman, S. 2013, December 22. 'Father of Fired Public Relations Director: "I'm so Ashamed of Her. She is a f*cking Idiot".' Rawstory. http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/12/22/father-of-fired-public-relations-director-im-so-ashamed-of-her-shes-a-fcking-idiot (accessed June 4, 2014).

King + Company. 2013. "We Work the Globe.' http://kingcompr.com/ (accessed June 10, 2014).

Kline, K.N. 2003. 'Popular Media and Health: Images, Effects, and Institutions.' In Handbook of Health Communication, ed. A. M. Thompson, K. I. Dorsey and R. Parrott, 557–581. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

LinkedIn. n.d. 'Justine Sacco's profile.'   http://www.linkedin.com/pub/justine-sacco/2/135/658 (accessed June 10, 2014).

Livingston, S. and W. L. Bannette. 2003. 'Gatekeeping, Indexing and Live-Event News: Is Technology Altering the Construction of News?' Political Communication 20 (4): 363–380.

Martin, J. N. and O. I. Davis. 2001. 'Conceptual Foundations for Teaching about Whiteness in Intercultural Communication Courses.' Communication Education 50 (4): 298–313.

Martin, J. N. and T. K. Nakayama. 2010. Intercultural Communication and Dialectics Revisited. In The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication, ed. T. K. Nakayama and R. T. Halualani, 59–83. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

McIntosh, P. 1998. 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.' In Race, Class and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study, ed. P. S. Rothenberg, 165–169. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Mckerrow, R. 1993. 'Critical Rhetoric and the Possibility of the Subject.' In The Critical Turn: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Postmodern Discourse, ed. I. Angus and L. Langsdor, <pages>. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

milton, v.c. 2004. 'Time's picturing of HIV/AIDS: International Perceptions in Africa.' Tydskrif vir Letterkunde 41 (2): 99–112.

Pahl, R. H. 1995. 'The Image of Africa in our Classrooms.'' Social Studies 86 (6): 245–247.

Pan, Z. and G. M. Kosicki. 1993. 'Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse.' Political Communication 46 (2): 33–54.

Panos Institute. 2001. 'Background Paper for Communication for Development Roundtable.' http://www.eldis.org/go/home&id=10811&type=Document#.VH9b7cnGA24   (accessed December 1, 2014).

PBS. 2012, June 11. 'How do the HIV/AIDS Rates in DC compare?' PBS News Hour. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/spc/multimedia/africa-dc/#.Uw2RNIWhaM8 (accessed June 11, 2014).

Rodney, W. 1972. How Europe underdeveloped Africa. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture.

Shome, R. and R. Hedge. 2002. 'Postcolonial Approaches to Communication: Charting the Terrain, engaging the Intersections.' Communication Theory 12 (3): 249–270.

Shome, R. 2000. 'Outing Whiteness.' Critical Studies in Mediated Communication 17 (3): 366–371.

Soyinka, W. 2012. Of Africa. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Stelter, B. 2013, December 21. 'Company parts Ways with PR Executive after AIDS in Africa Tweet.' CNN. http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/21/us/sacco-offensive-tweet/ (accessed June 11, 2014).

Stroud, N. J. 2011. Niche News: The Politics of News Choice. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ted Talks. 2009, October 7. 'Chimamanda Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story.' http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg (accessed June 11, 2014).

Terkildsen, N., F. L. Schnell, and C. Ling. 1998. Interest Groups, the Media, and Policy Debate Formation: An Analysis of Message Structure, Rhetoric, and Source Cues. Political Communication 15 (1): 45–62.

The Guardian. 2013, December 22. 'Justice Sacco, PR Executive fired over Racist Tweet, "Ashamed".' http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/22/pr-exec-fired-racist-tweet-aids-africa-apology (accessed June 11, 2014).

Tsikata, P. Y. 2014. 'The Historical and Contemporary Representation of Africa in Global Media Flows: Can the Continent speak Back for Itself on its Own Terms?' Communicatio 40 (1): 34–48.

UNAIDS. 2012. 'HIV and AIDS estimates.' http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/swaziland (accessed June 11, 2014).

West, C. 1993. Race Matters. 3rd ed. Boston: Beacon Press.

Wilson, C. C. and F. Gutierrez. 1985. Minorities and Media: Diversity and the End of Mass Communication. Beverly Hills: Sage.

WWE. 2013. 'Our Commitment to Community and Family.' https://community.wwe.com/ (accessed June 11, 2014).

Xu, K. 2013. 'Theorizing Difference in Intercultural Communication: A Critical Dialogic Perspective.' Communication Monographs 80 (3): 379–397.

CHALLENGES IN DONOR–NPO RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Louise van Dyk
Department of Communication Science, University of South Africa
vdykli@unisa.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to highlight challenges in the relationship between corporate donors and recipient NPOs within the context of corporate social investment (CSI) in South Africa and to link the relational challenges to problems NPOs face in general. It is theoretically argued that CSI forms an important part of sustainable development and that NPOs, in turn, form an integral part of many organisations' social investment. The challenges faced by them need addressing for the sake of NPOs, donors and society as a whole. It was found that although the stakeholder relationship generally shows both positive and negative perceptions of the parties involved, the challenges that exist can be traced to challenges in the everyday functioning of NPOs, including resource limitations and dependence; staffing problems; and strategy, management and environmental challenges. These challenges facing NPOs manifest in their relationship with donors and can be seen in the power imbalance in the relationship that favours donors, the lack of transparency by NPOs, divergent views on commitment, the questioned competence of NPOs, time constraints in the execution of activities, a perceived incomprehension by NPOs of the realities

107

of the business world, and an unwillingness on the part of donors to allow NPOs some decision-making power.

Keywords: corporate social investment, corporate social responsibility, development communication, NPO-management, participatory development, stakeholder relationships

1. INTRODUCTION

As an integral part of corporate governance and citizenship, corporate social investment (CSI) forms part of both the business and social development landscapes of South Africa. In a developing society like South Africa, this manifestation of the responsibility of the private sector in the fight against social ills and for sustainable development is increasingly important (Skinner and Mersham 2008, 239). One of the groups on the receiving end of CSI funding is non-profit organisations (NPOs) that often act as catalysts, partners and implementation agents for resources from donors (Lewis 2003, 333–334; Rossouw 2010).

NPOs are well positioned to act as a link between donors and recipient communities because they have grassroots contact and understand the community's needs and realities better than the donor ever could. Hence, NPOs are one of the main implementers of CSI funding (Shumate and O'Connor 2010, 578). When CSI funding is channelled through NPOs to recipient communities, a relationship between the corporate donor and the NPO is imminent – a relationship that represents the corporate donors' responsibility towards their community and survival for the NPOs (Padaki 2007, 70).

In an exploration of the relationship between corporate donors and recipient NPOs it became clear that relations are fraught with challenges that could be traced to complexities in the environment and the management of NPOs (< >2012a, 210). The article further highlights challenges in this unique stakeholder relationship that emerged from the perceptions which corporate donors and NPOs have of each other, as revealed in the research.

The research presented in this article will be introduced by outlining CSI as an expression of business towards the society in which it operates, followed by a discussion of the role of NPOs in the CSI landscape, the challenges they face and the relationship indicators used to describe the resulting challenges in the relationship. A selection of the results from two corresponding surveys will be presented to illuminate relational challenges that can be related to the challenges faced by NPOs.

2. BUSINESS AND SOCIETY

In an effort to make the planet more sustainable, the three functions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are interdependent and reinforce one another (UN 2005). The relationship between the three pillars was modelled by Pearce and Atkinson (1993, 106; 1998, 253) to represent both a weak and a strong view on sustainability. Weak sustainability views economic and social development, as well as environmental protection, as overlapping functions of sustainability, while strong sustainability views business as embedded within society, which is in turn part of the bigger ecology (Grossman 2011; PCE 2002, 7; Pearce and Atkinson 1998, 254). Figure 1 illustrates the place of business, society and the environment from the perspective of strong sustainability.
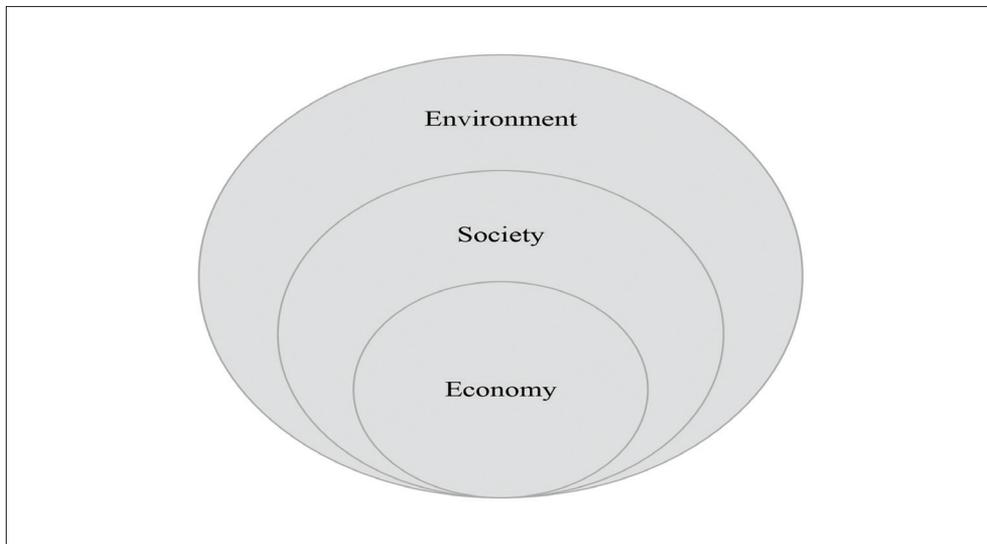
Figure 1: Strong sustainability (Grossman 2011)

When considering business–society relationships from the side of business, strong sustainability resonates with the main premises of various management paradigms and theories including the excellence theory, the reflective paradigm of organisational communication and ecological business–society relationships. The main premise of the excellence theory is that communication in organisations should be managed strategically, with a balance between the needs of the organisation its stakeholders (Lindenborg 1994, 5; Wood 2006, 22). The reflective paradigm and ecological business–society relations imply open, harmonious and cooperative communication where parties mutually adjust to each other as part of the larger system (Grunig and White 1992, 44; Littlejohn and Foss 2008, 40). The view further implies that some social and environmental issues could be important, without involving an

109

economic opportunity or a threat to the organisation, but that the importance lies in the intertwined nature of business, society and the environment.

One such social issue that is important because it represents a business–society link is CSI, where business funds the development of the community in which it operates.

3. THE CSI LANDSCAPE

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) forms part of the bigger movement of corporate governance and corporate citizenship that broadly implies that business takes responsibility for all its actions and policies, shows respect for all stakeholders, and treats all stakeholders and society fairly (Cooke 2010, 72; Phillips 2006, 34; Steyn and Niemann 2010, 117). In developing societies the abovementioned responsibilities are necessary and expected, as business has much to offer in the fight against poverty and other societal ills (Catalyst Consortium 2002, 1; Skinner and Mersham 2008, 239).

CSI is the manifestation of corporate social responsibility towards the society and environment in which an organisation operates (IoDSA 2009, 9). If business and society relations are viewed from a strong sustainability stance, a symmetrical view, namely CSI, represents this link between business and its stakeholders. Because business could bring financial resources to the relationship, CSI creates the opportunity for mutually beneficial relationships between business and societal stakeholders (Catalyst Consortium 2002, 2).

Various theoretical principles are associated with CSI. Garriga and Melé (2004, 51) differentiate between four groups of theories: instrumental, political, integrative and ethical. Instrumental theories are those in which the organisation is focused on profit-making and social investment is intended to yield economic results. Political theories are concerned with the power of organisations in society and how they use their power politically. Integrative theories centre on satisfying the demands of society, and ethical theories are about the responsibilities of business in society.

To align with strong sustainability and symmetrical stakeholder relations, the integrative and ethical theoretical perspectives are preferable. The integrative approach regards business as part of society, just like the strong sustainability model according to which business also depends on society for survival, and the ethical approaches which view CSI as an ethical obligation to the society in which the organisation operates (ibid.).

For some industries their responsibilities towards society and their communities are paramount to their business strategies. For example, pharmaceutical organisations cannot evade their responsibility towards the larger population, and mining organisations cannot get away with being irresponsible towards the communities located around their operations (Smith 2003, 7). For most organisations, however,

these responsibilities manifest in various ways, including cause-related marketing, HIV/Aids prevention, community development and outreach, employee volunteerism and tripartite alliances which also involve government (Catalyst Consortium 2002, 5; Lichtenstein, Drumwright and Braig 2004, 16).

A large part of CSI activities is implemented by funding non-profit organisations (Lichtenstein et al. 2004, 16). Catalyst Consortium (2002, 1) argues that realising the potential of the private sector and civil society together is fundamental to sustainability. In South Africa, corporate organisations are estimated to have invested R6.9 billion in CSI projects during 2011/12 (Trialogue 2012).

In this regard, authors such as Lantos (2001, 619) and Skinner and Mersham (2008, 241) emphasise the importance of thinking strategically about the impact and sustainability of CSI. One such strategic consideration is the management and maintenance of a relationship between a corporate donor and a recipient non-profit organisation. The importance of the relationship between business and its societal stakeholders is accentuated by researchers such as Hall (2006, 7) who emphasises the business value; Skinner and Mersham (2008, 249) who note the possibilities of partnerships between business and community contributing to social development; and Bruning and Ledingham (1999, 165) who argue that social as well as economic aspects stand to benefit from community relationships with stakeholders.

4. NPOs IN CSI

The focus of this article is on one societal stakeholder which is central to implementing CSI initiatives: the NPOs. Lewis (2003, 326–327) attributes the rise of NPOs to four factors, the first being that activists in the 1980s pushed for a more people-centred development and NPOs were regarded as ideal to fulfil such a mandate. The second reason was a realisation that development funding that flowed between governments opened the door to high levels of corruption, and NPOs were seen as ideal non-state actors to transfer international aid. The third reason for the rise of NPOs in the development sector was growing concern for social and environmental issues and for the movements driving these concerns. Lastly, governments' realisation that they cannot deal with development issues without the support of other sectors also turned the attention to NPOs as a possible solution. For South Africa specifically, all of these reasons seem plausible, but the inability of government to address social problems alone is central, as locally supported social development and the fight against poverty in South Africa only really started after 1994 (Aliber 2003, 473; Fourie and Meyer 2010, 8). This inability of government makes the private sector and civil society very important role-players in filling the void (Rossouw 2010).

NPOs fulfil various roles within social development, from being catalysts for development or partners of business and government, to being implementation agents for resources from donors (Lewis 2003, 333–334; Rossouw 2010). From these

roles it is clear that NPOs link donors to recipient communities and vice versa, as they are close to the grassroots realities of their community. From a CSI perspective the ability of NPOs to link communities with donors and implement CSI initiatives makes them one of the main mobilisers for CSI expenditure (Shumate and O'Connor 2010, 578).

NPOs have a complex nature as they span different disciplines as well as a distinctive and challenging environment (Helmig, Jegers and Lapsley 2004, 101). The effectiveness of NPOs is multidimensional and cannot be measured using universal requirements (Herman and Renz 2008, 399). Despite their diversity and complexity, many NPOs face similar and distinctive management challenges (Lewis 2003, 329).

Challenges generally faced by NPOs include the ever-present limitations in resources (Boafo 2006; Connely and York 2002, 33; Hailey 2006, 1). Due to the non-market nature of NPOs they cannot generate funds using the standard economic model (Helmig et al. 2004, 101). Linked to the limitations which many NPOs experience regarding resources, are their dependence on others for those resources (Byrne and Sahay 2007, 71; Hodge and Piccolo 2005, 175). This dependence is usually on donors for funding (Lewis 2003, 332; Helmig et al. 2004, 107). Also related to resource limitations are consequential staffing problems (Coffman 2005). NPOs find it difficult to obtain and retain competent staff and board members (Coffman 2005; < > 2012a, 211), possibly because they cannot afford to pay competitive salaries and because staff members are culturally diverse (Kaplan 2001, 358; Lewis 2003, 330). Partly due to staffing issues, another dominant challenge cited by researchers and NPOs themselves is difficulty in defining a clear strategy and in managing the process followed to attain those goals (Helmig et al. 2004, 102; Kaplan 2001, 358). These difficulties challenge NPOs to stay accountable to and to manage expectations from those stakeholders (Coffman 2005; Connely and York 2002, 33). The volatile environment in which numerous NPOs function is another issue that hinders their success (Connely and York 2002, 33). Environmental concerns include isolated geographical environments, rapid changes and duality in the funding environment, and unstable and conflict-prone political environments (Lewis 2003, 330).

When considering the challenges faced by NPOs that work in social development, it is only fair to assume that these will also challenge their relationships with stakeholders. For the purpose of this article, the unique and important relationship between social development NPOs and their corporate donors is of interest, and the challenges faced by NPOs might allude to some relational challenges.

5. DONOR–NPO RELATIONSHIPS IN CSI

Relationships are usually described in accordance with the extensive literature on the stakeholder theory. Since the main premise of the aforementioned theory is that

organisations should be attentive to the needs of all their stakeholders (Freeman et al. 2010, 50) it seems a suitable starting point for the context of business–society relationships. The management and maintenance of stakeholder relationships, when viewed as ecological relationships, are about balancing the interests of the parties by using two-way communication to create value for both (Freeman, Wicks and Parmar 2004, 364; Ledingham 2003, 181; Steyn and Puth 2000, 210).

As an extension of the excellence theory, Hon and Grunig (1999) identified a set of relationship outcomes that could be used to measure and describe stakeholder relationships. Based on the perceptions of the parties in a relationship, the indicators are used to distinguish positive stakeholder relationships from negative ones, thereby also indicating management problems in the relationship (Broom, Casey and Ritchey 2000, 17; Hon and Grunig 1999, 38).

The relationship indicators defined by Hon and Grunig (1999) are control mutuality, trust, commitment and satisfaction. The two types of relationships they refer to are exchange and communal relationships. Using these relationship indicators, < > (2012a; 2012b) explored donor–NPO relationships and ultimately contextualised the indicators to describe this specific relationship more accurately. The relevant and contextual relationship indicators are subsequently summarised.

Hon and Grunig (1999, 3) refer to control mutuality as representing the balance of power in the relationship. Perceptions of power and control are important for describing stakeholder relationships (cf. Jahansoozi 2002, 8). The context of donor–NPO relationships which only focus on power-sharing (as in other relationships) will give an incomplete picture of this relationship, since donors are always in the more powerful position (< > 2012b, 360). The responsible use of power and attempting to secure sustainability for NPOs are part of donors' definition of control, while the possibility of being independent in the future also fit the NPOs' definition (< >).

The relational indicator trust is complex and can be operationalised as consisting of a combination of integrity, dependability and competence (Hon and Grunig 1999, 3). In donor–NPO relationships, trust was seen to include perceptions about the intention of the other party, consideration of the other, and a willingness to allow the other some decision-making power (< >).

Hon and Grunig (1999, 3) define commitment as the extent to which parties believe their relationship is worth spending time and energy on. In the donor–NPO relationship no single redefinition of commitment exits, as the indicator is viewed differently by the two parties involved: while NPOs define commitment as a combination of affection and desire they perceive from the donors, donors view the combination of loyalty and the perceived importance of the relationship as commitment. Both parties include the obligation to relate as part commitment to this relationship. NPOs also <view> <value?> cause commitment, i.e., the degree to which they believe their donors are committed to social causes (< >).

Satisfaction is seen by Hon and Grunig (1999, 3) as the extent to which parties perceive the relationship as positive. <   > (2012b, 358) claim that satisfaction as an indicator is less applicable to the context of this relationship, based on the initial exploration. In the interviews participants made it clear that they viewed feelings of positivity and fulfilment as part of other relational dimensions, and not as a stand-alone indicator of the relationship.

The two types of relationships, exchange and communal, were also considered unsuitable for describing donor–NPO relations. <   > (2012b, 358) argue that the context dictates that elements of both communality and exchange are found in donor–NPO relationships, but that the type of relationship (donor–NPO) is implied and the differentiation unnecessary.

To further explicate, < > identifies context-specific relational realities experienced by the parties in this relationship that should be considered in a description of the state of the relationship. These realities include the specific importance of transparency, accommodation of the other, understanding of the differences between the parties, the requirements of reporting, and a grasp on the insatiable needs that come from communities served by this relationship.

These redefined indicators were used to describe the stakeholder relationship between corporate donors and recipient NPOs, and to highlight the challenges emerging from the data.

6. RESEARCH PROCESS

The research for this article fell within the interpretative paradigm and aimed to provide a description of the relationship challenges as perceived by both parties in the donor–NPO relationship. An understanding of the relationship from the point of view of both the donors and NPOs was mainly based on the results from two corresponding survey questionnaires and supplemented by partially structured interviews conducted during the exploratory phase of the study.

For the initial exploration, partially structured interviews, using an adapted version of the Grunig (2002) interview schedule, were conducted with six key informants who shared their insight and experience regarding donor–NPO relationships. Two major findings came from the interviews: (1) the relationship between donors and NPOs is challenging; and (2) the relationship indicators used to measure and describe stakeholder relationships should be contextualised to make them better suited for measuring in context. The findings of the partially structured interviews are not discussed in full in this article, but have been published in <   > (2012a and 2012b).

6.1. Questionnaire development

The development of the survey questionnaire was based on a review of the literature on stakeholder relationships in the context of CSI and the link between corporate donors and recipient NPOs, as well as the findings of the partially structured interviews. Informed by the literature and qualitative findings, preliminary relationship indicators were defined, operationalised and Likert-scale items formulated to represent those preliminary constructs. The well-known Hon and Grunig (1999) relationship questionnaire served as the basis for the compilation of two separate questionnaires (one for each party in the relationship), with adaptation, and to which newly formulated items were added. The term 'corresponding surveys' is used because the two surveys were intended to measure the same relationship from two sides by using corresponding items, some of which were identical and some similar (specifically where contextual differences made it impossible to use identical items). After review by an expert panel consisting of communication researchers, and pilot-testing among five donor respondents and five NPO respondents, the questionnaires were considered ready for administration.

6.2. Sampling

Separate samples were drawn for the two populations: managers of South African NPOs that receive corporate funding and CSI representatives of organisations operating in South Africa that interact with NPOs that receive funding. The NPO sample was drawn with a simple random sampling method from the Prodder NGO Directory of 2008. This directory was deemed suitable (1) because it was available to the researcher and (2) because all of the NPOs listed provide e-mail addresses and were presumed to have Internet access. Of the 413 questionnaires sent to e-mail addresses, and after various follow-ups (both via e-mail and telephonically, where possible), 106 questionnaires were completed and returned. The sample intending to select CSI representatives of donor organisations proved to be challenging due to the relative inaccessibility of the population. The researcher reverted to various non-probability sampling methods including conveniently accessing contact details from the *Trialogue CSI Handbook* and a client list from a Black Economic Empowerment consultancy firm. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Babbie and Mouton 2001, 166; Du Plooy 2009, 123–124) was applied In internet searches focused on obtaining contact details for CSI representatives of South African organisations listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Of the total of 137 survey questionnaires distributed, 67 donor respondents responded.

6.3. Research procedure

The data collected from the corresponding surveys were analysed with IBM SPSS with two aims in mind: (1) to identify relationship indicators as perceived by the respondents in these surveys as being important for describing the specific stakeholder relationship; and (2) to conduct a descriptive analysis of the relationship.

The definition of contextual relationship indicators was done by means of an exploratory factor analysis at construct level, and reliability testing of the factor groupings for both sets of survey results. The factor groupings were named and described as contextual relationship indicators for both parties in the relationship (<   >). The relationship was subsequently described using contextual relationship indicators and items measuring the perceptions of the survey respondents on those items (<   >). For the purpose of this article, the description of the relationship by both parties is used to identify challenges in the relationship that could possibly relate to challenges faced by NPOs in the execution of their development work. Only results focusing on these challenges have been selected and will be presented in this article.

7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Although all the findings of the surveys are not reported below, and even though this article focuses on problematic aspects of the donor–NPO relationship, on the whole the parties did not perceive the relationship as being greatly negative. The perceptions of both parties include both positive and negative reflections about the donor–NPO relationship's dimensions of control/power, trust, commitment and contextual realities. A summary of the results of the corresponding surveys is provided in Figure 2, which indicates the mean scores for each indicator as well as the contextual elements.
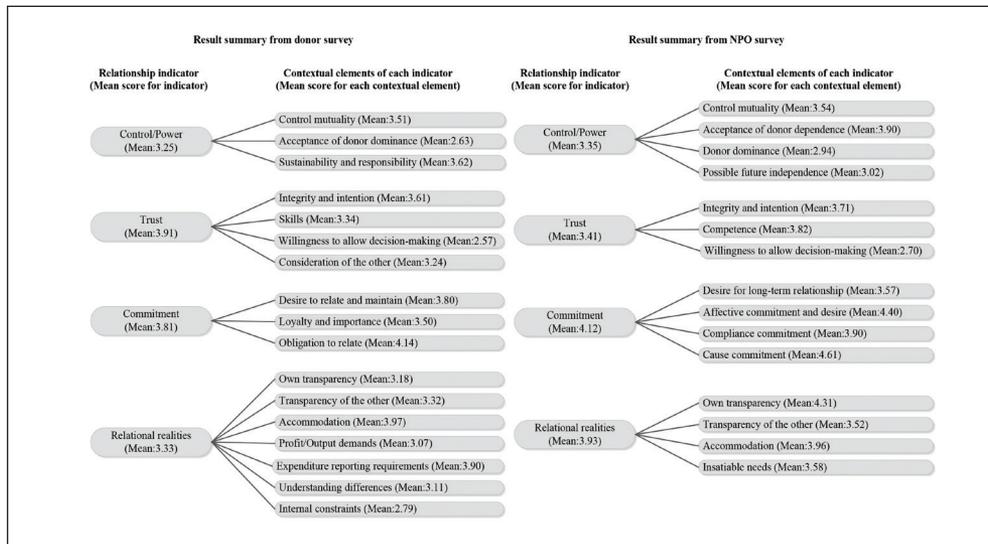
Figure 2: Summary of results from both donor and NPO surveys

For the purposes of this article, the focus is on those survey results that indicate possible relational difficulties. Reference is also made to some of the findings of the partially structured interviews, as published in < > (2012a, 2012b), as they suggest links between the relational problems and managerial and environmental challenges reportedly faced by NPOs.

The findings all relate to the relationship indicators discussed above, but arranged as they link to the challenges generally faced by NPOs, namely resource limitations and dependence; problems with staffing; strategy; and management and the realities of working in a volatile environment. In the presentation of findings, the respondents who selected the Agree/Strongly agree and Disagree/Strongly disagree options will be discussed together, by referring to being in agreement or being in disagreement. Furthermore, in the tables the options selected by respondents are indicated with the following key: SD (Strongly disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree) and SA (Strongly agree).

When considering the overall mean scores for the relationship indicators for both donors and NPOs (see Figure 2), it is evident that the relationship is generally positive with all mean scores higher than 3. A closer look at the mean scores of the contextual elements indicates some problem areas that are further explored in this article.

117

Table 1: Summary of relationship challenges and possible link to NPO challenges

Relational challenges	Possible link to challenges of NPOs
Power imbalance in favour of corporate donors	Dependence on and limitations of resources such as funding and infrastructure
Lack of transparency on the side of the NPOs	
Divergent views on commitment in the relationship	
Questionable competence of NPOs	Problems with recruiting and retaining of competent staff
Time constraints in project execution	
Perceived incomprehension of NPOs of the business world	Strategy, management and environmental challenges regularly associated with NPO management
Unwillingness from donors to allow NPOs decision-making power	

For the donor survey, lower mean scores are indicated for the contextual elements named 'Acceptance of donor dominance' (Mean: 2.63), 'Willingness to allow decision-making power' (Mean: 2.57), 'Profit/output demands' (Mean: 3.07), 'Understanding differences' (Mean: 3.11) and 'Internal constraints of NPOs' (Mean: 2.79). These lower mean scores allude to problems in the relationship, from the perception of the donors.

From the NPO survey the following contextual elements have lower mean scores: 'Donor dominance' (Mean: 2.94), 'Possible future independence' (Mean: 3.02) and 'Willingness to allow decision-making power' (Mean: 2.70). The lower mean scores indicate problem areas in the relationship that need further investigation.

The lower-scoring contextual elements and the way these elements were grouped by the respondents indicated the relationship challenges and their possible root causes (see Table 1). They are subsequently further explored.

8. RESOURCE LIMITATIONS AND DEPENDENCE

NPOs do not generate funds in the same way as organisations in the private sector, and limited resources and lacking infrastructure are realities they face in their daily operations. Together with the constraints facing NPOs in terms of access to limited resources, it also implies that they are dependent on others, usually donors, for their resources. Resource limitations and donor dependence are at the root of many relational challenges between donor and recipient, and these challenges include an imbalance in power between the parties, a lack of transparency on the side of the donors, and divergent views on commitment in the relationship.

8.1. Power imbalance in favour of corporate donors

From the partially structured interviews it emerged that NPOs settle for a position of powerlessness in their relationship with their donors, because they believe it can help them secure funding for the future (< > 2012b, 354). This belief links their dependence on their donors for funding and the sensitivity that comes with resource limitations, with power in their relationship with their donors.

The NPO survey supported the qualitative findings as reflected by the responses to the selection of items reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Perceptions on power and control in the relationship (NPO survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
We are dependent on our donors for survival	88	n	2	6	7	45	28
		%	2.3	6.8	8.0	51.1	31.8
Our donors hold a powerful position in our relationship	87	n	—	6	19	47	15
		%	—	6.9	21.8	54	17.2
We cooperate with our donors because we want to secure future funding	88	n	—	10	15	43	20
		%	—	11.4	17	48.9	22.7
In the future, we will be able to survive without our donors	86	n	13	36	23	11	3
		%	15.1	41.9	26.7	12.8	3.5
Independence from donors is an important long-term goal for us	88	n	4	15	18	30	21
		%	4.5	17	20.5	34.1	23.9

The vast majority of NPOs (82.9% / N = 88) believed that they depend on their donors for survival, and the majority (71.2% / N = 87) were in agreement that their donors hold a powerful position in their relationship with them. The dependence on donors and the perceived power of donors in the relationship with those they fund are also reflected in the 71.6 per cent (N = 88) of NPOs that cooperate with their donors in order to secure future funding. As a further expression of control in the relationship, NPOs grouped together responses depicting their perception of the future and their possible independence from donors. Although the respondents' reactions were varied, large proportions of them disagreed that they would be able to survive without donors in the future (57% / N = 86), while 58 per cent (N =88) agreed that donor independence is a long-term goal. The antithesis in the responses to these two statements shows that while NPOs seem to want to be independent, they do not believe that independence is a possibility.

The survey showed that the NPOs perceived their donors as being powerful and that they know they are dependent on their donors for survival. They reported that independence from donors is important, but unlikely. On considering these survey

results, together with the responses from participants in the partially structured interviews, a more complex picture emerges. NPO participants in the interviews reported that CSI is a donor-driven process where donors control all decisions and processes. The NPOs feel that they must perform at every command of their corporate donors, and that they do not even attempt to gain control of certain situations in their relationship with their donors. When citing the reasons for this, they reported that they adhere to donor demands because they are dependent on their funding.

8.2. Lack of transparency on the side of the NPOs

Issues of transparency also seem to burden the relationship between the two parties. The participants in the partially structured interviews emphasised the transparency of NPOs more than that of the corporate donors (< > 2012a, 209). Similarly, the survey results show that NPOs perceive themselves as being more transparent and open than their donors perceive them to be.

The NPO survey supported the qualitative findings as reflected by the responses to the selection of items (see Table 3).

Table 3: Perceptions on their own transparency (NPO survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
Our donors are free to access our financial reports	78	n	—	—	—	29	49
		%	—	—	—	37.2	62.8
Our donors require us to be transparent regarding our operational expenses	78	n	—	—	2	43	33
		%	—	—	2.6	55.1	42.3
We openly share information with our donors	77	n	—	2	2	38	35
		%	—	2.6	2.6	49.4	45.5
We are financially transparent to the donors	78	n	—	2	5	39	32
		%	—	2.6	6.4	50	41

As reported in Table 3, when questioned about their own transparency in their relationship with their donors, the vast majority of NPO respondents, 97.4 per cent (N = 78), indicated that they believe they are financially transparent; 94.9 per cent (N = 77) reported that they share information openly with their donors; 100 per cent (N = 78) indicated that their donors are free to access their financial reports; and 91 per cent (N = 78) believed that they are open about their situation when interacting with their donors.

Regarding the transparency of recipient NPOs, as perceived by their donors, the majority were neutral when asked to respond to the statement 'The [NPOs] are truthful about funding issues', while only 39.3 per cent agreed with the statement.

Almost the same proportion as for the above statement (45.9% / N = 61) reacted neutrally about the openness of recipient NPOs about their real situation and whether they felt the NPOs share information openly (44.3%). The responses of the donors reflect that they were generally unconvinced that the NPOs are open and truthful and they could possibly be viewed as suspicious in this regard.

The donor survey responses are reflected in the selection of items reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Perceptions on the transparency of NPOs (donor survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
The [NPOs] share information openly with us	61	n	—	6	27	27	1
		%	—	9.8	44.3	44.3	1.6
The [NPOs] are open about their real situation	61	n	—	7	28	24	2
		%	—	11.5	45.9	39.3	3.3
The [NPOs] are truthful about funding issues	61	n	1	7	29	24	—
		%	1.6	11.5	47.5	39.3	—

When comparing the survey results in Table 4 with the views of participants in the partially structured interviews, it is clear that donors experienced NPOs as sometimes untruthful about funding issues, with anecdotes of embezzled funds and double-funding for projects. The reasons for this perceived lack of truthfulness and transparency lie in the challenges of managing an NPO. Participants defended the actions of NPOs by saying they understood that being transparent is not always in the best interests of the NPO, because transparency would pose risks to their funding or could cause them to forfeit the money they need.

8.3. Divergent views on commitment to the relationship

Regarding commitment, the survey results show that 51.4 per cent (N = 85) of the NPO respondents disagreed with the statement about their donors committing to funding for longer than three years, while the largest proportion (37.7% / N = 61) of donors were of the opinion (agreed) that they do commit to long-term funding, while a lesser 27.9 per cent disagreed and 18 per cent responded neutrally when questioned about long-term funding.

The qualitative findings show that the participants criticised the practice of using 12-month financial cycles for CSI funding, as the needs of NPOs generally call for a longer-term commitment. Commitment is not only perceived differently by the two parties in the relationship, but (from both quantitative and qualitative stances) the limited resources to fulfil their mission could also be linked to their need for a

longer-term commitment, plus their critique of organisations that do not commit on a long-term basis.

9. STAFFING PROBLEMS

Challenges regarding skilled staff and board members are evident from the literature on NPO management. These challenges can be related to limitations in resources (see above). These challenges can also be seen in the qualitative inquiry's focus on the perceptions of the competence of NPOs and frustrations linked to time constraints in the execution of CSI-funded projects.

9.1. Questionable competence of NPOs

In the interview phase of the research, the participants generally indicated that they regard NPOs as incompetent and the donors as generally competent. Challenges in attracting and retaining skilled staff and a dependency on volunteers were given as reasons for the perceived incompetence of NPOs by the participants in the partially structured interviews.

The competence of NPOs was further explored in the survey, and although the perceptions were not as strongly expressed as in the interviews, it was apparent that the donors are not convinced of the competence of the NPOs.

A selection of the donor survey results pertaining to NPO competence is reflected in Table 5.

Table 5: Perceptions on the competence of NPOs (donor survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
The [NPOs] can be left to work unsupervised	67	n	2	17	18	27	3
		%	3	25.4	26.9	40.3	4.5
I feel confident about the skills of the [NPOs]	67	n	1	12	31	30	3
		%	1.5	17.9	31.3	44.8	4.5
The [NPOs] are known to be successful at the things they try to do	67	n	—	5	25	34	3
		%	—	7.5	37.3	50.7	4.5

Although the majority of donors perceived the NPOs to be competent and skilful, a large proportion was undecided on these issues. Of the donor respondents, 26.9 per cent (N = 67) were undecided whether NPOs can be left to work unsupervised, 31.3 per cent (N = 67) neither agreed nor disagreed that they are confident about the skills of NPOs, and 37.3 per cent (N = 67) were neutral about a statement pertaining to the known successes of NPOs. Thus, while few respondents strongly disagreed,

some ambivalence is clear in the responses: large proportions of respondents reacted neutrally or negatively to statements pertaining to the skills of the NPOs.

The ambiguity in the survey results supported the qualitative findings that donors sometimes question the competence and dependability of NPOs, and confirmed literature that cites issues of lacking infrastructure and human resources as part of their constraints (cf. Boafo 2006).

9.2. Time constraints in project execution

Time constraints in the execution of CSI-funded activities could also be blamed on the challenges faced by NPOs due to limited resources. The idea that NPOs themselves cause many of their operational problems emerged from the qualitative data.

The responses to the surveys were not as strong as the views of participants expressed during the partially structured interviews, but the responses nonetheless expanded the exploration of the relationship. A selection of the results from the donor survey is shown in Table 6.

Table 6:   Perceptions on time constraints in the relationship (donor survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
The [NPOs] are slow when acting on promises made to us	61	n	2	23	27	8	1
		%	3.3	37.7	44.3	13.1	1.6
The [NPOs] themselves are the main cause of time constraints when it comes to implementing funded projects	61	n	4	14	27	15	—
		%	6.7	23.3	45	25	—

The survey responses indicate divergent views, with the largest proportion of donors (45% / N = 61) reacting neutrally to the statement about the recipient NPOs being the main cause of time constraints when it comes to implementing funded projects, whereas 25 per cent (N = 15) of donors agreed that they are the main cause of such constraints. Similarly, the largest proportion (44.3% / N = 61) of donors responded neutrally when indicating whether they perceive NPOs as being slow in acting on their promises. Yet, a large proportion of donors do not experience the NPOs as being slow in acting on promises.

The NPO survey further revealed that 60.2 per cent (N = 78) of respondents believed their needs were greater than what donors could satisfy, and 59.8 per cent (N = 77) perceived their needs to be never-ending. During the partially structured interviews the donor participants cited the reason for NPOs not being able to honour commitments timeously as them overpromising on funding applications in order to project an image of sufficiency, but then not being able to deliver. The many neutral

responses could mean that donors are generally not convinced of the real cause of time constraints, but when put into perspective with the qualitative responses and the NPOs' perceptions of their insatiable needs, it seems possible that time constraints in the donor–NPO relationship are linked to the challenges and needs of the NPOs.

10. STRATEGY, MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Associated with both resource limitations and staffing problems, the strategic and management difficulties experienced by many NPOs and the volatile environment in which they work also have a bearing on their relationship with their donors. Furthermore, isolated, politically unstable and conflict-ridden environments are where NPOs are most needed, and where they are expected to operate. Environmental pressures (reported in the literature as one of the predominant challenges facing NPO management) also have a negative impact on their relationship with corporate donors.

Although no direct questions about strategy, management or environmental pressures were put to the donors and NPOs in the surveys, a substantial proportion of the donors were not certain that NPOs understood the business world. In addition, it was clear that donors are not willing to entrust NPOs with decision-making power in the relationship. Both of these perceptions could be indicative of relational challenges caused by management and environmental challenges facing the NPOs.

10.1. Perceived incomprehension of the business world

Survey responses regarding the comprehension the parties show for each other's realities could further clarify perceptions of the relationship in terms of the challenges NPOs face in the execution of their work.

A selection of results from the donor survey, about their perceptions of NPOs' understanding of the business environment, is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Perceptions on the NPOs' understanding of the corporate context (donor survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
Both parties in a corporate [NPO] relationship understand the difference in organisational goals between them	61	n	—	12	22	25	2

		%	—	19.7	36.1	41	3.3
The [NPOs] understand the realities of the corporate world	61	n	1	17	30	10	3
		%	1.6	27.9	49.2	16.4	4.9

Close to half of the donors (49.2% / N = 61) responded neutrally to the statement 'The [NPOs] understand the realities of the corporate world', with a substantial 29.5 per cent disagreeing. The largest proportion of donors at least agreed that both parties in the donor–NPO relationship reported that they understand the difference in organisational goals between them. A large proportion (36.1% / N = 61) also reacted neutrally.

From these responses it is clear that the donors were not convinced that the NPOs understand their reality, nor were they confident about their own understanding of the realities of NPOs. The survey responses could be linked to perceptions of both parties, voiced during the partially structured interviews, where NPOs claimed to understand what their donors expected of them, but indicated that they are constrained by their day-to-day realities.

10.2. Unwillingness to allow NPOs decision-making power

Another relational constraint that could be linked to problems of environment, as well as the management of NPOs, is the unwillingness of donors to trust their recipient NPOs with the power to make decisions within the relationship.

A selection of the results from the donor survey is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Perceptions on the willingness of donors to share decision-making power (donor survey)

Item	N		SD	D	N	A	SA
I am willing to let the [NPOs], make decisions for us	66	n	8	26	19	11	2
		%	12.1	39.4	28.8	16.7	3
We are willing to allow the [NPOs] to take decisions that could affect us	66	n	5	32	17	12	—
		%	7.6	48.5	25.8	18.2	—

The survey responses clearly illustrate that donor respondents were not willing to allow recipient NPOs decision-making power, with 56.1 per cent (N = 66) disagreeing that they are willing to let NPOs make decisions that could affect them and 51.5 per cent (N = 66) disagreeing that they are willing to let NPOs make decisions on their behalf. Large proportions of respondents (25.8% and 28.8% respectively) responded neutrally to the statements, but generally the donors indicated that they are not willing to let NPOs take important decisions in the relationship.

11. CONCLUSION

The research on which this article is based, together with the qualitative results published as < > (2012a, 2012b), shows that some relational difficulties between corporate donors and recipient NPOs within the context of CSI could be linked to the management and environmental challenges facing the NPO. Understanding the relationship challenges experienced in the donor–NPO relationship in the context of CSI can assist donors' understanding of the NPOs which they fund. It may also enable them to better deal with the challenges involved when funding NPOs.

The relational difficulties experienced by the participants and respondents in the study reported on in this article revealed the following:

- Power imbalances in the relationship, a lack of transparency on the part of the NPO and differing views on commitment are part of the relationship, because NPOs are generally tight on resources and dependent on others for those resources;
- Questions about the competence of NPOs and time constraints in project execution are linked to the staffing problems experienced by many NPOs;
- The perceived incomprehension of NPOs about the realities of the business environment and the reluctance of donors to allow NPOs to make decisions in their relationship are associated with the management and environmental difficulties which NPOs sometimes experience.

Bearing in mind these relational challenges and their probable roots, donors could ultimately enhance the quality of their CSI practices and the evaluation thereof, and in so doing make them more accountable for their responsibility towards their society. With almost R7 billion invested in CSI in 2011/12, a more effective and accountable CSI is not something to be taken lightly – it should rather be seriously considered as a vehicle for sustainable change in South Africa.

REFERENCES

Aliber, M. 2003. 'Chronic Poverty in South Africa: Incidence, Causes and Policies.' *World Development* 31 (3): 473–490.

Babbie, E. R. and J. Mouton. 2001. *The Practice of Social Research.* Cape Town: Oxford.

Boafo, K. S. T. 2006. 'Participatory Development Communication: An African Perspective.' In *People, Land and Water: Participatory Development Communication for Natural Resource Management*, ed. G. Besette, 41–48. IDRC. http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=112. (Accessed July 13, 2009).

Broom, G. M., S. Casey, and J. Ritchey. 2000. 'Concept and Theory of Organization–Public Relationships.' In *Public Relations as Relationship Management: A Relational Approach to*

the Study and Practice of Public Relations, ed. J. A. Ledingham and S. D. Bruning, 3–22. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bruning, S. D. and J. A. Ledingham. 1999. 'Relationships Between Organisations and Publics: Development of a Multi-dimensional Organisation–Public Relationship Scale.' *Public Relations Review* 25 (2): 157–170.

Burger, K. M. 2009. Businesses' Social Engagement, Public Relations and Social Development: A Beyond Modernist Conceptual Model.' Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Byrne, E. and S. Sahay. 2007. 'Participatory Design for Social Development: A South African Case Study on Community-Based Health Information Systems.' *Information Technology for Development* 13 (1): 71–94.

Catalyst Consortium. 2002. 'Corporate Social Responsibility in Practice Casebook.' Pathfinder International. http://www.pathfinder.org/publications-tools/pdfs/CATALYST-Corporate-Social-Responsibility-in-Practice-Casebook.pdf (accessed July 2, 2013).

Coffman, S. E. 2005. 'Nonprofits' Three Greatest Challenges.' http://www.guidestar.org/rxa/news/articles/2005/nonprofits-three-greatest-challenges.aspx (Accessed July 12, 2013).

Connolly, P. and P. York. 2002. 'Evaluating Capacity-Building Efforts for Nonprofit Organizations.' *OD Practitioner* 34 (4): 33–39.

Cooke, D. 2010. 'Building Social Capital through Corporate Social Investment.' *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration* 2 (1): 71–87.

Du Plooy, G. M. 2009. *Communication Research: Techniques, Methods and Applications*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Juta.

Fourie, P. and M. Meyer. 2010. *The Politics of Aids Denialism*. Surrey: Ashgate.

Freeman, R. E., J. S. Harrison, A. C. Wicks, B. L. Parmar, and S. De Colle. 2010. *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, R. E., A. C. Wicks, and B. Parma. 2004. 'Stakeholder Theory and "the corporate objective revisited".' *Organization Science* 15 (3): 364–369.

Garriga, E. and D. Melé. 2004. 'Corporate Social Responsibility Theories: Mapping the Territory.' *Journal of Business Ethics* 53 (1-2): 51–71.

Grossman, M. 2011. 'Redefining the Relationship between the Environment, Society and Economy.' http://www.environmentalleader.com/2011/11/14/redefining-the-relationship-between-the-environment-society-and-the-economy/ (Accessed June 12, 2013).

Grunig, J. E. 2002. 'Qualitative Methods for assessing Relationships between Organizations and Publics.' The Institute for Public Relations. http://www.instituteforpr.org/research_single/qualitative_methods_assessing/ (accessed November 12, 2013).

Grunig, J. E. and J. White. 1992. The effect of worldviews on public relations theory and practice. In *Excellence in public relations and communication management*, eds. J.E. Grunig and D.M Dozier, 31-64. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hailey, J. 2006. 'NGO Leadership Development.' http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/handle/123456789/21770 (Accessed July 11, 2013).

Hall, M. R. 2007. 'Corporate Philanthropy and Corporate Community Relations: Measuring Relationship-Building Results.' *Journal of Public Relations Research* 18 (1): 1–21.

Helmig, B., M. Jegers, and I. Lapsley. 2004. 'Challenges in Managing Non-Profit Organizations: A Research Overview.' *International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations* 15 (2): 101–116.

Herman, R. D. and D. O. Renz. 2008. 'Advancing Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness Research and Theory: Nine Theses.' *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 18 (4): 399–415.

Hodge, M. M. and R. F. Piccolo. 2005. 'Funding Source, Board Involvement Techniques, and Financial Vulnerability in Non-Profit Organizations: A Test of Resource Dependence.' *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 16 (2): 171–190.

Hon, L. and J. E. Grunig. 1999. 'Guidelines for Measuring Relationship in Public Relations.' The Institute for Public Relations. http://www.instituteforpr.org/research_single/ (accessed October 28, 2013).

Institute of Directors Southern Africa (IoDSA). 2009. *King Report on Governance for South Africa 2009*. Johannesburg: IoDSA.

Jahansoozi, J. 2002. 'Public Relations and the Relational Perspective – An Exploration of Relationship Characteristics: Researching an Appropriate Framework for Evaluating the Relationships between Publics and Organisations.' Proceedings from the 9th International Public Relations Research Symposium, July 4–7, Lake Bled, Slovenia.

Kaplan, R. S. 2001. 'Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations.' *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 11 (3): 353–370.

Ledingham J. A. 2003. 'Explicating Relationship Management as a General Theory of Public Relations.' *Journal of Public Relations Research* 15 (2): 181–198.

Lewis, D. 2003. 'Theorizing the Organization and Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: Towards a Composite Approach.' *Public Management Review* 5 (3): 325–344.

Lichtenstein, D. R., M. E. Drumwright, and B. M. Braig. 2004. 'The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Donations to Corporate-Supported Nonprofits.' *Journal of Marketing* 68 (4): 16–32.

Lindenborg, R. A. 1994. 'Excellent Communication.' *Public Relations Quarterly* 39 (1): 5–11.

Littlejohn, S. W. and K. A. Foss. 2008. *Theories of Human Communication*. 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Padaki, V. 2007. 'The Human Organisation: Challenges in NGOs and Development Programmes.' *Development in Practice* 17 (1): 65–77.

PCE (Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment). 2002. 'Creating Our Future: Sustainable Development for New Zealand.' Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. http://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/all-publications/creating-our-future-sustainable-development-for-new-zealand-3 (Accessed July 13, 2013).

Pearce, D. and G. Atkinson. 1998. 'The Concept of Sustainable Development: An Evaluation of its Usefulness Ten Years after Brundtland.' *Revue Suisse d'Économie et de Statistique* 134: 251–270.

Pearce, D. W. and G. D. Atkinson. 1993. 'Capital Theory and the Measurement of Sustainable Development: An Indicator of "weak" sustainability.' *Ecological Economics* 8 (2): 103–108.

Phillips, D. 2006. 'Relationships are the Core Value for Organisations: A Practitioner Perspective.' *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 11 (1): 34–42.

Rossouw, R. 2010. Personal Communication. E-mail Correspondence, September 12–16. Information on Corporate Social Investment in South Africa.

Shumate, M. and A. O'Connor. 2010. 'The Symbiotic Sustainability Model: Conceptualizing NGO–Corporate Alliance Communication.' *Journal of Communication* 60 (3): 577–609.

Skinner, J. C. and G. Mersham. 2008. Corporate Social Responsibility in South Africa: Emerging Trends. *Society and Business Review* 3 (3): 239–255.

Smith, N. C. 2003. 'Corporate Social Responsibility: Not Whether, but How.' Centre for Marketing Working Paper. http://www.london.edu/facultyandresearch/research/docs/03-701.pdf (Accessed October 13, 2013).

Steyn, B. and L. Niemann. 2010. 'Enterprise Strategy: A Concept that explicates Corporate Communication's Strategic Contribution at the Macro-Organisational Level.' *Journal of Communication Management* 14 (2): 106–126.

Steyn, B. and G. Puth. 2000. *Corporate Communication Strategy.* Sandton: Heinemann.

Trialogue. 2012. 'Trialogue launches its 2012 Corporate Social Investment Research.' http://www.corporatecitizenship.co.za/assets/pdf/The%20CSI%20Handbook%20Launch%20Presentation%20-%2015th%20edition.pdf (Accessed September 2, 2013).

UN (United Nations). 2005. 'World Summit Outcome.' United Nations General Assembly. http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r60_en.shtml (Accessed February 19, 2009).

Wood, J. T. 2004. *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

MARKETING COMMUNICATION FOR ORGANIC WINE: SEMIOTIC GUIDELINES FOR WINE BOTTLE FRONT LABELS

Elsie Magdalena van Tonder and Dalmé Mulder
Department of Communication Science, University of the Free State, South Africa
vantonderem@ufs.ac.za; mulderd@ufs.ac.za

ABSTRACT

South Africa's organic wine industry has yet to benefit from research on wine bottle labelling. The wine bottle front label has proven to be a forceful first point of contact with consumers, and has powerful implications and consequences – both negative and positive – for marketing communication. Women have grown to represent a niche market which has increased spending and decision-making power, they are drinking more wine than before and have a preference for organic produce. This consumer group regards wine bottle front labels as an important decision-making entity and employs affective factors when making purchasing decisions. This research encompasses an approach which considered all the semiotic elements of wine bottle front labels and their influence on women within a retail setting. Although a small group of research respondents took part in this study, rich data were generated and the results indicate how semiotics influences South African consumers' perceptions and decision making. With the possibility that alcohol advertisements might soon be banned in South Africa, it would be in the interest of organic wine producers to inform themselves of

relevant and effective wine bottle front label design, in order to capitalise on the touch points that consumers have with their product. This article provides guidelines for the design of organic wine bottle front labels which will enable organic wine producers to cut through the clutter on retail shelves and distinguish their products as unique, successful brands.

Keywords: branding, females, graphic design, integrated marketing communication, marketing, marketing communication, organic, organic wine, point of purchase, semiotics, South Africa, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, people are interested in and are demanding to know what goes into the products they consume. As a result, the demand for organic products is expanding to such an extent that the global market for certified organic products has experienced rapid and prolonged growth over the past two decades. In South Africa, organic product sales are also on the rise. South Africa is seen as the largest market for organic products in Africa, which accounts for three per cent of the global organic market (Soil Association 2013, 18). As consumers become increasingly discerning about what they drink, so the demand for organic wines keeps increasing (Petzoldt n.d.), prompting liquor retailers to expand the shelf space designated for organic wines. Organic wine sales in South Africa have 'exploded', increasing by 4.1 per cent in 2012 (Hu 2011; Whitehead 2012).

Women are seen as great advocates for the use of organic products and are the main buyers of organic produce (Lipson 2004). In addition, women constitute a consumer group which has growing influence within the wine industry, as they are drinking more wine than before and are making the majority of related purchasing decisions (Kuhn 2011, 3). Approximately 56.7 per cent of wine drinkers are female, and 54 per cent of women buy wine when they do the household shopping (Pitt 2010). Communication campaigns related to organic food products should, therefore, primarily address women (Olivas and Bernabéu 2012, n.p.).

The symbols, indices and icons used in designing the artwork for a wine label need to be carefully planned and executed, as they critically influence the communication process when complex and diverse information about brand value and consumer attitudes are conveyed (Morse 2010, 2). Halstead (2012, 77) confirms that wine labels are indeed imbued with semiotics as they contain layers of meaning and play on complex consumer needs on both a rational and an emotional level. Semiotics plays an integral part in marketing communication, since emotional and cultural connotations are symbolised in product packaging and other marketing communication techniques, such as advertising (Leech n.d.).

According to Ritz (2013), women resort to affective decision making (rather than cognition) when choosing wine and they are concerned with the 'story' behind a bottle of wine. Wine labels represent the main source of information in this process (Mueller and Lockshin 2008, 13).

Although previous research studies to some extent investigated the effect of wine labels on consumer decision making, similar research has not yet been done in respect of South African wines – and particularly not within the organic wine market. The aim of this article is to explore which elements South African organic wine producers should place on the front label of their bottles (and in which manner) to successfully engage female consumers. Currently there is strong speculation that there may soon be a ban on alcohol advertising in South Africa (Merten 2013). Should this become a reality, it would lead to a reduction in the number of touch points that organic wine producers have with consumers, thus justifying the aforementioned emphases on the importance of wine bottle front labels as marketing communicators.

This article speaks from an integrated marketing communication perspective and incorporates semiotic design considerations. A combination of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and semiotics is interwoven throughout the article, and emphasis is placed on the synergistic effect that both of these perspectives contribute to branding. DeLozier (in Kauppinen 2004, 32) acknowledges the role semiotics plays in marketing communication by describing it as a

> process of presenting an integrated set of stimuli to a market target with the intent of evoking a desired set of responses within that market, and setting up channels to receive, interpret, and act upon messages from the market for purposes of modifying present company messages and identifying new communications opportunities.

Other authors agree that marketing should embrace and consider semiotics, thereby enriching marketing communication and integrating relevant signs to engage consumers and manage brand equity (Johanesen 2012; Oswald 2007, 1; Sherry, Morris and Mick in Mick 1986).

The role and importance of packaging at the point of purchase and how it affects consumer decision making are addressed, after which the communicative abilities and function of wine bottle front labels are discussed. Thereafter the research method is explained, and this is followed by a discussion of the research results. Recommendations from the existing research and for future research conclude the article. An exposition of guidelines for the design of wine bottle front labels follows the precedent, and aims to mediate effective branding and marketing communication in favour of South African organic wine producers, in order to promote brand equity and elicit positive effects from the female wine-purchasing consumer group.

2. PACKAGING AND POINT OF PURCHASE

Packaging is an important marketing communication technique used in branding. According to Belch and Belch (2009, 26), IMC involves the process of planning, executing, evaluating and controlling promotional mix elements to effectively communicate with target audiences. IMC also creates widespread brand exposure (O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik 2009, 11). In other words, IMC entails the management of all consumer touch points in order to effectively build brands. Shimp and Andrews (2014, 14) provide the IMC application of the aforementioned by suggesting that practitioners need to be receptive to using all forms of 'touch points' or 'contacts' as potential message delivery channels. 'Touch point' and 'contact' are used here as interchangeable terms to mean *any* message medium capable of reaching target customers and presenting the brand in a favourable light.

Products on shop shelves compete to attract favourable attention and selection at the point of purchase (PoP). The package *is* the product up until the product has been consumed (Ksenia 2013, 12). Therefore, packaging is a purposeful and powerful vessel at the PoP. It is an influential communicator in a dynamic market environment where consumers often only make their final purchasing decision when they are inside a retail setting (Court, Elzinga, Mulder and Vetvik 2009). The importance of packaging can therefore not be emphasised enough, as approximately 70–73 per cent of purchasing decisions are made at the PoP (Ksenia 2013, 6; Naidoo 2003, 24). Barsotti (2010, 5) adds that product labels are key determinants at this location. With wine bottles, the front labels form an essential part of the product's packaging. This establishes that the decisional moment at the PoP is a substantial and significant consideration for marketing communication.

Package design informs a consumers' evaluation of a product from the pre-purchase phase when consumers make inferences about the product contents (Berry 2009; Ksenia 2013, 5). Consumers often experience confusion when deciding on which single product they believe will provide them with that unique benefit which the opposing products cannot (Naidoo 2003, 24). Communication from packaging which cuts through the clutter could clear up this confusion. Visual cues are important since approximately 48 per cent of PoP sales are influenced by packaging visuals specifically. Consumers are more likely to choose a different brand than they originally considered as a result of alluring packaging they notice at the PoP (Popai in De Luca and Penco 2006, 6).

Authors differ in their interpretation of what constitutes packaging and what the functions of packaging are. Naidoo (2003, 25) describes packaging elements in terms of visual appeal and as a form of visual stimulus that affects consumers psychologically. Kauppinen's (2004, 3) research represents the semiotic tradition of communication, regarding packaging elements as signs (verbal or non-verbal) which are attributes of the brand or package. These are processed as information

by consumers, and communicate significantly during the marketing communication process by attracting attention, evoking persuasion, influencing attitudes and impacting on memory (ibid.). Ksenia (2013, 18) groups packaging elements into two main categories, namely visual and information communication: visual elements (graphics, colour, size and shape) play an integral role in product branding and also facilitate consumer identification by communicating meaning and product differentiation. Information communication is one of the core functions of packaging which assists consumers during decision making (ibid.). Therefore, packaging is an attention-grabbing element when used effectively. Packaging affects consumers subconsciously, since shape, colour and graphic design directly appeal to the emotions (Hines in Morse 2010, 154). Ritz (2013) opines that emotional aspects are especially pertinent when women select wine.

Packaging design seems to be an irrefutable force and a powerful marketing communicator when targeting an increasingly stimulated and discerning consumer audience. Ksenia (2013, 5) points out that consumer buying behaviour and preferences both influence packaging design. Thus, skillful consideration and planning are crucial when South African organic wine producers want to dress their bottles for success.

3. PACKAGING AND INTEGRATED BRAND COMMUNICATION

The phenomena of branding and marketing communication are inseparable from product packaging. An integrated approach is needed when any marketer sets out to distinguish a product from that of competitors, and aims to engage consumers (O'Guinn et al. 2009). Moreover, these are especially relevant when marketing South African organic wines to local consumers.

Mueller and Lockshin (2008, 1) confirm that wine packaging is increasingly researched and represents an important research topic. Consumers extract social and aesthetic utility from extrinsic package attributes, and these strongly influence sensory perception expectations – hence 'the first taste is almost always with the eye' (ibid.). Research reveals that packaging (46%) and brand (27%) are foremost in influencing consumers' liking for a specific wine (Mu 2011). Within the wine sector, packaging design is estimated to have an 80 per cent influence on a consumer's purchasing decision (Haarhoff 2013, n.p.).

In a highly competitive and changing marketplace, brands need to remain innovative in their product offering and packaging, since both of these aspects strongly influence consumer experience, perception and preference. New, more challenging brands – such as organic wines – have fewer visual touch points between consumer and brand (ibid.). Packaging design demands consumers' attention and thereby encourages them to experience and engage with the brand. Storey (2013, n.p.) confirms that the effective branding of a winery is a process which entails 'extensive

strategising' and an integrated marketing approach which should include all brand development aspects. Shimp and Andrews (2014) recommend a systematic approach to package design, as it is crucial to a brand's success. For wine producers to fully capitalise on the benefits of branding and grow brand equity, the packaging, wine label design and marketing communication should embody a clearly distinguishable product personality. Should this unique personality be valued by consumers, the wine could be considered to have been successfully branded (Storey 2013, n.p.).

On the South African organic wine scene, research which encompasses semiotics is necessary for establishing guidelines for successful product communication to consumers in terms of the predominant visual element of organic wine packaging – the wine bottle front label.

4. THE WINE BOTTLE FRONT LABEL AS FORCEFUL FIRST POINT OF CONTACT

It is estimated that more than 590 million m^2 of labelling materials are used worldwide – wine labelling is indeed significant (Martin in Morse 2010, 98). There are more than 100 000 different wine brands worldwide and the majority of consumers buy wine as a result of their attraction to the label (Morse 2009, 134). The front wine label is seen as the predominant and first line of communication between the consumer and wine producer. Wine labels, as the visual signals first perceived by consumers, constitute the biggest source of advertising (Ritz 2013, n.p.; Rocchi and Stefani 2005, 43). Since consumers' perception is rapid in retail settings, quick recognition is crucial in their decision process. These factors influence branding (Brewer and Retti in Barsotti 2010, 6; Shimp and Andrews 2014). The colour, design and shape of a package have been found to affect consumer perceptions of a brand's quality, value and image (O'Guinn et al. 2009, 591).

Morse (2010, 2) confirms that wine label design critically influences the communication process when complex and diverse information about brand value and consumer attitudes are conveyed. Sizeable branding and marketing consideration go into the design of front wine labels which are aesthetically attractive and reduce the perceived buying risk to the consumer (De Mello and Pires 2009, 6). A wine label fulfils several roles within marketing communication as it should convey the brand's uniqueness and increase the content's perceived value (Ritz 2013, n.p.).

Wine bottle front labels vary worldwide as a result of legislation, input and the expectations of wine producers and graphic designers. The regulatory guidelines for South African wine labelling (see Table 1) state what should appear on labels (front, back and top foil), but do not specify the contents for front labels.

Table 1: Minimum requirements for wine labelling in South Africa

Name of the product	Alcohol products are exempt from nutrition labelling unless the product contains tartrazine or the label advertises a health claim
Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, seller, or importer	Allergens should be indicated in ingredient listing
Grape variety	Additives must be declared
Special instructions for storage or use (if applicable)	Minimum and maximum sulphur dioxide or sulphite content must be indicated
Country of origin	Where listing appears, ingredients should be listed in descending order of mass
Net contents (metric units)	
Date marking	
Batch identification	
Quality standard	
Alcohol content	
All printed type should be at least 1mm in height, or at least 4mm for the name	

Adapted from: www.icap.org; Chan (2000)

In the main, front wine labels in South Africa contain at least the following:

- Brand name, series name or winery name;
- Colour of the wine, indicated by the wording ('red', 'white' or 'rosé'/'pink') or could be deduced by the cultivar/varietal name (e.g., 'cabernet sauvignon' for red wine and 'chenin blanc' for white wine);
- Vintage: year in which the grapes were harvested;
- Origin: indication of geographical region;
- Volume of contents;
- Alcohol content; and
- Image, e.g., Illustrations, photographs, patterns.

South African wine producers therefore have carte blanche regarding which elements to post on the front label – bar the guidelines for the size of printed type.

Consumers behave as a result of the 'meanings they ascribe to marketplace stimuli' (Mick 1986, 201). Marketplace stimuli are received and perceived by consumers mainly in visual form, which places the onus on designers to create labels which perform as expected in terms of marketing communication. It could therefore be argued that consumers contribute varying degrees of importance to the

136

information they require prior to making a purchasing decision. It is crucial that the front label is designed in such a way that it satisfies the basic needs of the targeted consumers. In addition to this the typography, images and other branding-related elements should deliver on the attributes which draw consumers, namely visibility, impact and meaning-creation.

The relevance of semiotic signs (classified as icons, indices and symbols, respectively) to packaging are as follows: icons enable consumers to imagine the experience that a certain product will offer them; indexical signs show physical connections to the consumer and are the most potent semiotic tool available since they pre-consciously involve the consumer, who physically possesses the product by inviting touch and triggering the notion of ownership of the product by just looking at it (Berry 2009, n.p.); and symbols connect consumption with brand communication in packaging (Oswald 2007, 1).

Semiotics should not be regarded as a mere supplement to traditional marketing tools. Brand semiotics is the pinnacle of brand equity management. A brand represents 'a system of signs and symbols that engages the consumer in an imaginary/symbolic process that contributes tangible value to a product offering' (ibid.). Budha (2011, n.p.) concurs, viewing semiotics as a 'powerful tool' which creates awareness, develops brand associations in the mind of the consumer and adds brand value.

How semiotic research provides guidelines for marketing communication and wine bottle front label design is described in the next section.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an interpretative semiotic approach to fathom the experiences and attitudes of respondents, in order to understand the meaning they ascribe to the labels on current South African brands of organic wine. Participants were all members of a Bloemfontein wine club. Their demographic profile represents females aged 26–55 years. Their occupations include: speech therapist, lecturer, senior data coordinator, accounting clerk, case manager, sales representative and personal assistant. A significant number of respondents reported that they know 'a little bit' about organic wine. Various respondents had bought organic wine before, while others were either unsure whether they had or had never purchased organic wine. Upon testing these respondents' attitudes and intentions to buy, the majority answered that they would consider buying organic wine.

As this study aimed to reveal consumers' affective responses to visual images and words (a subconscious process) within a retail environment, a questionnaire was deemed the most suited method for collecting consumer data, since both visual images and text could be included. Questionnaires were developed and first tested on an initial test group, which subsequently led to minor adaptations.

The study respondents answered questions, some of which were based on photographs showing entire wine bottles with front labels (47 images in total from all currently active South African organic wine farms). Volunteer bias towards wine varietal (red, white or rosé) was minimised by allowing respondents to base their answers on their foremost choice of wine by selecting the set of photographs which corresponded to their chosen varietal/colour. This mimicked the sales environment where consumers approach a specific shelf to select a specific wine colour and varietal. Altogether 36 self-administered questionnaires were sent out via email, of which ten were completed and could be used for analysis. The members of a local wine club in Bloemfontein were targeted first, but it was necessary to extend the distribution to other people who either currently belong or have belonged to other wine clubs, in order to have a sufficient number of questionnaires to analyse.

The main body of questions in the questionnaire was composed to elicit respondents' preferences regarding labels (as complete entities); to ascertain their perceptions of what these signs (combined) on labels communicated to them and how the signs influence their choices within a retail setting. The respondents volunteered information about the use of colour, label shape and words on labels, amongst others. This resonates with semiotic research (see Morse) on how design issues (colour, shape, tone, texture, words and form – the basis of his critical taxonomy) communicate with consumers and influence their choices. Johanesen (2012, 2), who regards 'everything' as signs, focused her research on how shape, space, line, size, colour, texture and typography should be used on organic food packaging to influence the desirability of brands. Mello and Pires' (2009) semiotic analysis of wine labels' colour and size is helpful here.

Certain questions in this study focused on the images (semiotically categorised as icons, symbols or indices) on the front label in order to test respondents' perceptions and behavioural responses towards this specific semiotic element.

Consequently, this research regarded all the design elements (words, font/typeface, colour, images, shape/form, size and space/placement) as signs that are capable of semiosis on wine bottle labels. Three major subsets categorised the questions in the questionnaire: demographics, label preferences and recall, and label information preference.

Open-ended questions grant respondents the freedom to generate their own answers and to provide in-depth responses, both of which are suited to collecting qualitative data (Wimmer and Dominick 2001, 187). The use of 'other' sections,

where closed questions were posed, overcame the possible limitation of not generating sufficient information (ibid, 188).

Semantic differential scales garnered information on respondents' preferences in terms of relevance and information on wine bottle front labels. According to Wimmer and Dominick (ibid, 56), these scales measure the meaning an item has for a respondent, as well as potency, activity and evaluation. Therefore, these scales were ideal for measuring consumer attitudes and behaviours.

Best–worst scaling was used to measure respondents' decision motivations when choosing from among various alternatives, by requesting respondents to nominate their idea of most suited/favourite and least suited/least favourite wine bottle front labels from the photograph sets. This method mirrors the decisions they would make in a true retail setting (Coltman, Devinney and Keating 2010, 6).

Data analysis was done by collating all respondent data into an electronic spreadsheet. Latent and overt patterns were sought and thereafter the researcher identified certain themes against which all responses could be codified, grouped and numerically expressed. Response categories were also contrasted to highlight further themes and patterns which aided the researcher in extracting explanations from the data. Response categories were guided by previous research and theory by other researchers and theorists, and were also deducted from the current study's data. This method correlates with the data analysis process described by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, 120).

6. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consumer behaviour within retail settings has long been researched, and remains an interesting and complex topic. Consumers' wine choices are more complex than for other products and it is critical to determine what influences wine purchases (Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.). Such influences represent a critical element in this research, which directly impacts on the marketing communication that 'speaks' from the shelves of wine retailers. Szolnoki, Herrmann and Hoffmann (2010, 2) emphasise the importance of wine packaging as a communication medium where a 'lack of communication' exists between seller and buyer, as 75 per cent of wine sales are made at self-service points. Having knowledge of consumers' perceptual processes and resultant responses optimises the potential of packaging (Nancarrow, Wright and Brace in Ksenia 2013, 18).

To understand the typical behaviour and conscious choices they make while shopping, respondents were asked to describe how they approach the wine section when buying wine. The order in which they look at elements is shown in Figure 1.
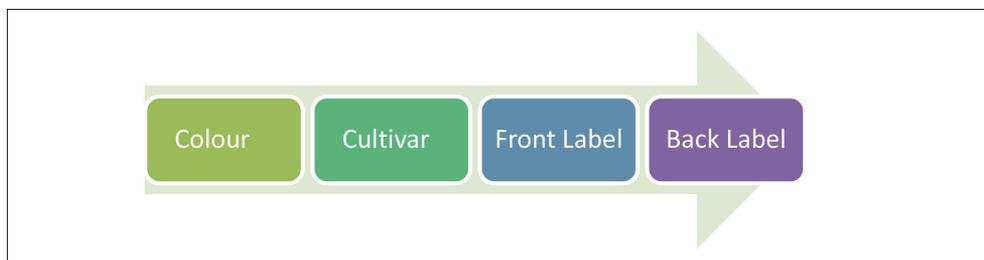

Figure 1:   Steps in consumer decision making when approaching the wine section

The majority of respondents noted that they first approach the shelves housing their desired colour of wine (red, white or pink) before looking for their cultivar of choice. These findings resonate with research by Lockshin and Hall (2010, n.p.) who report that 'grape variety is a major factor in wine choice' and that different varieties could be seen as brands <to> the wine consumer. Studies by Rocchi and Stefani (2005, 43) reveal that consumers first look at a bottle's colour, shape and size, and thereafter the labelling. From the current study it seems that bottle shape and material are not important for product recognition, which was confirmed in research by Szolnoki et al. (2010, 7) who studied consumers' wine choices.

The respondents mentioned that they consult labels after locating wine in their colour and cultivar of choice. Gluckman (in Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.) echoes that consumers regard wine labels as primary information sources in gaining product knowledge and making choices. Szolnoki et al. (2010, 1) reinforce the idea that visual design is an important differentiator for product and brand in terms of wine marketing. Usually front labels face the consumer when wine bottles are on display, and are seen as 'the key recognition factor' in terms of their informational role at the time of purchase as a result of their colour, shape and position (Jennings and Wood in Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.). The majority of respondents in this study remarked that the front label is 'very important' to them and that it 'definitely influences' their decision. Lockshin and Hall (2010, n.p.) use the term 'brand constellation' to refer to all the potential label information/'cues' which consumers use when selecting a specific bottle of wine from among others. Brand constellation includes the producer's name, paired with some (or all) elements of the following: wine colour, country or origin, region, sub-region and/or vineyard, varietal, discounts, winemaker and style (Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.).

Consumers are only able to assess the quality of the contents/attributes of wine during its consumption, relying on extrinsic cues to make inferences about product quality and making use of the information available inside the retail environment

140

(Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.). For wine buyers, this information is presented on wine labels. The respondents' reactions were a half-half split with regard to which label they spend most time reading on a wine bottle: they spend between 12 and 31 seconds looking at the front label, and between 25 and 44 seconds reading the back label. Rocchi and Stefani (2010, 43) confirm that the role of the front label is as an evocative agent, while the back label primarily has an informative function since it contains information of a technical nature. The majority of respondents replied that the front label is an indicator of quality, as can be seen in the following remarks (the number in brackets throughout the rest of the text indicates the corresponding image in Figure 2):

My first impression was that it could be a quality wine. (1)

Just looking at the label gives me a hangover, label look and wording makes the wine look cheap. (4)

Figure 2: Front labels of a variety of South African wines

It could be argued that the attractiveness of the front label is determined by the general aesthetic of the design elements. When asked which elements they find most pleasing on the front label, a large number of respondents noted that general design aspects matter to them – and almost always the way in which these are combined with other elements and with expected information. This is reflected in answers

like: '*Design of the label*', '*Graphic design*', '*Picture and colour*' and '*Placing [placement] of the label on the bottle*'. Ogden (in Morse 2010, 138) supports the idea that both aesthetics and emotions are involved when wine shopping consumers are 'confronted with this endless sea of bottles'. Semiotic analysis reveals consumer perceptions and provides strategic cues in a quest to differentiate and distinguish between brands (Budha 2011, n.p.; Gordon 2010, n.p.). Most respondents reported that their preferred wine label would entice them to buy it within a retail setting, and that the label which they least preferred from the selection would deter them from buying the wine. Semiotic codes lead consumers to engage with brands and build relationships that elicit positive brand choice (Oswald 2007, 2). This indicates that wine producers should have an understanding of which design elements (all semiotic in nature) please consumers, and which emotions and perceptions they evoke.

After analysing responses regarding preferred and non-preferred labels, the majority of respondents' answers revealed a personal, emotional aspect: '*I just like that type of image…*' and '*I do not like…*'. This conforms to the semiotic-funded ideas of Oswald (2007, 2) regarding the function of packaging in eliciting consumer action and brand relationships. Her thoughts are that marketing sign systems engage consumers in communication by means of codes that lead to subject positions for 'I' (the wine-buying female consumer) and 'you' (the wine brand/producer).

Respondents were also asked to provide recommendations for improvements on those labels they chose as their least preferred. The combined results of the pertinent aspects revealed for general and organic wine label design are indicated in Table 2 (the number in brackets indicates the corresponding image in Figure 2).

Table 3: Guidelines for wine bottle front label design

Semiotic element	Preferred	Not preferred	Additional and especially relevant to organic wine
General design	Uncluttered, classics and minimalistic (5, 6, 7, 8) that are 'unpretentious', 'classic', 'without unnecessary detail', 'plain', 'clean lines', 'less is more'	'[B]usy' designs or designs that are too 'formal' or 'traditional'	Same as for preferred, and also 'elegant'. Should not look 'too old-fashioned', 'too formal', or 'too traditional' (12, 20)
Colour	Moderate colours	Bright or 'shocking'	Muted or earthy tones, colourful
Font	'more serious' in cases where the font was more frivolous (2, 3, 18) and 'clean'	Frivolous, too 'traditional'	'more cursive'

Shape	Unconventional and asymmetric	'too oblong' (21)	-
Size	Small	-	-
Placement	Unconventional position	-	Unconventional position
Image	Iconic images or no image	Light hearted images, modern art (2,3,18), pictures or symbols 'that might have other meanings' (8), 'bushmen', 'people running in the desert' (17), 'animation', 'hand signs', 'cool dude hand' (4, 9, 10), 'cartoon image' (3), '[d]uck and wine?' (16).	'natural' images like leaves (15), vines (13, 19) and trees (14). Marking that specifies that it is an organic product
Words	In order of ranked importance: Brand name Cultivar Origin Year of harvest	Words with negative connotations like 'shebeen' (4, 9, 10), 'wine of South Africa', 'South Africa'	'organic'

Respondents mostly favoured uncluttered, classic and minimalistic styled wine labels. One reason for this phenomenon could be the fact that these labels are visually streamlined. They could also be regarded as semiotically uncluttered, since they do not contain lots of signs and pictorial elements/images. Berry (2009, n.p) suggests that simply branded labels with 'very low symbolic (i.e., verbal) information lead the pack'.

Moderate colours were preferred over overly bright or '*shocking*' hues. Said one respondent: '*The shocking colour does not encourage me to buy it*' (9). Respondents were divided on whether muted, earthy tones or lots of colour should be used for organic wines. Berry (2009, n.p.) suggests that 'bold and bright labels break through the noise at [the] shelf' by attracting attention faster. However, the boldest and brightest (4, 9, 10) labels proved to be the least preferred by respondents in this study. When consumers need to choose between different low-involvement products (such as wine), the graphics and colour become more meaningful and noticeable to them (Grossman and Wisenblit in Ksenia 2013, 19).

The respondents seemed to prefer flowing, natural-looking fonts. Label shape was also listed, with labels that are '*too oblong*' deemed '*boring*' (21). Label size and

placement were also found to be important to female consumers, and should therefore be used creatively and innovatively to ensure stronger product/brand differentiation. Unconventional label placement was favoured. Smaller-sized labels proved popular on condition that the information printed on them were in a large enough font size to enable reading at shelf level. Most respondents chose the same labels (5, 6) from the selection as their favourites, and their motivations echo the aforementioned. The preferred label has an unconventional placement and size, and the brand name is not printed but is positioned strongly in the space where conventional labels appear on bottles. Research by Storey (2013, n.p.) highlights that branding signs (images, words and other design elements such as shape, size, etc.) should convey a wine brand's 'inimitable character' and 'unique personality' so that the relevant brand will be 'elevated' in an already 'saturated industry' – thereby growing brand reach and equity.

The images (all semiotic signs) used on wine labels also influenced respondents in either a positive or negative way:

> *I just like that type of image, a drawing is nice and it feels like I am walking through the winelands! I can almost smell the fresh ground looking at that picture.* (13)

> *I don't like that type of images on wine bottles.* (4, 9, 10)

In the process of marketing communication, signs convey meaning by being the true performers of the communication act via packaging – thereby influencing wine choice (Berry 2009, n.p.). Morse (2010, 141) refers to the functional connection between linking an image (the semiotic sign) to the real or imagined. In answer to an open-ended question about why respondents preferred a certain label, most commented on the use of images – the majority of respondents felt that organic labels should contain '*natural*' images (13, 14, 15, 19). Only a few respondents felt that labels benefited from an absence of images, which means the rest of the design would need to be unique in some way (e.g., unusual label or branding placement). The label most respondents preferred, and which in their view best suited the organic wine theme, depicted a flowing, hand-drawn grapevine (13, 19) and reflected the respondents' view that images used should relate to organic wine, i.e., iconic or symbolic signs are preferred. Berry (2009, n.p.) writes that icons 'suggest plausible connections and make it easier for consumers to imagine the world of experience' that the wine inside a bottle offers. Comments made by respondents also link to Storey's (2010, n.p.) idea that all the words and images on a wine label 'confer a meaning that is beyond what is in the bottle':

> *The vine confirms that it is organic.* (13)

> *Without wondering one can see that it is organic wine.* (13)

A recommendation could be that indexical signs should be used on wine bottle front

labels to engage consumers even more. The frosted name of a certain wine brand (also chosen by the majority of respondents as their favourite label overall) uses an indexical sign which invites the consumer's touch. Scratch-and-sniff would allow consumers to smell the wine. De Luca and Penco (2004, 36) propose innovative ideas for semiotic design, such as stamping the front label with heat-sensitive ink that only becomes visible when the wine reaches its ideal temperature. Another idea might be to include microchips which contain wine information consumers can listen to. The aforementioned will improve the touch points the brands have with consumers, in addition to optimising their experience with the brand.

Words (in their role as semiotic signs) proved to affect respondents negatively or positively by virtue of their inherent connotations. This corresponds with McQuail's (in Kauppinen 2004, 36) preconditions for effective marketing communication: signs must have a general meaning and must be universally understood; sender and receiver should understand abstract and symbolic concepts and signs in the same way (shared meaning). Another result of the research, which reiterates the importance of using semiotic analysis when doing market segmentation and when planning branding and marketing communication, was that the label that was designed to speak to and attract younger consumers failed to do so. One of the youngest respondents' remarks pointed to the fact that the image used does not carry the intended meaning on a symbolic semiotic level:

> *Don't see the connection between the hand and the wine – just seems like the wine company tries really hard to be cool.* (10)

Although this particular brand is aimed at a 'younger and more contemporary consumer' (Smith 2013, n.p.), in this study the youngest respondent reacted adversely to the brand by nominating its label as both least preferred and least suited to organic wine.

The majority of respondents said they would find a certain marking, indicating that the wine is organic, useful when wine shopping. This represents the symbolic use of the sign as 'simple substitution[s] for the idea being conveyed' (Berry 2009, n.p.).

In terms of product/brand distinction, several respondents mentioned qualities which drew the eye, when elaborating on their choice of label: '*makes your eye look for an extra second or two*' (11) and '*caught my eye*' (2).

Only a few respondents were able to recall unique features on wine bottles which attracted their attention from previous wine shopping excursions. Some respondents commented that the use of additional, unique features to attract attention forebodes a '*bad-quality*', '*poorly selling*' wine and that '*gimmicks*' do not affect their intentions to buy.

Regarding other informational elements and their significance on the front label, brand name was found to be 'very important'. Cultivar/grape variety and

origin (geographical) were ranked 'important'. In addition to the aforementioned, the majority of respondents indicated that the year of harvest should appear on the front label.

Respondents were also asked to recall the wine bottle label that had the most impact on them from memory, without referring back to the images. Many respondents chose the same label, namely the design chosen as their overall most preferred label. For various respondents their most preferred label from earlier in the questionnaire matched the label they recalled. It was noted that various respondents recalled the design of the same brand in this section, but different bottles and labels of the same brand. Some respondents, regardless of which label they remembered, managed to remember the brand name of that particular wine. Only a few respondents remembered a label which they did not like, while the rest all remembered the labels they did like. The main elements which made an impression on respondents in this context were label colour, size and position. A few respondents could not recall the brand name and recalled a label which they did not like, due to a perceived mismatched sign: '*The cool dude hand, just because it did not fit!*' (4, 9, 10).

Branding elicits positive or negative behaviours from consumers and should therefore be thoroughly evaluated and considered. Gluckman (in Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.) remarks that 'the act of purchasing wines is clouded with insecurity'. Consumers resort to certain 'risk-reduction strategies' when buying wine, of which selecting a known brand is one strategy (Mitchell and Greatorex <not in refs>; Spawton in Lockshin and Hall 2010, n.p.). Many respondents reported that they prefer to keep to a specific brand when buying wine, while the rest reported that they enjoy trying '*new*' and '*unusual*' wines.

7. CONCLUSION

The importance of the wine bottle front label as forceful first point of contact and the semiotic elements contained therein, should not be underestimated in their role as potent communicators to women who consider buying organic wine. This study's results re-emphasise that careful consideration of the semiotic levels of meaning creation and transference is crucial – this should, by rights, inform the graphic design process involved in creating wine bottle front labels. The results of this study corroborate previous related research by other authors. Women revealed a definite susceptibility to such labels' semiotic elements and their communicative ability as negative or positive reinforcers in terms of brand preference and choice. Women also regard the wine bottle front label as an important source of information and as a persuasive force, proving that they involve many different affective variables when making wine choices. Visual design is linked to emotional appeal and determines the success of marketing communication messages – both intended and unintended.

146

An integrated approach is instrumental for establishing and growing a brand – with specific reference to the omnipotent marketing communication component. There is a definite sentiment among female consumers that organic wine should aptly distinguish itself from conventional wine on store shelves, and that organic wine packaging should be innovative and '*new*'. The findings from this research provided material that pinpoints those pertinent aspects which organic wine producers should consider when making decisions about labelling their bottled wine, if they aspire to attract the buying power of female consumers in South Africa.

This study also highlighted new areas of interest pertaining to the topic. Recommendations for future research would be to include both male respondents and respondents from other geographical areas, in order to obtain a more holistic view of all wine-buying consumers. Furthermore, the inclusion of more research respondents as representatives of the general wine-buying population would be useful, as not only connoisseurs buy wine in retail outlets. The use of an eye-tracking system to measure true visibility and attraction elements could prove useful. The aforementioned will also aid in gathering more accurate data on the time consumers spend looking at labels, and also looking at certain labels while ignoring others. Different data categories could also be set up, since the use of such technology would reveal data which are more visual than perceptual in nature.

With the pending possibility of a ban on alcohol advertising, South African organic wine producers should heed the aforementioned to ensure that they dress their bottles for success, so as to attract an increasingly discerning, wine-preferring female niche market.

REFERENCES

Barsotti, T.A. 2010. 'Evaluation of Qualitative Aesthetics of Wine Labels.' digitalcommons. calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029...agbsp (accessed September 20, 2013).

Belch, G. E. and M. A. Belch. 2009. *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective.* 8th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill Urban.

Berry, J.D. 2009. 'Simplicity of Semiotics.' http://www.packagedesignmag.com/content/simplicity-semiotics (accessed February 23, 2013).

Bricki, N. and J. Green. 2007. 'A Guide to using Qualitative Research Methodology.' http://fieldresearch.msf.org/msf/bitstream/10144/84230/1/Qualitative%20research%20methodology.pdf (accessed October 14, 2013).

Budha, K. 2011. 'The Importance of Semiotics in Branding.' http://www.smeweb.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2780:semiotics-in-branding&catid=67:features&Itemid=110 (accessed February 26, 2013).

Chan, B. 2000. 'Labels: Wine Regulations.' http://www.internetwineguide.com/structure/abwine/labelreg.htm#sa (accessed February 2, 2014).

Coltman, T., T. M. Devinney and B. Keating. 2010. 'Best–Worst Scaling Approach to predict Customer Choice for 3PL Services.' http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/40492/1/MPRA_paper_40492.pdf (accessed October 20, 2013).

Court, D., D. Elzinga, S. Mulder, and O. J. Vetvik. 2009. 'The Consumer Decision Journey.' http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_consumer_decision_journey (accessed September 17, 2013).

De Luca, P. and P. Penco. 2006. 'The Role of Packaging in Marketing Communication: An Explorative Study of the Italian Wine Business.' Conference Paper, 3rd International Wine Business Research Conference, Montpellier. http://academyofwinebusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/De-Luca.pdf (accessed September 17, 2013).

De Mello, L. and R. Pires. 2009. 'Message on the Bottle: Colours and Shapes of Wine Labels.' *American Association of Wine Economists Working Paper* No. 72. www.wine-economics.org/workingpapers/AAWE_WP42.pdf (accessed September 17, 2013).

Gordon, J. 2010. 'Applying Semiotics to Brand Strategy Innovation.' http://thebrandsherpa.wordpress.com/2010/02/10/applying-semiotics-to-brand-strategy-innovation/ (accessed February 26, 2013).

Haarhoff, A. 2013. 'How Packaging connects Brands and Consumers.' http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/13/94870.html (accessed July 23, 2013).

Halstead, R. 2012. 'How do you Judge a Book, Then? Consumer Perceptions of Wine Labels.' *Wine and Viticulture* (January/February): 76–77. http://www.wineintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/Wine-Viniculture-Journal-Jan-Feb-2012-Richard-Halstead.pdf (accessed July 23, 2013).

Hu, C. 2011. 'Ten Great Organic Wines.' http://eatout.co.za/Features/444/10-great-organic-wines (accessed July 29, 2013).

Johanesen, A. 2012. 'Marketing Natural Foods: A Semiotic Study.' http://web.njit.edu/~aj276/public_html/Johanesen_Final_Research_Proposal.pdf (accessed March 12, 2013).

Kauppinen, H. 2004. 'Colours as Non-Verbal Signs on Packages.' https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10227/111/139-951-555-862-x.pdf?sequence=2 (accessed September 21, 2013).

Ksenia, P. 2013. 'Packaging Design as a Marketing Tool and Desire to Purchase.' http://publications.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/55293/Polyakova_Ksenia.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed September 17, 2013).

Kuhn, M. 2011. 'VinIntell: Trends influencing Wine Consumption Globally and in South Africa in Particular.' http://www.sawis.co.za/info/download/VinInTell_Issue_7_Part_2_Feb_2011_Wine_Trends.pdf (accessed July 17, 2013).

Leech, C. n.d. 'Metasemiotics and brand Placement: The Art of Narrative Congruence.' http://www.brandsandbranding.co.za/metasemiotics-brand-placement-the-art-of-narrative-congruence/ (accessed August 12, 2013).

Lipson, E. 2004. 'Food, Farming … Feminism? Why Going Organic Makes Good Sense.' http://www.msmagazine.com/summer2004/organicfarming.asp (accessed July 30, 2013).

Lockshin, L. and J. Hall. 2010. 'Consumer Purchasing Behaviour for Wine: What We know and Where We are going.' http://academyofwinebusiness.com/wp-content/uploads /2010/05/File-030.pdf (accessed February 28, 2013).

Merten, M. 2013. 'Alcohol Ad Ban 'Will Hurt Sport'. http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/alcohol-ad-ban-will-hurt-sport-1.1599551#.UnIyQPlvCcY (accessed October 31, 2013).

Mick, D.G. 1986. 'Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring the Morphology of Signs, Symbols and Significance.' *Journal of Consumer Research* 13 (2). https://www2.bc.edu/~woodsiar/nov%209%20consumer%20research.pdf (accessed April 3, 2013).

Morse, A. 2010. 'The Australian Wine Label, an Analysis of the Impact of Graphic Design and Visual Communication Strategies in the Wine Industry.' http://nova.newcastle.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:12476?f0=type%3A%22thesis%22&sort=metadata.fulltext%5C (accessed July 18, 2013).

Mu, R. 2011. 'What Consumers look for When buying Wine.' http://www.foodmag.com.au/news/what-consumers-look-for-when-buying-wine (accessed July 24, 2013).

Mueller, S. and L. Lockshin. 2008. 'How Important is Wine Packaging for Consumers? On the Reliability of Measuring Attribute Importance with Direct Verbal Versus Indirect Visual Methods.' Conference Paper, 4th International Conference of the Academy of Wine Business Research, Siena. http://academyofwinebusiness.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/How-important-is-wine-packaging-for-consumers_paper.pdf (accessed August 7, 2013).

Naidoo, Y. 2003. 'An Investigation into the Elements of Packaging and its Influence on the Consumer at the Point of Purchase.' http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/xmlui/handle/10413/4613 (accessed September 17, 2013).

O'Guinn, T. C., C. T. Allen and R. J. Semenik. 2009. *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion.* 5th edition. Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Olivas, R. and R. Bernabéu. 2012. 'Mens' and Women's Attitudes toward Organic Food Consumption: A Spanish Case Study.' *Spanish Journal of Agriculture Research* 10 (2). http://revistas.inia.es/index.php/sjar/article/view/2213 (accessed July 30, 2013).

Oswald, L. 2007. 'Semiotics and Strategic Brand Management.' http://www.marketingsemiotics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/SemioticStrategy.pdf (accessed July 18, 2013).

Petzoldt, S. n.d. 'A Brief History of Organic Wines and Facts about Sulphites.' http://www.globalwinespirits.com/cgi/en/wine-news.detail/SearchCriteria.NewsId=302094117/SearchCriteria.Title=A%20Brief%20History%20of%20Organic%20Wines%20and%20Facts%20about%20Sulphites (accessed July 29, 2013).

Pitt, H. 2010. 'Women Thirst for Knowledge as They buy and drink More Wine.' http://www.smh.com.au/executive-style/top-drop/women-thirst-for-knowledge-as-they-buy-and-drink-more-wine-20100928-15vuv.html (accessed July 29, 2013).

Ritz, R. B. 2013. 'How to Target Women with Wine Label Design.' http://www.bauerhaus.com/strategy/how-to-target-women-with-wine-label-design/ (accessed July 23, 2013).

Rocchi, B. and G. Stefani. 2005. 'Consumers' Perception of Wine Packaging: A Case Study.' *International Journal of Wine* 18 (1). http://dipsa.unifi.it/upload/sub/pubblicazioni/gstefani/IntJouWineMk_2006.pdf (accessed July 16, 2013).

Shimp, T. A. and J. C. Andrews. 2014. 2014. *Advertising, Promotion and Other Aspects of Integrated Marketing Communications.* South African Edition. Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA.

Smith, C. 2013. 'Youngsters venture into Organic Wine.' http://www.fin24.com/Entrepreneurs/Profiles/Building-a-modern-organic-wine-brand-20130702 (accessed July 23, 2013).

Soil Association. 2013. 'Organic Market Report 2013.' http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.
aspx?fileticket=whbpEnZUd7A%3d&tabid=1984 (accessed July 23, 2013).

Storey, S. 2013. 'Brand Development: Building a Wine Brand Inside and Out.' http://www.
bizcommunity.com/Article/196/82/92615.html (accessed July 23, 2013).

Styles, O. 2010. 'Gallo, Red Bicyclette, Pinot Noir and Reality.' http://www.wine-life.co.uk/
blogs/wine-news/labels/Gallo.html (accessed July 23, 2013).

Szolnoki, G., R. Herrmann and D. Hoffmann. 2010. 'Origin, Grape Variety or Packaging?
Analyzing the Buying Decision for Wine with a Conjoint Experiment.' *American Association
of Wine Economists Working Paper* No. 72. <url> (accessed July 22, 2013).

Whitehead, C. 2012. 'Wine Industry Information.' http://www.sawis.co.za/info/download/
Wynbedryfinligting_Aug_2012_Eng.pdf (accessed February 20, 2013).

Wimmer, R. D. and J .R. Dominick. 2011. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. Canada:
Wadsworth.

www.icap.org. n.d. 'Beverage Alcohol Labeling Requirements by Country.' http://www.icap.org/
table/alcoholbeveragelabeling (accessed September 7, 2013).

Communicatio

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL FOR COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH

ORDER FORM

A one-year subscription to *Journal of Times New Roman Italic* is as follows:

Local	R555.00
International	US$66.00

Please note:

1. Subscriptions are strictly by calender year.
2. No trade discount is offered.
3. It is not possible to issue invoices.
4. Orders not accompanied by cheque or postal order will not be processed.

To subscribe, please fax or mail the completed subscription form together with the proof of your electronic payment or a cheque/postal order (made out to the University of South Africa) to:

Unisa Press
PO Box 392
UNISA
0003
South Africa

Enquiries: Tel: +27 12 429 2953

Fax: +27 12 429 3449

e-mail: journalsubs@unisa.ac.za

Signature: _____

Title: _____ Initials: _____

Surname: _____ First Names: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____Code:_____

Tel:_____Fax:_____

E-mail: _____

Direct deposit:

Bank:	Standard Bank
Account name:	Unisa
Account number:	011554622
Branch code:	010645
Reference number:	5400380454.

Fax a copy of the deposit slip, together with all relevant information (name, address, volume ordered and telephone number) to the Subscription Officer on 012 429 3449.