

The political role of black women journalists in post-apartheid South Africa: *Sowetan* (1994-1999)

by

Todani Nodoba

Research Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Philosophy



at

Stellenbosch University

Department of Journalism

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Supervisor: Dr Simphiwe Sesanti

December 2011

Declaration

I, the undersigned declare that the work contained in this Research Assignment is my original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it at any other University for a degree.

.....

Todani Nodoba

Signature

.....

Date

Copyright©2011 University of Stellenbosch

All rights reserved

Abstract

Black journalists in South Africa have played a crucial role in exposing the political oppression of black South Africans during the Apartheid era. In this regard the *Sowetan* newspaper made a great contribution. However, the political role that black women journalists played at the *Sowetan* has been ignored, before and after 1994. After 1994, political black women journalists at the *Sowetan* continued to make strides despite the hostile environment that these women journalists worked in. The limitation of beats and assignments, lack of promotions and many other challenges that black women journalists faced during this period made their work environment unfriendly and hostile towards their performance.

This study examines the political role made by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* newspaper from 1994 to 1999. The study shows how the black women journalists brought different perspectives in news at the *Sowetan* through their manner of reporting and also how they viewed matters within the context of a new democracy in South Africa.

Opsomming

Swart joernaliste in Suid-Afrika het 'n onontbeerlike rol gespeel in die onthulling van die politieke onderdrukking van swart Suid-Afrikaners tydens die apartheidjare. In hierdie verband het die *Sowetan*-koerant 'n groot bydrae gelewer. Die politieke rol van swart vrouejoernaliste by die *Sowetan* is egter geïgnoreer, voor en ná 1994. Ná 1994 het politieke swart vrouejoernaliste by die *Sowetan* steeds opgang gemaak, ten spyte van die vyandige omgewing waarin hierdie vroue gewerk het. Beperkte opdragte en spesialissonderwerpe om te dek, 'n gebrek aan bevordering en die talle ander uitdagings wat swart vrouejoernaliste in hierdie tydperk moes trotseer, het hul werksomgewing onvriendelik en vyandig gemaak met betrekking tot hul werkverrigting.

Hierdie studie ondersoek die politieke rol wat vanaf 1994 tot 1999 deur swart vrouejoernaliste by die *Sowetan* gespeel is. Die studie toon aan hoe die swart vrouejoernaliste ander nuusperspektiewe na die *Sowetan* gebring het, met die wyse waarop hulle verslag gedoen het en ook waarop hulle aangeleenthede in die breë verband van 'n nuwe demokratiese bestel in Suid-Afrika beskou het.

Acknowledgements

My deep felt gratitude is due to the Almighty God for His countless love, grace and mercy. Without Him I would be nothing.

I thank my Supervisor Dr Simphiwe Sesanti for his guidance and patience. I also thank my husband and editor, Gaontebale Nodoba for his understanding, encouragement and sacrifices when I was busy with the study.

To my brother Vho-Mathatha Tsedu, his availability, support and guidance has made this study a reality. I also thank the following journalists who gave me the support I needed during the study: Thabo Leshilo, Len Maseko, Nthabi Moreosele, Pearl Majola, Joe Thloloe, Siza Kooma and Joyce Dube.

To a great woman journalist, former colleague and friend Anna Majavu, she has taught me what it takes to be a great journalist.

To all the beautiful women of South Africa, continue to seek knowledge and make South Africa a better place to live.

I thank my mother and father for raising me with love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

A Historical Overview

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Research Background	1
1.2. Preliminary study	2
1.2.1. The Missionary phase	3
1.2.2. The Independent Elitist phase	3
1.2.3. The White-owned phase	4
1.2.4. The Multi-racial phase	5
1.2.5. The Black Economic Empowerment phase	5
1.3. Black Consciousness as a source of inspiration for black journalists	6
1.4. Rationale for the study	7
1.5. Problem statement and focus	7
1.6. Theoretical Framework	7
1.7. Research Design and Methodology	8
1.7.1. Research Design	8
1.7.2. Qualitative Research Method	8
1.7.2.1. Content Analysis	8
1.7.2.2. Data collection	9
1.7.2.2.1. Sampling	9
1.8. Significance of the study	10
1.9. Research Question	10
1.10. Definitions of key concepts	11
1.11. Scope and limitations of the study	12
1.12. Overview of chapters in the study	13
2. Chapter summary	15

Chapter 2

Literature review

2. Introduction	15
2.1. Glass ceiling	16
2.2. The emergence of women in journalism	17
2.3. Women's experiences in the newsroom	18
2.3.1. The dress code	18
2.3.2. Sexism in the Newsroom	18
2.3.3. 'Soft news' versus 'Hard news'	19
2.3.4. The burden of balancing career and motherhood	20
2.3.5. Racism and gender	21
2.3.6. Sexual harassment	22
2.4. The effect of women's experiences in the journalism profession	23
2.4.1. Gendered news	23
2.4.2. Urgent need for support structures	24
2.4.3. Education and Training	25

3. Chapter summary	25
--------------------	----

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework: African Feminism

3. Introduction	26
3.1. Brief background to Feminism	26
3.2. Types of feminism	27
3.2.1. Liberal feminism	27
3.2.2. Marxist feminism	28
3.2.3. Radical feminism	28
3.2.4. Cosmo feminism	28
3.3. African feminism	28
3.3.1. The position of women in the African society	31
3.3.2. The position of women journalists in the black press	32
4. Chapter summary	33

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

4. Introduction	34
4.1. Research Design	34
4.2. The qualitative research method	34
4.3. Content Analysis	35
4.4. Data collection	35
4.4.1. Sampling	35
5. Chapter summary	37

Chapter 5

Research Findings

5. Introduction	38
5.1. Power within the ANC	39
5.2. Women's rights and women abuse	43
5.3. Children's rights and child abuse	45
5.4. Opinion pieces for Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat	48
5.4.1. Power within the ANC	49
5.4.2. Women's rights and women abuse	49
5.4.3. Children's rights and child abuse	50
6. Chapter summary	52

Chapter 6

Data Analysis

6. Introduction

6.1. Opinion pieces from Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat	54
6.2. Opinion pieces from <i>Ruth Bhengu's heart Beat</i>	55
6.2.1. Power within the ANC	56
6.2.2. Women's rights and women abuse	57

6.2.3. Children's rights and child abuse	59
6.3. News reports	61
6.3.1. Power within the ANC	62
6.3.2. Women's rights and women abuse	69
6.3.2.1. Women's rights in health	69
6.3.2.2. Women's rights in political representivity	70
6.3.2.3. Women's rights in literacy and media	71
6.3.2.4. The fight against women abuse in relationships	72
6.4. Children's rights and child abuse	74
6.4.1. Rape, incest and neglect	76
6.4.2. Children in prison	79
7. Chapter summary	80
Chapter 7	
Conclusion and recommendations	
7. Introduction	81
7.1. The political role of black women journalists at the <i>Sowetan vis-a-vis</i> their experiences (1994-1999)	82
7.2. Recommendations	84
8. Chapter summary	85
Bibliography	86

*Until lions have their own historians, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter
(African proverb)*

Chapter One

A Historical Overview

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Black journalists played an important political role in exposing the dark side of the apartheid government in South Africa (Maseko, 2006: 8). However, since the African National Congress (ANC) got into power after the historic 1994 democratic elections, it seems black journalists have lost their political watchdog role (Wasserman, 2006: 61). In addition to the question of the political role played by black journalists, newspapers such as the *Sowetan* experienced a drop in circulation figures due to the emergence of tabloids (Ibid). Another possible factor contributing to a drop in circulation figures for *Sowetan* is the change of ownership. The Argus group (post-1994) was replaced by New African Investment Limited (NAIL) as owners of the *Sowetan*. This mounted commercial pressure on the newspaper and it had to find a way of survival (Manganyi, 2004: 112).

This study is motivated by interest in the political role black women journalists continue to play in post-apartheid South Africa. While it is true that the *Sowetan* newspaper is no longer the most popularly read black newspaper, its contribution to the liberation of black people in South Africa is indisputable (Latakomo, 2006:26).

Black journalists are usually assumed to be men. The implication of this perception is the marginalisation of black women journalists. Their contribution and role in journalism has mostly been down- played (Mathiane, 1997:31). It is on the basis of this observation that

the researcher was motivated to probe the political contribution of black women journalists at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The study also highlights conditions under which these black women journalists performed their duties.

1.2. Preliminary Study

Black journalism in South Africa is synonymous with the development of the black press in the country (Johnson, 1991:15). The black press was founded at the Cape in 1829 after 'Ordinance no. 60' which granted press freedom to black journalists who were previously not allowed to own and manage publications (Wigston, 2007:36). The black press can be defined as newspapers and any other publications written for a black audience and in most instances written by black journalists (Johnson, 1991:15). The two concepts black press and black journalism have in most instances been used interchangeably due to their synonymous nature, particularly during the apartheid era. In this chapter, the researcher has used the two concepts interchangeably. In subsequent chapters the researcher drops the concept black press in favour of black journalism. Reasons for this choice emanate from what black journalism entails. By definition black journalists are those journalists who by virtue of being 'black' identified and wrote about black people's experiences in South Africa. These journalists worked mostly for black newspapers. Others worked for a few white newspapers, particularly those which developed an interest in covering stories about black people (Raubenheimer, 1991:95).

Black journalism emerged as a distinct type of journalism in South Africa, which tried hard to promote black identity and pride and to resist white dominance (Raubenheimer, 1991:101). The notion of being 'black' is an important aspect for qualifying one as a 'black journalist'. When interpreted within the Black Consciousness philosophy (BC), being 'black' suggests people who by law or tradition were and continue to be underprivileged, socially, politically, economically and otherwise (Biko, 2004: 52). The notion of 'blackness' was not merely associated with skin colour, but it is a 'state of consciousness' and 'mental attitude.' In Black Consciousness terms, the notion refers to all the underprivileged groups in South Africa namely, Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

In essence the apartheid government discriminated against these groups on the basis of their skin colour and other physical attributes. Black journalism is categorised into five periods; namely, missionary, independent elitist, white-owned, multiracial, and the black economic empowerment phase (Wigston, 2007: 36). The discussion that follows gives a brief description of each of the five periods of black journalism.

1.2.1. The Missionary Phase

During its initial stages, the black press started as a missionary vehicle aimed at introducing Christianity to the natives¹ and also ‘imposing’ the western culture, which the missionaries regarded as more superior to that of the natives (Maseko, 2006: 6). Despite the fact that the missionary period was also characterised by training black journalists, black journalists like John Tengo Jabavu later on started mounting resistance to white dominance and culture in missionary newspapers (Wigston, 2006: 37). However, most of the newspapers published during this period were given African titles such as *Umshumayeli we Ndaba* (published in Grahamstown), *Indaba and Isigidimi Sama Xhosa*. This was an interesting aspect since the content would either be written in English or English and an African language.

1.2.2. The Independent Elitist Phase

John Tengo Jabavu was the first black journalist to start a black owned newspaper entitled, *Imvo Zabantsundu* in which he aimed to develop, enlighten, and educate African people to organise themselves and stand up for their rights (Maseko, 2006:6). Later on, *Imvo Zabantsundu* experienced constraints with regard to human and financial resources and that meant black journalism could not continue under black ownership and control (Maseko, 2006: 8). As a result of the financial constraints, black newspapers were taken over by white owners.

¹ The different tribes of the African population in South Africa

1.2.3. The White-owned Phase

Bertram Paver saw the opportunity and tapped into a market of black readership. He started the Bantu Press Ltd, which published newspapers such as *Bantu World* (Wigston, 2007: 38). These newspapers wrote about black people, their lives and experiences and were aimed at a black readership as indicated. When the Argus Company bought the Bantu Press Ltd in 1952, the South African media market experienced its first monopoly (Maseko, 2006: 8). A great development in black journalism occurred when Jim Bailey started the *Drum* magazine which served as a platform for training black journalists in that black journalists had to write about the experiences of black people in South Africa at that time.

In addition, *The World* became a daily which made a huge impact on the black readership market (Johnson, 1991: 22). During Percy Qoboza's reign as editor *The World* became a political mouthpiece of black people in that its black journalists were reporting on the struggle against apartheid rule (Maseko, 2006:10). As a result, many black journalists working for white-owned newspapers such as *The World* and *Rand Daily Mail* were detained under the security laws of the then apartheid government.

An interesting development in this phase was how the issue of white-ownership and black journalists influenced the content of white-owned newspapers (Wigston, 2007:38). English speaking as opposed to Afrikaans speaking whites, owned the newspapers mentioned above. Although there were attempts to penetrate and attract the black readership market (which was the largest), there was still some form of censorship by owners of newspapers. However, the 'black perspective', which, exposed atrocities of the apartheid government was what attracted black readers to these newspapers.

1.2.4. The Multi-racial Phase

More white owned newspapers hired black journalists to report about what was happening in townships (Wigston, 2007: 40). Black journalists such as Harry Mashabela who worked for the *Rand Daily Mail* during the 1976 Soweto uprisings reported fully about these uprisings. After the closing down of the *Post* newspaper (in the late 70s) following an industrial action, *Sowetan Mirror* was started and the black journalists from the *Post* were employed to work for this knock-and-drop² (Latakomo, 2006: 28). The knock-and-drop became successful and it was transformed into a daily called the *Sowetan* in 1981. Initially, the *Sowetan* operated under white-ownership of the Argus Company.

1.2.5. The Black Economic Empowerment Phase

Post the 1994 democratic elections, the *Sowetan* was sold to New African Investment Limited (NAIL), a Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) company led by ANC members (Wigston, 2007: 40). The Black Economic Empowerment phase marks the fifth phase of black journalism.

NAIL's ownership of the *Sowetan* had its own challenges. It was a known fact that black journalists at the *Sowetan* were mostly Black Consciousness and Pan Africanist adherents (Mabote, 1996:323). This did not go down well with the new owners, who were mostly ANC members. There was thus a clash in ideological outlook between the owners of the *Sowetan* newspaper and its employees. Needless to say this impacted on the content of the newspaper. Furthermore, some ANC members including the former State President Nelson Mandela viewed some black journalists at the *Sowetan* as a threat to the newly elected black government (Mabote, 1996:323).

² This was a free paper, smaller in size than the current *Sowetan*. The knock-and-drop concept is derived from the manner of delivery of the newspaper. Those that delivered it used to literally knock on doors of peoples' houses in Soweto township and drop the paper.

These five phases show that black people were trained in journalism and used their knowledge and skills to write and report about genuine experiences of black South Africans. During the apartheid era, black journalists were viewed as a threat to the state hence they were constantly harassed and detained. Ironically, the ANC-led government also viewed black journalists with suspicion and could not understand why these journalists would continue to report in the manner in which they would report during apartheid (Tsedu, 2000:2).

1.3. Black Consciousness as a source of inspiration for black journalists

In 1971, Bokwe Mafuna, a member of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and a reporter for the *Rand Daily Mail* introduced the Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy at a South African Journalists Association (SAJA) meeting (Raubenheimer, 1991: 95). The introduction of BC with its emphasis on 'black pride' led to the birth of the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ) and Harry Mashabela was elected as its first president (Ibid). The UBJ unified black journalists to intensify their reporting about the oppression of black people in South Africa. These journalists had a common goal of exposing the dark side of apartheid.

Black Consciousness emphasised the state of being conscious or a state of awareness of the oppression of black people by a man-made political system and the need to resist this oppression through a state of the mind (Biko, 2004: 53). Black Consciousness encouraged black people to be proud and self reliant in challenging their political oppression.

From the 60s onwards, BC became a powerful inspiration and vehicle through which black journalists aired their opinions. Consequently, newspapers such as the *Post*, *The World* and the *Sowetan* became powerful catalysts that aided black people to assert themselves as a collective through the BC philosophy. BC encouraged black people to be proud, self reliant and to challenge their political oppression (Biko, 2004: 53). It is interesting to note that white newspapers which hired black journalists like the *Rand*

Daily Mail also reflected the BC perspective in their reporting. These newspapers also started attracting a black readership (Maseko, 2006:9).

1.4. Rationale for the study

Even though the *Sowetan* is a black newspaper in terms of its personnel composition, it however reflects the patriarchal nature of the South African society. In this respect, black women journalists received little or no recognition despite their positive contribution to the *Sowetan* in particular and to black journalism in general. This feature of the *Sowetan* newspaper prompted the researcher to probe the political role played by black women journalists in post-apartheid South Africa (1994 to 1999).

1.5. Problem statement and focus

This study investigates the political role played by black women journalists in post-apartheid South Africa with specific focus on the *Sowetan* newspaper from 1994 to 1999. The study further investigates the writings of black women journalists and conditions under which they worked. Furthermore, the study explores challenges black women journalists faced as they played their political role.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

The researcher uses African feminism (also known as African feminist critical theory) as a critical theory to examine how black women journalists have generally been treated in their work environment. African feminism is a theory that promotes the liberation of women (within an African environment) from gender-based discrimination which is expounded by the colonialism legacy and ‘an international political economy’ from the western world (Steady, 2005:324). African feminism is used in this study to evaluate the political role of black women journalists at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999 in post-apartheid South Africa. The *Sowetan* is used as a case study to test the theoretical assumptions of African feminist critical theory.

1.7. Research Design and Methodology

1.7.1. Research Design

The research design is the framework that the actual research project is based on. Mouton (1996:107) defines the research design as a ‘plan or blueprint’ that precedes the actual research project. It enables the researcher to anticipate and take appropriate decisions so that the research results will be valid (Ibid).

There are different types of research designs. A research design that examines a single unit is called a case study (Du Plooy, 2001:101). In this study, the *Sowetan* newspaper will be used to gain better insight into the political role played by black women journalists post-1994. The type of research design used is therefore a case study.

1.7.2. Research Method

The research method used is qualitative due to the analytic approach the study will take in examining the political role and contribution of black women journalists in post-apartheid South Africa (from 1994-1999). A definition of the qualitative research method will be given in Chapter 4. The questions guiding this study trace the origins of the *Sowetan* newspaper and interrogate the political role of black women journalists over a five year period (1994 to 1999). This orientation is in line with the case study approach.

1.7.2.1. Content Analysis

The researcher used content analysis in order to analyse news reports and opinion pieces of five black women journalists who worked at the *Sowetan* between 1994 and 1999. They are Ruth Bhengu, Pamela Dube, Pearl Majola, Pearl Rantsekeng and Charity Bhengu.

The content analysis technique is used to analyse the content of any messages of communication in texts in the form of pictures, words or symbols (Mouton, 2001: 165). In this study, content analysis involves gauging the assignments (news reports and opinion pieces) that these black women journalists covered, their views and their comments on issues. The stylistic issues looked at include the following:

- themes /ideas (different themes covered)
- propositional (arguments, opinions)
- syntactic- (sentences, phrases, clauses, paragraphs and language use)

A systematic study of these reports and opinion pieces reveals the foci in terms of assignments (beats) covered and positions taken on major discussion issues in the post-apartheid era (from 1994 to 1999).

1.7.2.2. Data collection

1.7.2.2.1. Sampling

A sampling method was used to select the twenty three news reports and seven opinion pieces from 60 copies of the *Sowetan* newspaper stretching over a period of 5 years (1994 to 1999). Twelve monthly copies of the *Sowetan* were selected annually (12 copies of the *Sowetan* per month X5 years). Thereafter a random sampling method was employed to pick up the twenty three news reports of the five black women journalists and an additional seven opinion pieces written by one black woman journalist from a pool of 12 monthly copies of the *Sowetan* per annum from 1994 to 1999. The selection of both the news reports and opinion pieces was based on three themes namely, *Power within the ANC*, *Women's rights* and *women abuse*, *Children's rights* and *child abuse*.

1.8. Significance of the study

There is very little research done on the political role played by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* in post-apartheid South Africa. Much research was done on the political role black journalists played in bringing about democracy in South Africa (Kaunda, 2004:3). This study aims to add value to the ongoing debates around black journalism and gender issues in South Africa. These debates are ongoing in academia and research in the field of black journalism.

1.9. Research Question

The study attempts to answer the following main question: What political role did black women journalists at the *Sowetan* play in post-apartheid South Africa from 1994 to 1999?

The following sub-questions will help to answer the main research question:

- In what ways did black women journalists contribute to a different perspective of news in post-apartheid South Africa?
- What challenges did black women journalists face at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999?

The following section comprises definitions of key concepts used in the study. These definitions are significant in that they help to contextualise the study.

1.10. Definitions of key concepts

Black

This concept was commonly used during the apartheid era. It became more common during the Black Consciousness era (and even beyond) which had its climax in 1976 when the youth of South Africa revolted against Bantu Education (Mphahlele, 2006: 7). During this era and even beyond the concept 'black' became more popularly used in South Africa to refer to the disadvantaged groups like Indians, Coloureds and Africans because they were all marginalised by the same political system (Biko, 2004:56). The emphasis on black pride and dignity made the concept 'black' a buzz-word among black South Africans and as a result many organisations and forums for black people during this era always had the concept 'black' as a prefix and/or adjective for example, Black Peoples' Convention, Black Community Programmes, Black Parents Association and Black Power.

Black journalists

Journalists from racial groups that were seen to be not at the same level with white journalists on the basis of their skin colour. The main racial groups in South Africa were journalists from the Indian, Coloured and African origin.

Black journalism

The type of journalism in South Africa, which expressed and continues to represent the interests and aspirations of black people. In this study black journalism is used interchangeably with black press (see Section 1.2).

Black women journalists

In South Africa these are women journalists who belong to the African, Indian and Coloured racial groups. Black women journalists also belong to black journalism. The *Sowetan* only hired black journalists and black women journalists mainly of African origin. That means 'women journalists' can also be used to refer to 'black women

journalists' at the *Sowetan* since all of them were black. The terms 'black women journalists' and 'black female journalists' have been used interchangeably in the study.

Politics

Affairs that affect the state or government directly or indirectly. Concepts such as 'political issues' and 'politics' are closely related and have multiple definitions. Political issues could impact on health, education, safety and security, international relations, women's issues, children's issues, environmental issues and many more (Tunstall, 2002:229). This is the context within which the concept political issues and politics is used in this study.

1.11. Scope and limitations of the study

The study focuses on the news reports and opinion pieces of five black women journalists who worked at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. Most of these journalists have since left the *Sowetan*. The news reports and opinion pieces are classified into three themes namely, *Power within the ANC*, *Women's rights and women abuse*, *Children's rights and child abuse*.

1.12. Overview of chapters in the study

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 gives an introduction, a historical overview of black journalism and the emergence of the *Sowetan* newspaper. It also outlines the motivation, research questions, research design and method, scope and limitations of the research as well as definitions of key concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter discusses literature which documents experiences and challenges women journalists face in the journalism profession (black and white). It gives an overview of how black women entered the journalism profession and the kinds of obstacles and challenges they face. The last part of this chapter gives implications of these obstacles in the journalism profession and provides suggestions to remedy the situation.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The chapter discusses African feminism as a theoretical framework of the study. The discussion shows the strengths and limitations of the different types of feminism. The researcher also provides reasons for selecting African feminism as a critical theory in the study.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the case study as the research design of the study. She also discusses key features of qualitative research since this is the research method adopted in this study. Finally, the chapter outlines the data collection process and how the data was analysed.

Chapter 5: Research Findings

The findings of the study form the bedrock of this chapter. These findings are drawn from the analyses of the news reports and opinion pieces of the five selected black women journalists who worked for the *Sowetan* newspaper from 1994 to 1999.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the researcher analyses news reports and opinion pieces of the selected five black women journalists of the *Sowetan* (1994 to 1999). For every news report, or

opinion piece the researcher gives an analysis of the language used, opinion/s expressed and the manner in which the content material is presented.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter gives a conclusion of the study. It also gives recommendations for future research.

2. Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the historical overview of black journalism and the black press in South Africa. The different phases of black journalism have been highlighted as well as the emergence of the *Sowetan* newspaper. The chapter has noted that black journalists have mainly been regarded as men, even though black women journalists equally contributed to the political role of the *Sowetan* in fighting against the oppression of black people. It is for this reason that the political role of black women journalists forms the core of this study.

The English press in particular had great influence in the establishment of the black press thereby promoting black journalism in South Africa. Black journalists from the 1960s resorted to the Black Consciousness philosophy as a form of inspiration for their political writings. The Black Consciousness philosophy was reflected in black newspapers like the *Sowetan* and in other forms of writing. The chapter also gives the different structural elements of the study namely, the theoretical framework, research design and methodology as well as the research questions. The next chapter examines literature on the kinds of challenges black women journalists face in South Africa and elsewhere.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2. Introduction

Women have traditionally been treated as subservient to men across all cultures (Robinson, 2005:1). Journalism as a profession has been affected by this outlook on life, hence it has predominantly been a male oriented profession (Chambers, Steiner & Flemming, 2004: 15). During the early stages in the history of journalism, only men were accepted into the profession and women were completely ‘cut out’ (Robinson, 2005:1). Findings of the Glass Ceiling research conducted by the South African National Editors’ Forum (SANEF) in 2006 confirmed the view that journalism is still predominantly a male profession (Rabe, 2006: 20). This chapter discusses the literature that deals with the experiences and struggles of women journalists in the newsroom, locally and globally. The discussion focuses on the experiences of women journalists in different parts of the world, particularly the experiences of South African black women journalists.

2.1. The Glass Ceiling

The Glass Ceiling is a concept used to define the artificial boundaries and barriers that form part of the corporate organisational culture, which are a hindrance to qualified and competent employees to enter into managerial positions (Robinson, 2008: 82). Robinson (2008: 82) further points out that in many professions, including journalism, artificial barriers such as racism, ethnicity and gender are integrated into the organisation to the point where they become part of the organisational culture. These boundaries are artificial because there is very little that the employee concerned can do even though they do not necessarily affect their competence.

Weaver (2004:143) points out that the number of males in the newsroom has always been higher than females according to a survey conducted in 19 countries. However it should

be noted that a country such as New Zealand had a balance in gender composition unlike countries such as Britain and Korea which had more males than females in the journalism profession (Ibid).

2.2. The emergence of women in journalism

Chambers *et al* (2004:16) note that countries like the United States of America (USA) and Britain discouraged women to enter the journalism profession. Again, at its initial stages, journalism was considered to be a profession that dealt with politics, and politics was regarded as a 'serious and hard' issue associated with males. As a result, women were completely ruled out of the profession. They were supposed to be at home looking after children. However, as time went by there was need to appeal to a female audience and that meant women journalists had to be recruited into the profession (Chambers *et al*, 2004:16). When women journalists came into the newsroom, they were given what was considered to be 'lighter' topics like fashion, welfare and gossip (Ibid). This eventually led to a situation where there was a rift between male and female journalists. Most of the women journalists in countries like Britain, as Chambers *et al* (2004:16) point out emerged as general writers or had relatives of men journalists who were already practising. At this point, there was a perception about women who entered into the profession. For example, in the USA women journalists were white and were regarded as more intelligent than the average white woman.

South Africa also followed the route of discriminating against women journalists including black women journalists. Mathiane (1997: 1) notes that Sophie Tema a veteran black woman journalist who covered the 1976 Soweto Uprisings with a fellow black male journalist, Sam Nzima was not acknowledged for her role. The *Sowetan*, a famous black South African newspaper, which reported about the struggle of black people under apartheid rule, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2006. In its narration of black journalists that made a mark in South African journalism, no woman journalist is mentioned (Maseko, 2006: 6-10). The names of women journalists like Joyce Sikhakhane, Sophie Tema and Ruth Bhengu are not mentioned at all. This omission cannot be justified

because prior to the publication of the book, there were good black women journalists at the *Sowetan* like Ruth Bhengu, a seasoned columnist and Pamela Dube, an experienced political journalist.

2.3. Women journalists' experiences in the Newsroom

There are many challenges and stumbling blocks that women journalists faced and continue to face in the newsroom and in society in general.

2.3.1. The dress code

The stereotype of women being subservient and less intelligent than men will take time to be uprooted from society. Cropp, Frisby and Mill (2003: 25) observe that in the 1980s women journalists wore outfits that were based on men's dress styles. Cropp *et al* (2003:25) observe that this was the women journalists' way of ingratiating themselves into the world of men. In other words these women had to become 'men' in the newsroom. Having put on the 'male image', it became more appropriate and easier for such females to get into 'serious beats' like politics. From this observation it could be concluded that not only did the 'male image' make serious beats such as politics accessible to women, it also had psychological effects – women had to 'think and behave' like men in order to fit into the 'male world'.

2.3.2. Sexism in the newsroom

Sexism is defined as an institutionalised bias or discrimination on the basis of sex (Lee, Marks & Byrd, 1994:4). The negative attitudes such as sexism experienced by black women journalists begin in the newsroom (from fellow male colleagues) and extends beyond the newsroom (Mathiane, 1997:31). Inside the newsroom, Mathiane (1997:31) points out that South African black women journalists are usually viewed as being 'less assertive' by their male colleagues. Those who become highly competent tend to be viewed as being 'aggressive'. This experience is not unique to South African women journalists. Stereotypes held by male colleagues about black women journalists, constitute sexism. However this sexism in the newsroom is not uniquely South African. In an interview with one of Namibia's black woman journalists, Theodora Nandjaa, it

emerged that ‘women journalists in Namibia had to be really tough and extraordinary because ... they would disrespect you as a woman journalist since you ventured into a field that is really male dominated’ (Nghidinwa, 2008: 128). As a result sexism in the profession extends beyond the newsroom.

Kaunda (2004:33) notes that despite harassment (as in sexism inside and beyond the newsroom) of women journalists – black and white, women journalists are on the increase in South Africa. This increase is partly because of policies such as Affirmative Action. However sexist attitudes of some editors hamper transformation in the newsroom. Black women journalists still face negative attitudes from male editors. For instance those that enter the profession are not mentored. Therefore, Affirmative Action does not benefit black women journalists because they are not empowered. The fact is most editors are still male (see Chambers *et al*, 2004: 10).

In contrast to what is happening in the South African newsroom, survey data from countries such as Canada, Germany, Denmark, Italy and the USA, indicate a different mindset to gender equity in different media sectors (Robinson 2005: 28). In Canada for example, the representation of women journalists was uniform throughout print and broadcasting. Furthermore, women journalists were more on television compared to newspapers in the USA, Italy and Denmark. This serves as an indication that certain sectors in the media encourage employment and empowerment of more women than men. In some instances there is balance in terms of the numbers. The significance of this gender equity and empowerment in various media sectors in other countries, lies in the conducive work environment it creates for women journalists to perform.

2.3.3. ‘Soft news’ versus ‘Hard news’

Women entered the journalism profession either as freelancers or when there was a need to attract women audiences (Chambers *et al*, 2004). ‘The Glass Ceiling’ research points out that the only beats in which female journalists are predominant are entertainment, education and general reporting (Rabe, 2006: 2). Chambers *et al* (2004: 92) indicate that women still experience hostilities when they enter areas traditionally dominated by men

like sports and politics. In countries like Britain and the USA, this ‘culture of entitlement’ has contributed to women resorting to freelancing in order to work independently (Chambers *et al*, 2004:93).

Kaunda (2004:57) notes that South African newspapers written in English have not made any visible advancement in terms of promoting women into political journalism. The number of women editors is also very low as compared to men. On the other hand, there is a view from some male colleagues that women journalists accept and promote situations where they are treated as subservient to men and are therefore partly to blame (Kaunda, 2004:58).

It should be noted that the so-called ‘serious beats’ such as politics and sports are more demanding for any journalist (female or male). As a result any woman journalist who gets into such beats should know that they will need more support. For example, women journalists who are also mothers will need extra support from their managers or editors especially when there are issues affecting their children which might need their attention as discussed below.

2.3.4. The burden of balancing career and motherhood

Research evidence shows that women journalists who are also mothers find it more difficult to balance their careers and motherhood (Drayton, 2004: vii). That is because in many societies children are chiefly the responsibility of women. By implication male colleagues who are parents do not have the burden of looking after their children. It means they are able to focus on their careers. Because of societal expectations, women are expected to juggle their careers and motherhood. This gives men an unfair advantage over their women colleagues.

This situation therefore impacts on the performance of women journalists in the newsroom as Drayton (2004:7) observes. For example, a woman journalist whose child is sick will find it difficult to concentrate and focus on the job. As a result, Drayton (2004:8) observes that many women journalists turn down promotions since they do not

want to put a 'strain on their families.' The lack of support for women journalists who are mothers leads to poor performance and further perpetuates the stereotype that journalism is a male profession (Drayton, 2004:8).

2.3.5. Racism and gender

Black women journalists in South Africa have found themselves at the lowest level in comparison to white female and black male journalists (Mathiane, 1997:31). Mathiane (1997: 31) blames racism in the journalism profession for the fewer black women journalists holding key positions in media companies. In addition to societal expectations on women having to juggle their careers with motherhood, factors like racism at the workplace also contribute to stalling the career of black women journalists.

Kaunda (2004:91) points out that the racial divide between black and white women journalists in South African newsrooms is quite common. This racial divide from one woman to another prevents female journalists from combating gender imbalances in the newsroom (2004:91). For example, white women journalists are seen to be more intelligent than black women journalists (Kaunda, 2004:91). Before challenging the female versus male imbalances there is need to deal with black female versus white female oppression. This means black women journalists also need to be treated as equals to their white counterparts.

In the USA, Chambers *et al* (2004:59) mention that black women entered the black press in the 1970s. At the time the black press was male dominated. Cooke, who is said to be the first black woman reporter in the USA worked for a newspaper called the *Daily Compass*. Cooke introduced a black perspective in news relating to prostitution among black women, poverty and drug abuse by black children. After she had managed to bring this perspective in news, she was employed by white newspapers to bring a flair of black news from a black woman's perspective (Chambers *et al*, 2004:60). This reveals that black women journalists experienced a double dose of oppression from a racial and gender perspective. From the Cooke story, it is evident that a black woman has to go an 'extra mile' in order to be taken seriously.

2.3.6. Sexual harassment

In the Glass ceiling report, Rabe (2006: 20) notes that sexual harassment of women journalists by male colleagues in the newsroom is a common practice which needs serious attention. Sexual harassment in this regard includes verbal abuse which has sexual innuendos and asking for sexual favours by senior male journalists from female journalists who are at a junior level.

Another area where women journalists encounter sexual harassment is in news gathering (Kaunda, 2004:70). Since news gathering forms the backbone of news writing, Kaunda (2004:70) points out that the process is not gender-sensitive. While it is true that women journalists use honest formal processes of news gathering, it has also been found that there are female journalists who use sexual appeals and flattery in order to get news from male sources (Kaunda, 2004:70). The femininity of women journalists has also been used by some male editors who would send them to get stories from male sources who ordinarily would be reluctant to give such information freely.

In some western countries like Britain and the USA, research shows that between 40% and 60% of women journalists had been sexually harassed while at work (Chambers *et al*: 2004:100). A study conducted by Walsh Childers, Chance and Herzog in 1996 in the USA found out that sexual harassment was a problem and about one-third of female journalists had been sexually harassed (Ibid). Some male editors, who for some reason feel threatened by a female journalist, would harass them by passing degrading comments which remind them about their femininity as a way of making them feel obligated to yield to sexual exploitation.

Joyce Sikhakhane, a veteran black woman journalist in South Africa traces problems like sexual harassment to the 1960s where black male journalists were politically harassed, became depressed and lost respect for themselves (Mathiane, 1997:30). According to this view, black male journalists who were harassed politically by the apartheid regime turned to harass black women including black women journalists out of anger and frustration. However, it can be argued that sexual harassment of women journalists by men

journalists mirrors the treatment of women in society. In a news environment where males are in the majority, sexual harassment becomes even worse since the woman is looked upon as an intruder into a male world and therefore looked upon as a sexual object (Kaunda, 2004:70).

2.4. The effect of women's experiences in the journalism profession

The negative experiences discussed above and the struggles for women journalists affect journalism not only locally but globally (Chambers *et al*, 2004:15). Robinson (2005:1) indicates that all cultures and societies treat women as weaker vessels and less intelligent than men. It is therefore true that the experiences and struggles of women journalists in the newsroom reflect the manner in which society treats women. The following are some of the implications on global journalism.

2.4.1. Gendered news

Since women journalists entered the profession in order to attract a female audience or readership as Chambers *et al* (2004: 16) notes, news content therefore tends to be gender - biased if reported by a member of a specific gender (Schubert, 1997:7). The problem of news reported only from a male perspective for example is that the news tends to privilege the 'maleness' factor and promotes negative stereotyping of women and children (Carter, Branston & Allan, 1998:143). For example, news reporting about sexual abuse and harassment of women and children has to some degree always reflected the 'male' factor of power. Skidmore (in Carter *et al*, 1998:143) argues that male editors and journalists show some degree of insensitivity in reporting about women (and sometimes children) and sexuality. This has resulted in women journalists reporting on women and children's issues in certain genres of journalism like magazines (Chambers *et al*, 2004:93). However this again means news is reported from either a male or a female perspective and not both. The end result is news which is unbalanced which robs the readers of the other perspective (male or female) since the news will be reported from one angle/gender.

2.4.2. Urgent need for support structures

Drayton (2004:30) cites lack of support structures for women journalists who are also mothers as a serious hindrance towards their career development. A reasonable editor (male or female) would understand the need for facilities like nursery rooms at the workplace and flexible working hours (Drayton, 2004:31). This has not been considered by many male editors up to so far.

Kaunda (2004:84) sees the lack of support structures such as child care facilities and flexible working hours as affecting every woman journalist irrespective of whether she is a mother or not. Robinson (2005: 103) affirms this by pointing out that journalism has been a profession that interprets competence as spending more hours at work, leaving women journalists who have families unable to balance their careers and family life. As they spend more time in the newsroom and in the field gathering news, women journalists spend less time with their children whereas men journalists in most instances do not have to look after children alone (since their female spouses/partners) do that as a primary responsibility (Drayton, 2004:31).

In addition to these challenges facing women journalists, the absence of mentoring programmes for women journalists is cause for concern. It is a known fact that mentoring is crucial for professional growth and facilitates directed hands-on experience. The fact that women have been sidelined for decades in the profession makes mentoring for women journalists a priority area by male editors and journalists, including fellow women journalists who have been long in the profession. A point should be made to the effect that there are media companies, male editors and male journalists that have already started supporting and mentoring women journalists as much as possible. Haffajee (2006: 19) a former woman editor for the *Mail & Guardian*, and current Editor-in-Chief of the *City Press* newspaper described the *Mail & Guardian* as an 'empowering space.' The fact that the *Mail & Guardian* had a female editor shows that the newspaper is transforming or has transformed. The *City Press*, South Africa's only black weekly newspaper has also made progress in this regard (Sesanti, 2007: 35). Mapula Sibanda (in Sesanti, 2007: 35) a black woman journalist who has worked for *City Press* for some time observes that 'each

section of the paper has a female writer either leading the pack or making substantial contribution’.

2.4.3. Education and Training

After noting that the problem of gender discrimination in global journalism is real, it becomes imperative to look at the type of education and training that journalists receive and also how this education contributes to this reality in South Africa and elsewhere.

Deuze (2004:129) argues that ‘what makes global journalism education truly global’ is the interconnectedness between education, training and development in society.

Chambers *et al* (2004: 70) note that in the past, global journalism education has not put any special emphasis on gender. The lack of emphasis on the gender factor has negative effects on the journalism profession. That is because the work environment will reinforce the already internalised patriarchal tendencies or practices of students from a patriarchal society. These students will in all probability display such tendencies in the newsroom. Having noted these two sides, it is crucial that global journalism education should concern itself with gender awareness and sensitivity.

3. Chapter summary

This chapter has looked at the literature that examines the experiences and struggles of women journalists in the newsroom and in society. The discussion has shown that gender discrimination in the newsroom is a reality in journalism across the world. Problems like sexism, lack of support and sexual harassment of women journalists at the workplace have been cited as real. Some of them have been forced to leave the profession and concentrate on their families. The discussion also highlighted implications these negative experiences of female journalists have on journalism as a profession. The next chapter looks at the theoretical framework of the study namely, African feminism.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3. Introduction

The study on the political role of black women journalists in post-apartheid South Africa is undertaken within the context of a democratic dispensation that seeks to promote gender equity. This study examines the political role played by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* in a post-apartheid South Africa (from 1994 to 1999). Only five of them were selected and they are: Ruth Bhengu, Pamela Dube, Pearl Majola, Pearl Ranteskeng and Charity Bhengu. Such a role has largely been undermined and/or ignored. In most instances, the political role played by black journalists in the pre and post-apartheid South Africa has been associated with men. In fact, currently there is a dearth of literature that credits the political role played by black female journalists in Africa as Nghidinwa (2008:41) observes. This study is located within African feminism as a theoretical framework.

3.1. Brief background to Feminism

African feminism forms part of the broader concept – feminism. At the core of feminism is the notion of ‘gender.’ ‘Gender’ refers to how societies assign roles to human beings based on their biological make-up (Kent, 1998: 9). By extension ‘Gender’ is the manner in which males and females relate to one another and how society interprets that. The manner in which society treats men and women has led to the interpretation that both are not treated equally as indicated in Chapter 2. Such a treatment has given birth to a movement which was started in the western world called feminism (Karam, 2008:308).

Feminism is a theory that opposes male domination or patriarchy in society. Karam (2008:308) defines feminism as a ‘political philosophy and social-political movement marked by an emancipator concern to explain and overcome subordination and

oppression of all kinds'. The history of feminism is traced back to Europe and North America as a movement that campaigned for gender equity (Karam, 2008:308). Feminists felt that women were oppressed by a patriarchal society and as a result they were treated as less intelligent and subservient to men. The patriarchal society encouraged women to be attached to a domestic environment and child bearing. This situation according to feminists extends to the workplace where women are treated as 'unequal' to men. As a result women at the workplace are less paid and given less influential positions than their male counterparts. In post-apartheid South Africa, the situation has changed in many professions due to the introduction of policies like Affirmative Action and gender equity (Kaunda, 2004:33), although there are still traces of the patriarchal tendencies towards women.

3.2. Types of Feminism

Scholars and advocates of feminism view and react to patriarchy in different ways, hence there are different types. These types include Liberal, Marxist, Radical and Cosmo feminism (Karam, 2008: 309-312). The above types of feminism emerged in the western world due to the challenges that women experienced in families, at the workplace and in society in general. As opposed to scholars from the western world, African scholars viewed the above types of feminism as being inappropriate to the African society in view of the fact that the challenges that women face in Africa are different from the rest of the world (Nnaekema, 2005:32). As a result, African feminism emerged in Africa in order to address patriarchy and gender issues within an African context (Ibid). Below is a brief explanation of the different types of feminism.

3.2.1. Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism advocates for equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of life including at work and at home (Karam, 2008: 309). Liberal feminists fight against the view that women should not get into leadership positions, especially in professions and fields such as engineering, aviation and medicine, which were traditionally reserved for men. Liberal feminists also oppose the view that women should be treated as unequal to men in all sectors of society.

3.2.2. Marxist feminism

Marxist feminists believe that patriarchy in society is promoted by a capitalist system and that this system therefore, is the system responsible for oppressing women (Karam, 2008: 310). Marxist feminists are of the view that once capitalism is removed from society, women will be liberated. In other words, capitalism is synonymous with gender inequality. By extension a capitalist society promotes women oppression.

3.2.3. Radical feminism

Radical feminism is the most radical/extreme form of feminism. The radical feminists believe that any association with men promotes the oppression of women hence they advocate separatism, lesbianism, abortions and artificial insemination as a form of baby making. Radical feminists maintain that patriarchy is part and parcel of society's culture which can never be eradicated from society (Karam, 2008: 311). They believe that the notion of 'gender' should be completely eliminated from society. For radical feminists there should no longer be what is referred to as 'male' or 'female' since that is where patriarchy begins.

3.2.4. Cosmo feminism

Another recent type of feminism is called cosmo-feminism (Karam, 2008: 312). Cosmo feminists believe in having benefits from the two worlds, that is, women should acquire material possessions, high-powered jobs; have loving husbands and happy children. The advocates of cosmo-feminism believe it is possible for women to acquire from both worlds that is, get married and make babies, have a decent career and remain independent even in marriage. In other words a woman holds the key to her achievements and happiness.

3.3. African feminism

African feminism is a type of feminism that emerged in Africa, as a way of explaining how Africans interpret feminism within their environment (Nnaekema, 2005:33). The other types of feminism given above have been influenced by western views on how women are treated in society. African feminism on the other hand, focuses on what

African women are doing with culture and patriarchy...it accounts for the triumph of African women in the midst of obstacles without undermining those obstacles or advocating for the removal of those obstacles (Nnaekema, 2005:32). In essence African feminism engages with African culture and the environment in which African women find themselves in order to interpret how women are treated in the African culture. It therefore becomes difficult to give a precise definition of what African feminism entails without looking at its core values which capture the general treatment of women in the African society.

The following are core values of African feminism. According to these values, African feminism:

- is not radical in its approach to issues affecting women and men
- accommodates maternal politics and motherhood. In fact motherhood is one of its central values. For example, the view that any elderly woman is regarded as your mother in African society. Again, somebody's child is also your child. This refers to both men and women.
- sees and addresses issues as they are relevant to their society and environment.
- invites men as partners in problem-solving with women leading in such issues. In other words, African feminism does not view men as enemies but are viewed as a crucial component of society that forms part of solution to society's problems.
- is proactive and not reactive
- promotes women as leaders in society's structures such as the family and the religious sector, queenship and encourages women to voice issues that affect society in general. Raising those issues includes making opinions, suggestions, criticising and rebuking as well as encouraging, condoning and supporting.
- in voicing their opinions, criticising and rebuking, women are encouraged to be bold, courageous and enthusiastic. In other words, no cowardice is accommodated or else that will make society to be one-sided (male dominated) and stereotyped.
- uses gender-neutral expressions in many African languages (for example, Yoruba, Igbo, Shona, Sepedi and Tshivenda), especially in names and titles.

The above values indicate that African feminism is quite different from western feminism and therefore, scholars, academics and critics need to be careful not to impose foreign/western concepts into African society which has views about how women are treated in society. Furthermore, African women have their own challenges like poverty and illiteracy (Nnaekema, 2005:32). All the above definitions of feminism have their strengths and weaknesses. Radical feminism for example is a form of reaction on how women are treated in society. As a form of reaction, radical feminism always considers 'men' and what they do. Men are seen to be at the core of women's oppression hence anything that is meant to please men needs to be done away with (Karam, 2008: 311). Radical feminists have also raised crucial problems facing women like the rape of women and pornography as Karam (2008: 312) acknowledges.

On the other hand, liberal feminism advocates for the rights of middle class women who are professionals. Liberal feminism does not take into account the working class women such as domestic workers and ordinary labourers (Kaunda, 2004). It speaks for middle class women and leaves out ordinary women in society. This type of approach is not relevant to the developing world where every news bulletin shows how unemployment and poverty are still a norm (for example in South Africa); it is more practical to the developed world where illiteracy is not a challenge at all.

In this study the researcher uses African feminism as a theoretical point of departure, reason being that African feminism refers to African society and its challenges. In addition, it defines the role of African women within their society. Unfortunately there is a clash between tenets of African feminism and those of other forms of feminism, which dominate the workplace. For instance careers of women are located within a capitalist economic system. In this context careers of women are guided largely by liberal feminism.

3.3.1. The position of women in African society

In the first part of this chapter the researcher warned that one of the challenges that Africa faces today is the tendency (by Africans themselves) to adopt western values, policies or even culture without assessing whether they will be relevant to their culture, society and lifestyle. It is on this basis that Africa has lost some of her values and principles and this has turned African society into chaos. Nnaekema (2005:21) points out that when Europeans came into Africa in the 19th century they already had an image about Africa, which they felt should be changed. The image about Africa from the European's perspective was a barbaric and negative one. In African society women have always played powerful roles and occupied prominent positions.

One great quality of African feminism is the acknowledgement of the powerful positions females occupy in African society. Positions such as queenship (in certain societies) which cannot be inherited by males; female traditional doctors who specialise in specific health areas like gynaecology and paediatrics and powerful positions such as *Makhadzi*³ as the chief advisor to the king. Her word is above everybody else's in the royal household. This role of *Makhadzi* can only be played by a woman, the sister to the chief. In mediating between the ancestors and the living, Sesanti (2009:213) observes that women have always played a powerful role. Such powerful leadership roles are accompanied by articulating or voicing out opinions regarding issues in African society. While performing ancestral rituals for example, if *Makhadzi* believes she has heard a word from the ancestors and communicates it to the family, no one will question her wisdom including men. Another current example is that of the Vhavenda Chief *Vhamusanda Vho-Bohwana* of a village called Tshaulu⁴ in the northern part of Venda who has male and female subordinates whom she instructs.

Another interesting phenomenon that Nnaekema (2009:32) observes is that in African societies, gender-neutrality in addressing males and females is quite common. For

³ Among the Vhavenda people of Limpopo, *Makhadzi* is the elder sister of the King or Chief who is also the Chief advisor to the King or Chief.

⁴ A village in the northern part of Limpopo province which is a few kilometers away from the Zimbabwean border.

example, a title such as *Vhamusanda* will be used to address a female and a male chief or king. In western languages like English a female king is referred to as a Queen and a male one as a King. Drawing on discussions so far, it is clear that African feminism is more relevant to this study. This claim is based on the fact that in African feminism, women are viewed and acknowledged as powerful persons in society. They influence political decisions and determine how other (young) women should be treated in society. In other words the treatment of women in society should not always be viewed as oppression by males, but females should also be seen to take part in how other females are treated. While it is true that there are patriarchal tendencies in African society, one should acknowledge that African women have also in one way or the other showed resistance and they need to reclaim their rightful position including in the media (Sesanti, 2009:215). This can only be done when African women stand up and speak, write and address matters affecting them.

3.3.2. The position of black women journalists in the black press

Although there are many newspapers which write for a black readership, Tsedu (1998:1) points out that there are essentially two main national newspapers in South Africa which constitute the black press. These are the *Sowetan* and the *City Press*. Mathiane (1997:1) argues that black women journalists have not received any recognition even in the black press. Whilst Mathiane's argument was true at the time, there are newspapers (like the *City Press* which has currently appointed a woman Editor-in-Chief) in the black press that are reversing the situation. However, one must acknowledge that there is still a lot of work to be done to transform the newsroom not only at junior level but also at management level. The perception out there is that male journalists are the gurus. For instance, mere mention of names such as that of the late Aggrey Klaaste, Joe Tlholoe, John Qwelane, Thami Mazwai and Mathatha Tsedu are immediately linked to excellence in black journalism. However, the same reaction in society is not forthcoming when names of women journalists such as Nomavenda Mathiane, Ruth Bhengu, Lakela Kaunda, Sophie Tema, Ferial Haffajee and Pamela Dube are mentioned.

4. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the theoretical framework that the researcher uses in the study namely African feminism. The different types of feminism have been discussed as a way of contextualising African feminism. The researcher uses African feminism to contextualise the role and position of African women in African society. The core values of African feminism such as women leadership were explained and discussed. African feminism has been used to indicate how women are treated in African society. The traditional African society did not only show respect to women in the household, but it also gave them powerful political titles and roles and men were and continue to be obliged to treat such women with dignity.

The study also shows how the rightful position and space of African women in general has been challenged and furthermore it is indicated that African women need to reclaim their original position as pointed in African feminism. The position of women in the black press was also highlighted. The next Chapter looks at the Research Design and Methodology.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

4. Introduction

The research design of the study is a case study. In this study, a case study is used to examine the political role played by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* (from 1994 to 1999). In the chapter, the researcher discusses the research design and methodology chosen and the reasons thereof. The researcher has chosen to employ a case study as a research design and qualitative research as a methodology. These will be defined and their choice will be explained.

4.1. Research Design

The research design is defined as a framework, plan or the blue print that precedes the research project (Mouton, 1996:107). The study examines the political role played by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* newspaper from 1994 to 1999 hence the selected research design is a case study. A case study is a type of research design that examines a single entity, institution or unit (Du Plooy, 2001:101).

4.2. The Qualitative Research Method

The qualitative research method describes the world of life from the point of view of participants (Flick, Von Kardoff & Steinke, 2004: 3). Qualitative research also known as field or interpretative research examines the social construction of reality and social order (Flick *et al*, 2004: 5). Unlike quantitative research which tends to be more objective and fixed, qualitative research tends to be more subjective and interpretive in approach. Flick *et al* (2004: 8) go on to indicate that qualitative research is also a ‘discovery’ approach wherein the data collected is analysed and interpreted within the contextual environment.

4.3. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method or a systematic procedure of analysing information that exists in any recorded form (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991: 157). Du Plooy (2001: 192) does not necessarily give a flowing definition; instead the author lists a number of characteristics pertaining to content analysis namely:

- the method is systematic
- objective
- it involves quantification
- the meaning of the content must be interpreted ‘within the context’ in which the research problem originated.

All the above definitions and characteristics emphasise the systematic and quantitative nature of this method. However, content analysis can also be used in qualitative research by ‘maintaining the systematic nature... for the various stages of qualitative analysis, without undertaking over-hasty quantifications’ (Marying, 2004: 266). The method can be used to analyse content without necessarily using quantitative information per se. This study therefore uses content analysis in data collection.

In content analysis, the units for analysis can include physical and thematic units. The articles written by the black women journalists have been selected and are analysed through thematic classification.

4.4. Data collection

The collected data is from the news reports of the five black women journalists who worked at *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The data collection process is detailed below.

4.4.1. Sampling

The method used for data collection is non-probability purposive sampling. The non-probability purposive (convenience) sampling method is used when the population under study is selected under specific criterion (Jensen, 2002:216). The selected news reports

and opinion pieces were selected based on three identified themes, namely, *Power within the ANC, Women's rights and women abuse and Children's rights and child abuse*.

Wimmer and Dominick (1991: 65) also recommend non-probability sampling in cases where the researcher uses readily available data. In this case, the available reports and opinion pieces of the five black women journalists were used. The names of the black women journalists are Ruth Bhengu, Pamela Dube, Charity Bhengu, Pearl Majola and Pearl Rantsekeng.

The researcher decided to select one news report or opinion piece per month written by anyone of the selected five black women journalists who were working at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The *Sowetan* is a daily newspaper which does not get published over weekends. There are 260 (5 copies every week X52 weeks) of copies available per year which translate into 1300 copies over a five year period. 12 copies were selected per annum and that means $(12 \times 5) = 60$ copies were selected over the five year period. From the 60 selected copies only twenty three news reports and seven opinion pieces were selected based on the three themes mentioned earlier. Such an approach was adopted following Du Plooy (2001: 102) who recommends a smaller sample size in a homogeneous population. A homogeneous population is one that shares common socio-economic status, occupation, educational level, language preferences and related issues. In this case the women journalists are all black and worked for one black newspaper, namely, the *Sowetan*. They all come from a similar socio-economic background. All of them are second language speakers of English, the language in which the *Sowetan* gets published.

From this sample of black women journalists Pamela Dube was the only one reporting on 'pure political' issues. One of them namely, Ruth Bhengu, had a column called *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat*. The researcher selected only seven opinion pieces out of all the available weekly opinion pieces that she wrote during the period under study. The opinion pieces were again based on the three themes: *Power within the ANC, Women's rights and women abuse, Children's rights and child abuse*.

The five black women journalists whose news reports and opinion pieces were selected did not all work at the *Sowetan* at the same period. They also did not work the same number of years and months. As a result it proved difficult for the researcher to select an equal number of news reports per journalist.

5. Chapter summary

This chapter looked at the research design and method used in the study. The study used the case study to examine the political role that black women journalists played at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The research method used is qualitative.

In qualitative research, the data is collected through non-probability purposive sampling. Content analysis was used for analysing the data. From 12 copies stretching over a five year period a total of thirty news reports and opinion pieces were selected (twenty three news reports and seven opinion pieces). These news reports were written by five (selected) black women journalists who worked at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The selected news reports and opinion pieces were based on the themes: *Power within the ANC, Women's rights and women abuse, Children's rights and child abuse*. The next chapter presents the Findings of the research.

Chapter 5

Research Findings

5. Introduction

This chapter looks at news reports and opinion pieces of five black women journalists at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The news reports and opinion pieces are all classified under 'politics'. Since politics is a broad area, the news reports and opinion pieces are classified thematically under the following sub-headings: *Power within the ANC*, *Women's rights and women abuse*; *Children's rights and child abuse*. The opinion pieces discussed belong to one black woman journalist namely, Ruth Bhengu - the only woman journalist who had a column during the period under study (1994 to 1999). The opinion pieces have been categorised in the same way as the news reports, that is, under the three themes mentioned above. The news reports and opinion pieces have been selected (by the researcher) on the basis of addressing issues related to the given themes namely, *Power within the ANC*, *Women's rights and women abuse*, *Children's rights and child abuse*.

The classification is based on the beats that these black women journalists covered. Most of their writings covered what was happening in black communities and in the newly elected ANC-led government during the period under study. The fact that some journalists have more news reports than others is determined by factors such as the length of period the journalists worked at the *Sowetan* and the beats (assignments) that the journalists covered. The total number of selected news reports and opinion pieces is thirty. What follows is a discussion of the selected news reports under the three themes mentioned above.

5.1. Power within the ANC

The news reports under this theme/category show the power struggle within the ANC from 1994 to 1999. The discussion also alludes to the impact this power struggle had on the ANC-led government and generally in South Africa. The first news report sheds some light on what happened just before former President Nelson Mandela was released. Some of the power struggles that emanated later were based on what happened before the ANC-led government got into power as indicated in the news report below.

Madiba's letter to former president PW Botha

The letter discussed in this news report was written by former president Nelson Mandela to the former president of South Africa, PW Botha, before he was released from his lifelong prison where he served 27 years of his life sentence. Dube (1997a:7) discusses the content of the letter wherein Mandela indicated that the political turmoil in the country could only be remedied by negotiations between the ANC and the NP-led government. According to Dube (1997a:7) a political prisoner like Mandela could not get into negotiations because of the prison conditions. However, Mandela indicated that he had not been granted permission from the ANC to write the letter and express what he was saying and this means Mandela was writing in his personal capacity (Dube, 1997a:7). The final paragraph of the letter expresses Mandela's hope to see South Africa (SA) a free country wherein the former NP-led government and ANC would be working together. This letter sheds light on why former President Nelson Mandela came to be regarded as a sell-out by some of his fellow comrades within the ANC. This contributed to some of the tensions during Mandela's presidency. This matter will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6 since it had a recurring and rippling effect in some of the fights and tensions in the ANC.

Ginwala joins ANC exodus

At the time when Nelson Mandela was the state president of South Africa and was about to retire, it became clear that certain members of the cabinet were going to resign (Dube, 1998b:2). The next president after Nelson Mandela, former President Thabo Mbeki, was about to take over. Dube (1998b:2) discusses the matter of the cabinet reshuffle and

resignations due to the fact that former President Nelson Mandela was about to step down and the next President Thabo Mbeki was about to take over. The news report shows that during the Mandela era, Ginwala was very pivotal, despite the fact that there were ANC members who did not like her particularly in the ANC caucus. Dube (1998b:2) argues that it was unlikely that Ginwala would serve in the cabinet under Thabo Mbeki's presidency. The main reason that Dube (1998b:2) gives was that Ginwala was doing it out of personal choice since she felt that it was highly unlikely that President Thabo Mbeki was going to appoint her as part of his cabinet. Dube (1998b:2) went on to predict that former ministers like Mac Maharaj, Sbusiso Bhengu and Joe Modise were not going to be part of Mbeki's government. Dube (1998b:2) made these predictions on the basis of the cliques and tensions within the ANC among ANC members which went on to affect the appointments of presidents and cabinet later.

The changing fortunes of the powerful

This report is related to *Ginwala joins the ANC exodus* in that Dube (1998c:19) gives a prediction of what was going to happen when Mandela resigned as president of the country. Already at that time political analysts were analysing and predicting the situation. However, in this report, Dube (1998c:19) gives a fortune teller's perspective.

The fortune teller, namely, Anne Barkhuizen showed that Mandela was going to complete his five year term in office and then step down (Dube, 1998c:19). She said thereafter he was going to die within four years' time. She said that when Mandela left government the country would get into a political chaos. At that time it was a known fact that former President Thabo Mbeki was going to take over and Barkhuizen predicted that he was not going to stay long in power and Mbeki's reign was going to be crushed because of divisions within the ANC (Ibid). Barkhuizen further predicted that a woman president with a name starting with an "F" would get into power. She said this lady was already in government at that time.

Thandi Modise was not threatened

The news report highlights the contestations for positions within the ANC (Dube, 1997d: 2). The news report claims that Thandi Modise received death threats for contesting the ANC women's league presidency (Dube, 1997d: 2). As deputy president of the ANC women's league who was eager to contest for presidency, Thandi Modise was allegedly warned (by a friend of Madikizela-Mandela, Sally Peterson) not to contest and after that she started receiving death threats. Thandi Modise reported this to the ANC executive and the matter was discussed and Sally Peterson denied having threatened Thandi Modise in any way.

Winnie bows out of race

The report is about Winnie Madikizela-Mandela who declined to be elected as ANC's deputy president after some arguments with former president of the ANC and also former President of the country Thabo Mbeki (Dube, 1997e:1). After being nominated to the position of deputy, Madikizela-Mandela consulted with other structures within the ANC and then during the elections indicated she would not accept the position. Dube (1997e:1) describes how Madikizela-Mandela's decline was gladly accepted by Jacob Zuma. On behalf of Madikizela-Mandela, the late ANC youth league president Peter Mokaba told the media that she would not leave the ANC even if there were tensions within the organisation which were revealed during the elections.

Carolus keen to take up new post

The news report discusses the possible appointment of Cheryl Carolus as a diplomat in the United Kingdom (UK). Carolus was going to be given the position during the Mandela era and Mandela described her as 'a capable woman' (Dube, 1997f: 6). She was elected secretary general of the ANC after Cyril Ramaphosa and thereafter appointed as a diplomat (Dube, 1997f: 6). In the news report Carolus points out that she consulted with her family and husband regarding the appointment. At the time Carolus was approached for the diplomatic post in the United Kingdom(UK) which was held by Mendi Msimang.

Duarte's case to be handled internally

The two news reports, *Duarte's case to be handled internally* and *Duarte's rise and fall* discuss the same subject namely Jessie Duarte, Gauteng's former MEC for safety and security. In 1998, Jessie Duarte was accused of corruption (Dube, 1998g: 2). She allegedly did not follow procedure when getting an official vehicle and she was involved in an accident. Jessie Duarte allegedly took along a 'friend' or colleague on a trip to Portugal at the taxpayers' expense. The Moerane Commission, which was appointed to investigate the allegations, concluded that she involved herself in 'illegal' activities (Ibid).

Duarte's rise and fall

The former Gauteng MEC for safety and security Jessie Duarte allegedly faced tough opposition in 1998 (Dube, 1998h: 10). The opposition seemed to come from all sides, male subordinates, colleagues and fellow comrades as well as from opposition political parties like the Democratic Alliance (DA). Duarte was accused of corruption, mismanagement and nepotism.

Dube (1998h:10) shows the allegations which were leveled against her and goes on to point out that Duarte had old time enemies like male chauvinism (in a department that was male dominated), racism (in a department where whites were in senior positions). Dube (1998h: 10) shows that these were part of the jealousies and envies from the ANC camp and outside the ANC. So the missiles directed to Duarte were also coming from within the ANC by her fellow comrades. This made Duarte's case very complicated. The report goes on to highlight some of Duarte's achievements like being able to deal with gangsterism and violence in the East Rand. Towards the end of the report, Dube (1998h:10) mentions all allegations directed towards Duarte starting from the alleged boyfriend whom she allegedly took along on a trip, a lie about the accident she was involved in and poor human relations particularly with colleagues.

All of the above news reports indicate power relations within the ANC. This is reflected in the fight for positions, cliques and tensions within the ANC which had an effect on the government.

5.2. Women's rights and women abuse

The news reports below show how the ANC- led government in 1994 dealt with the issue of women's rights which promoted gender equality, representivity in parliament and government and how this was replicated in society. The issue of women's rights also impacted on how society treats women hence women abuse was and continues to be discussed alongside women's rights and equality.

Women meet to formulate policy

In 1994, the Women's Health Project (WHP) hosted a conference dealing with health matters affecting women only (Majola, 1994a:15). The WHP was started in 1991 as a community project by the University of the Witwatersrand. It was started because there was a gap between the involvement of women in health and the policy that surrounds that. WHP also aimed at forming a network of stakeholders in societies interested in women's health issues. The conference looked at issues like abortion, teenage pregnancy, violence against women and the covering of women's issues by the media. The ANC-led government at this stage was one of the stakeholders of the project (Ibid). The project was meant to empower women regarding their rights in health matters.

Women's rights are threatened

After the first democratic elections in 1994, there was a debate about women empowerment. The issue of the right to choice of abortion was, among other things, a hotly debated issue and this is what this news report is all about. Majola (1994b:21) shows the different views about the issue from some of the stakeholders in society such as the former National Party and men who were opposed to the issue of women choosing to terminate their pregnancies . Majola (1994b:21) points out that when women are left out in discussing matters pertaining to their rights like abortion, women become victims of abuse and oppression because abortion affects women directly.

Women look to equal say in polls

In 1998, the time during which this news report was written, women were still under-represented in parliament. There were 25% women in national and provincial government and only 10% in decision making positions (Bhengu, 1998a:2). According to the report, women held a symposium in Johannesburg to discuss a plan of action on adequate representation in the oncoming elections (at that time). An action plan was made and a task team was elected to ensure that by the year 2000, 50% of women's representivity in parliament was accomplished. This was seen to be a way of empowering women in politics in the newly elected ANC-led government (Ibid).

Keeping Parliament female friendly

This is a news report about a conference held in October 1998 in Cape Town (Dube, 1998i:9). The conference was on the meaningful role of women's representivity. Among other things, the ANC was criticised for not giving crucial leadership positions to women, while they claimed to be promoting women empowerment. Political parties contesting for elections were encouraged to accommodate more women into their election lists. Again, accommodating the role of motherhood (which affects time for parliamentary sessions and meetings) on the side of women was discussed. Embracing the motherhood angle was seen to be a way of acknowledging women and their role in the family and in politics as the two cannot be separated.

Encouraging women to use mighty pen

In this news report, Rantsekeng (1998a:21) reports about the launch of *Women in Africa writing project*. The project was meant to encourage black African women to write with the view that if these women started writing, they would be able to voice out problems which affected them like the abuse of women and children. The news report indicates that black (African) women in particular are victims of abuse and exploitation since they cannot write and tell their story. Writing was discussed as a form of empowerment at the launch (Ibid).

A safe place for women

In this report, Majola (1994c:14) starts by describing the torture two women went through in their marriages. Maria a survivor of domestic violence and abuse was physically abused and eventually was hosted by the People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA). She then goes on to discuss Bongi, who was abused mentally and emotionally for 23 years until she walked out of the marriage. Bongi says she kept on hoping that one day things would get better and her husband would change and this never happened. The writer (Majola, 1994c:14) gives the statistics of Women Abuse in South Africa at that time. At least thirty five percent of women were said to be living in an abusive relationship at that time.

Women killed in tragic love triangle

Bhengu (1997b:2) describes an incident in which a woman was killed by her husband after she discovered that he had another wife. The 50-year old man also killed her cousin and her aunt. After the new wife, Sonto discovered that the husband had another wife at his place of birth in Springs, she told him and an argument erupted and the husband took out a gun and shot all those who were present including the girlfriend who was supposed to be a wife (Ibid). Three women were all killed by the man in this incident.

5.3. Children's rights and child abuse

The following selected news reports discuss the rights of children and how the ANC-led government dealt with them post-1994. Many child abuse cases were reported post-1994 and the issue of Children's rights became a serious matter as discussed in Chapter 6.

Child Abuse Law Blamed

This is a report on the review of the South African Law against child abuse which was in operation after 1994 (Bhengu, 1994c:12). According to the report, children's organisations and individuals felt that the law was too lenient for the abusers and unsympathetic towards abused children. The reasons given were that the sentences handed down to abusers were very light. Because children are sometimes unable to give coherent evidence in court, their abusers easily get bail. The other issue raised was that

children were grilled by unsympathetic prosecutors until they could not even answer because of the trauma. In the news report this was viewed as another way of denying children their rights and subjecting them to sexual abuse.

Girl missing from sanatorium

This news report is about a woman from Eldorado Park who was considering suing a hospital because her mentally retarded daughter had gone missing (Bhengü, 1995d: 5). The mother of the unnamed girl, Mrs Evelyn Veltman allegedly received a call from the hospital claiming that her daughter went missing after being sedated. The mother of the girl considered suing the hospital staff because she felt there was a form of negligence and many unexplained questions on how the girl got lost. Towards the end of the story the hospital staff alleged that they had searched everywhere including in mortuaries without any success. The news report describes this form of child abuse as negligence (Ibid).

Teacher accused of rape

In *Teacher accused of rape*, Bhengü (1998e:2) describes an incident where a 10 year old deaf girl who was mentally disturbed had been raped and impregnated by her teacher. It took some time for the child to explain what happened to her and who did it. When the investigation officer went to the school, the teacher had already resigned and he could not be located. The girl's pregnancy had to be terminated. The mother of the child indicated that the girl had been raped since the age of 7 by a taxi driver who took a group of children to school. A neighbour and the girl's stepbrother allegedly also raped the girl before. The girl was said to be deeply traumatised.

Principal faces rape charges

The report *Principal faces rape charges*, talks about the rape of deaf children by their principal (Bhengü, 1997f:3). The principal had raped more than one child, hence he had been suspended from the school. All the children he had raped were deaf and dumb and as a result it was difficult for them to testify or identify the suspect because they used sign language. The principal was released on a bail of R1000-00 and suspended from

school premises until his case was over. The Human Rights Commissioner Mr Jerry Nkeli commented that the Criminal Justice system in South Africa had no proper mechanisms to ensure that disabled children and adults were protected from abuse. He said it was difficult to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused was guilty because the victim used sign language, which not many people were able to interpret (Ibid).

Two-year old rape victim's life is doomed

In the report *Two year old rape victim's life doomed*, a child was raped when she was two years old by her uncle. Her private parts were damaged and the perpetrator was not even arrested because the child was too young to testify in court. The Warrant Officer in charge of the case indicates that child molestation is due to high unemployment rate (Bhengu, 1994g: 1). This makes unemployed men to get involved in substance abuse and to start abusing vulnerable members of society who happen to be children.

Residents attack man

In this report, entitled *Residents attack man*, Bhengu (1994h: 2) shows how angry residents followed a child rapist and arrested him on their own and then finally handed him to the police. The unnamed man allegedly lured young girls and then raped them. In another incident he killed his victim - a six year old girl. Bhengu (1994h:2) described how the residents of the Mandela squatter camp went to the man's shack, took him out and set the shack on fire, beat him and finally handed him to the police. The residents felt that their children were no longer safe in the community.

Suffer little prison children

In this news report Bhengu (1999i:10) discusses a visit to a woman's prison in Johannesburg where women are jailed with their babies. A woman named Thandi was arrested for stealing in a shop and she was eight months pregnant at the time, so she gave birth when she was in prison. During the interview Thandi told the journalist that prison is not a place for raising a child. Bhengu (1999i:10) also mentions the fact that there were other women prisoners who were arrested for assault and theft. In most of their crimes a man was the underlying cause, for example one woman beat another after discovering she

was sleeping with her husband. The prison also had crèche facilities and although the mothers were happy during their interaction with the children, they wore grim faces when they addressed adults. Bhengu (1999i:10) describes the atmosphere as unwelcoming and grim.

Triplets need aid

Rantsekeng (1998b: 4) in this news report, talks about a 35 year old woman from Soweto who had given birth to triplets. The woman had four other children already and she was unemployed. The father of the triplets was also unemployed. Rantsekeng's (1998b:4) report was an appeal to the community to assist with whatever they could, be it food, clothing or even a job. Rantsekeng (1998b:4) shows that despite the fact that the parents were unemployed, these triplets did deserve a decent life like any other children. It is on that basis that Rantsekeng (1998b:4) appealed to the community to assist.

The above news reports give an insight into how the issue of Children's rights and child abuse was reported by black women journalists from 1994 to 1999. The matter also became political in that it affected many sectors of society like the justice system and also because it was linked to Women's rights and women abuse.

5.4. Opinion pieces from *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat*

Although these are opinion pieces from *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat*, they have been classified thematically in the same manner as news reports. Only one opinion piece deals with *Power within the ANC*, three deal with *Women's rights and women abuse* and three deal with *Children's rights and child abuse*. The opinion pieces are seven in number.

The opinion pieces form part of this study because they express the views of a black woman journalist about (the black component of) the African society and related issues such as parenting and the African culture in transition and politics. This view was rare at the time (1994 to 1999) since the male perspective was the most common view.

5.4.1. Power within the ANC

Shouldn't Dr Zuma take 'sick leave' now?

In this opinion piece, Bhengu (1996a:11) talks about the R14 million that the former Minister of Health Nkosazana Zuma channeled to Mbongeni Ngema's *Sarafina 2* Aids play. The play according to Bhengu (1996a:11) was a flop and the criticism against Zuma was that she seemed unable to prioritise. The money she channeled to Ngema's play could have been used to improve the remuneration of doctors and nurses who were leaving the country in droves for Saudi Arabia. Bhengu (1996a:11) shows that what makes this matter worse is the fact that the public protector indicated that indeed the Minister was guilty but her ANC colleagues like Kader Asmal and former President Thabo Mbeki still showed their support. Bhengu (1996a:11) calls this a "*braskap*" within the ANC wherein members continued to do as they wanted and were never punished for their actions. The ANC as government was so powerful such that they could protect a fellow member (or minister) from being exposed for corruption. This opinion piece introduces the beginning of power and corruption in the ANC as an organisation and the government.

5.4.2. Women's rights and women abuse

Payment of ilobolo a sensitive issue

Lobola or *ilobolo* is a common practice in African communities (. Basically what happens is that the two families get to meet and the man's family gives a token to the woman's family as a form of appreciation for the child (daughter-in-law) that is being given to them in marriage (Bhengu, 1995b:12).

Bhengu (1995b:12) raises the fact that over the years, the *ilobolo* practice has been commercialised. The families of women who get married charge exorbitant amounts which might end up crippling their future marriage (Ibid). The abuse of the practice of paying *ilobolo* leads to the exploitation of black women.

Widow's Forum pulls hearts strings

In this opinion piece Bhengu (1995c:16) talks about a forum for widows that was started on the basis of problems that women face after losing their husbands. One of the problems cited in the forum was the fact that many relatives want to take over the goods and property of the deceased and the poor woman and her children are left vulnerable to abuse. Bhengu (1995c:16) describes it as one of the most fruitful meetings she had ever attended as the sharing of women's experiences were accompanied by talks on how women could approach issues legally, economically and otherwise. Bhengu (1995c:16) says she liked the meeting because status was not important but what counted was experience and knowledge. Bhengu (1995c:16) praises the forum for embracing women from every class in order to share their experiences.

Sisters do it themselves

Bhengu (1997d: 12) discusses a woman's day meeting she had attended. She talks about how a group of women from all walks of life gathered at a restaurant with very few men who were willing to accompany their spouses. While Bhengu (1997d: 12) says she enjoyed the talk, she believes the story of women is incomplete without the violence that they experience from their spouses and their communities. Bhengu (1997d: 12) notes that women are pressurised to fit into societies' roles of 'motherhood' and 'wives', which should not necessarily be the case. Any woman who defies all of the above gets ostracised. She is treated not as a normal woman by society. Bhengu (1997d: 12) goes on to indicate that not all women are soft mothers, loving and caring. She believes that some women are drug dealers, abusive and bad. Bhengu (1997d: 12) feels that society further oppresses women by prescribing how they should live.

5.4.3. Children's rights and child abuse

Black families in trouble

In this opinion piece, Bhengu (1995e:1) argues that divorce has escalated among black families. The end result is children who grow up in this social milieu of broken homes. These children end up viewing divorce as a normal phenomenon.

Bhengu (1995e:1) discusses different approaches on how men and women can handle marriage. She firstly provides a general view without indicating whether it is a male's or a female's perspective. The second view is that of a woman and the third that of a man. Bhengu (1995e:1) points out that women should be respected and at the same time shows that men should look at themselves and adjust to current economic trends, which impact on marriages. If men and women can treat each other with respect, then there will be happy marriages which will give children a happy life in families (Ibid).

Don't let kids lose their identity

Bhengu (1994f:16) observes in the opinion piece the manner in which black children who attend former 'Model C' schools imbibe white culture through the English language.

Bhengu (1994f:16) shows that the children do not have a choice because they imitate their white teachers who speak 'nasal English' and can therefore not be expected to speak English like black people. Bhengu (1994f:16) shows that parents also encourage the situation because they speak to their children in English at home. This situation causes children to lose their culture as they cannot use their own African languages at home. The last part of this article shows that countries like America were introducing multicultural education in order to prepare their students for the global world. The irony is that schools in South Africa were embracing mono-lingualism with English as a *lingua franca*. At the end these children are not prepared to live in a multicultural society as they have been denied the opportunity to learn under such an environment.

Our children should not lose part of themselves

This article addresses the same subject raised in the previous one namely, the fact that parents are concerned that their children are losing their identity because of the education they are receiving from former white schools (also known as model C schools) (Bhengu, 1996g:12).

Bhengu (1996g: 12) shows that since writing about the subject, she had received a number of phone calls from parents who continued to raise this concern asking if there

were any solutions that Bhengu as a black parent could offer. Bhengu (1996g: 12) points out those parents need to come together and discuss the issue instead of showing feelings of desperation. According to Bhengu (1996g: 12) parents need to look at issues in a balanced way and see what is the best solution especially when parents claim that they decided to take their children to the schools because there is discipline and work ethic as opposed to township schools which only children of 'poor black people' attend because they do not have an alternative.

The above opinion pieces express the views that Ruth Bhengu had about the South African black community from 1994 to 1999 as a black woman journalist. Her perspective is crucial as it shows the female dimension of the news angle and opinion.

6. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed news reports and opinion pieces of five selected black women journalists who worked at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The discussion does not delve into a deeper analysis as this forms part of Chapter 6. Both the news reports and opinion pieces have been classified under three themes namely: *Power within the ANC, Women's rights and women abuse and Children's rights and child abuse*. The black women journalists whose articles have been selected are Pamela Dube, Ruth Bhengu, Charity Bhengu, Pearl Rantsekeng and Pearl Majola.

The news reports are twenty three and the opinion pieces are seven. The total number of the selected news reports and opinion pieces is thirty. Only one black woman journalist namely Ruth Bhengu had a column during the period under study. The selected opinion pieces from *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat* make a total of seven which are analysed separately. The opinion pieces also deal with *Power within the ANC, Women's rights and women abuse and Children's rights and child abuse*. The news reports and the opinion pieces show how the black women journalists viewed current issues (in the black component of the African society at that time) pertaining to Women's rights and women abuse, Children's rights and child abuse as well as the power struggles within the ANC as a political party/ organisation and the government. The next Chapter presents the data

analysis. The analysis begins with seven opinion pieces from *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat* column.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis

6. Introduction

This study has discussed the political contribution made by black women journalists at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The investigation of the political contribution and role of black women journalists is done within the context of a post-apartheid South Africa (1994 to 1999). The central question that the study seeks to answer is: *What political role did black women journalists at the Sowetan play in post-apartheid South Africa from 1994 to 1999?* In this chapter, the researcher analyses the research findings employing African feminism as a theoretical framework. The researcher then draws on the core values of African feminism upon which this analysis is based.

6.1. Theoretical framework: African feminism

The theoretical framework used in the study is African feminism. The core values in African feminism according to Nnaekema (2005:32) are:

- promoting women as leaders in society's structures such as family, health, queenship and the religious sector. This includes voicing out views and opinions, rebuking and condoning good or bad behavior (in society) and in those structures with boldness and courage.
- Accommodates maternal and paternal politics and motherhood, where every adult woman becomes a mother to every child and somebody's child becomes your child. This refers to both men and women.
- sees and addresses issues as they are relevant to their society and environment, issues are addressed and not swept under the carpet.
- invites men as partners in problem-solving with women equally leading in such issues. In other words, African feminism does not view men as enemies but men are viewed as a crucial component of society that forms part of solution to society's problems. Men are parents/fathers and brothers who protect all children in society.

- matters are addressed before they create a crisis hence being proactive is encouraged as opposed to being reactive.
- uses gender-neutral expressions in many African languages (for example, Yoruba, Igbo, Shona, Sepedi and Tshivenda), especially in names and titles.

African feminism as a theoretical framework is used to analyse the political contribution black women journalists at the *Sowetan* played and how the *Sowetan* as a black newspaper either promoted or undermined this contribution. The analysis will begin with Ruth Bhengu's opinion pieces because unlike news reports, opinion pieces disclose the mind of a journalist and in this regard they provide a bird's eye view of how a black woman journalist viewed politics, social life and transition in the black South African society post-1994. It is on that basis that the researcher decided to analyse the opinion pieces first.

6. 2. Opinion pieces from *Ruth Bhengu's Heart Beat*

During the period under study (1994 to 1999), Ruth Bhengu was the only black woman journalist who was a columnist. The analysis follows a similar thematic pattern of the news reports namely, *Power within the ANC*, *Women's rights and women abuse* and *Children's rights and child abuse*. The opinion pieces are seven in number.

Ruth Bhengu's column comments on a number of issues affecting lives of black people in South Africa after 1994. The column is significant in the sense that it provided an opportunity for a perspective of a black woman to occupy space in a contested terrain of ideas. At the time, public discourse was largely influenced by a male viewpoint. According to African feminism, women assert themselves by occupying influential leadership positions in society. They achieve this in many ways. One of which is through voicing their opinions on platforms provided by society. By giving Bhengu a platform to air her views, the *Sowetan* agrees with what is promoted in African feminism, that is, giving a platform to women to air their views.

The role Bhengu played by voicing crucial issues particularly in her column was noted by one male reader of the *Sowetan* who wrote to the editor thus: "*In Ruth Bhengu you have*

one of the most prolific columnists. She simply ranks among the best. Being the chauvinist that I am I needed a lot of courage to admit this" (Mashumi, 1995:10). This is evidence that her column was influential to both female and male readers. It brought about a woman's perspective which was needed to chart the way forward regarding society's problems (most of which had been addressed through views of males or male journalists).

6. 2.1. Power within the ANC

Shouldn't Dr Zuma take 'sick leave' now? Is an opinion piece in which Bhengu (1996a: 11) highlights the corruption in the ANC-led government and also to what extent politicians would go to protect one another. When the former Minister of health Dr Nkosazana Zuma messed up by channeling tax payers' money into the *Sarafina 2* AIDS play, her colleagues the then President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki and former Minister Kader Asmal supported her instead of calling her to order publicly. The health department at that time had a limited budget set aside to fight the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Dr Nkosazana Zuma concluded a contract with Mbongeni Ngema to come up with the infamous AIDS play. This she did without consulting stakeholders in the health sector. A clear indication of outright corruption and what could be termed 'tenderpreneurship', which has since been associated with the ANC-led government (Bhengu, 1996a:11)."

The opinion piece reflects an approach of African feminism. This approach agitates for issues to be addressed on the basis of their relevance and need irrespective of the personalities involved. African feminism pursues issues irrespective of whether women are involved. The status of the subject of investigation is not considered an issue at all. As a columnist Bhengu (1996a:11) follows this approach regardless of who she writes about. Because African feminism is premised on transparency, Bhengu is able to pursue issues involving even politicians like Dr Nkosazana Zuma without fear or favour. In her opinion pieces Bhengu consistently addresses crucial issues as and when they arise.

6.2.2. Women's rights and women abuse

In *Payment of ilobolo a sensitive issue*, Bhengu (1995b:12) shows an interesting aspect of African culture that has been affected by western practices. *Ilobolo* is an African practice and is meant to be a token of appreciation to the family of the woman getting married.

However, due to westernisation and the love of material things, *ilobolo* has become commercialised. Bhengu's (1995b:12) concern is that the commercialisation could have negative rippling effects on the marriage of young people, particularly women. The high price of *ilobolo* that parents charge for their daughters make these women susceptible to abuse by their husbands. Ironically in the olden days *ilobolo* was just a small token of appreciation. Marriages were then more respected and the abuse of the wife was a crime to the whole family of the husband and the family would ensure that they protect the wife because she was now their daughter. In a subtle manner Bhengu (1995b:12) sends a strong warning to African families to guard against greed when asking for *ilobolo*.

This opinion piece raises the level of materialism that has crept into the black African society everywhere. This materialism however, robs the black society of its values like getting married not for material gain but for genuine reasons. Bhengu (1995b:12) is concerned that this practice portrays African women as property or commodities for sale. It is perceptions like these that lead to marital abuse in African society.

One area of vulnerability women face is after the loss of their husbands and/or partners as indicated in *Widow's forum pulls hearts strings*. Bhengu (1995c:16) observes that widows tend to be vulnerable to their own family members who are after their property and assets. The manner in which *ilobolo* is handled in the black South African society and the subsequent treatment of widows is raised (by Ruth Bhengu) as a matter of concern in society. Ruth Bhengu raises this as a woman who feels that the two issues, namely *ilobolo* practice and challenges the widow faces from her in-laws and other family members regarding her deceased husband's assets and property make women vulnerable. From an African feminism perspective, problems need to be raised and addressed as and when they arise and a solution should be sought. The problem of

materialism which keeps encroaching valuable practices of African culture, has become a reality. In the opinion piece under discussion, Bhengu (1995b:12) observes that the problem of materialism affects not only women, but the entire black society. The opinion piece, *Widow's forum pulls hearts strings*, suggests that the forum upon which it is based, discussed issues such as the treatment of women after the death of the spouse. Such discussions were fruitful, informative and educative. In this respect Bhengu (1995c:16) notes that women need to be educated about their rights so as not to be exploited. It is generally a good thing for women to organise such educational talks instead of mourning about abuse by their male partners/husbands.

In *Sisters do it themselves* Bhengu (1997d: 12) talks about a meeting organised by women held on women's day. At this meeting matters affecting black women were discussed. However, Bhengu (1997d: 12) notes that a few men who were willing to accompany their partners also attended the meeting (Bhengu, 1997d: 12). Bhengu (1997d: 12) observes that in meetings such as this one, different issues pertaining to black women need to be addressed including the fact that not all women are born to be married and give birth, others simply do not subscribe to such roles and society should not therefore ostracise them. Bhengu (1997d: 12) notes that meetings which address women's issues like the one mentioned in the opinion piece tend to over-glorify women, whereas there are women who are drug dealers and murderers in society. However, Bhengu (1997d: 12) appreciates the fact that black women are organising meetings and gatherings in order to deal with matters and challenges affecting women in society. This means black women are in charge of their own lives and determining how society should treat them.

The practice of preparing all women in society for motherhood and marriage only is foreign in the African society. African feminism maintains that once you are a woman you are a mother to every child, you do not get trained for it per se. It is automatic and in your blood as an African woman. In the same way, men are fathers to all children. Bhengu (1997d: 12) criticises the issue where all women are prepared to be married and become mothers to their own children only. In the African society there are female chiefs

and traditional healers who do not necessarily get married to a man in order to give birth to their own children (Sudarkasa, 2005:25). These women however, are still mothers to the nation and children just by virtue of their positions and gender. In this regard Bhengu's (1997d: 12) views are in line with African feminism which indicates that every child is your child. However, the view that there are women who are thugs and who do not necessarily display maternal traits is not referred to in African feminism. This is one of the major limitations of African feminism.

6.2.3. Children's rights and child abuse

Black families in trouble, is an opinion piece that discusses the problem of divorce in black African families (Bhengu, 1995e:1). Bhengu (1995e:1) indicates that the high rate of divorce has come to be associated with black people and she shows that the black community needs to address this as a matter of urgency. Should divorce not be addressed soon, Bhengu (1995e:1) notes that marriage will be an institution that will be negatively affected among black people. Eventually the well-being of black families will suffer and the effects thereof will impact generations to come. The point Bhengu (1995e:1) raises is that both black men and women need to look at themselves and adjust to the current socio-economic trends.

One interesting opinion piece that Ruth Bhengu wrote is entitled *Don't let kids lose their identity*. In this opinion piece Bhengu (1994f:16) shows how African parents who send their children to former 'Model C' schools are getting concerned that their children cannot speak African languages but rather imbibe white culture. This eventually leads to these kids becoming 'white people in a black skin'. The end result is that these children lose their cultural identity and become 'social misfits' in black society.

Bhengu (1994f:16) shows that parents are mainly responsible for such situations. For example, when such children come home, their parents are the first ones to speak to them in English. That means these children cannot learn African languages anywhere because at school African languages are not taught and at home these languages are not spoken either.

Bhengu (1994f:16) points out that countries like America have resorted to multicultural education in order to prepare American children for the global world. It therefore becomes ironic for black South African parents to send their children to monolingual schools where English is used as a *lingua franca*. These parents could instead be encouraging their children to learn the official languages of this country and become multilingual speakers. It should be noted that Bhengu (1994f:16) observes that the problem lies with parents and not necessarily with the children. Black parents are the ones who take children to monolingual English medium schools. Instead of lamenting their children's inability to converse in African languages, black parents should conduct introspection. They need to identify where they went wrong as parents and stop finding fault with their children.

Bhengu (1996g: 12) raises a related matter to the one in the above opinion piece *Don't let kids lose their identity* and in another opinion piece entitled *Our children should not lose part of themselves*. While these opinion pieces refer to the loss of a black African identity by black children who attend former 'Model C' schools, Bhengu (1996g: 12) also makes the point that since she started writing about the subject she received many phone calls from desperate black parents who indicated that they were losing their children to white culture. Bhengu (1996g: 12) suggests that parents need to look at two issues namely, the work ethic in white schools accompanied by the English language *vis-à-vis* township schools where African languages are used, and where there is no culture of learning. Bhengu (1996g: 12) is of the view that township schools, where African languages are used need to be rescued by the learned black middle class parents. Such a rescue mission needs a plan to ensure that township schools are functional and run efficiently. What this means is that black people are supposed to take responsibility for their destiny.

So far two issues stand out from Bhengu's three opinion pieces. These are motherhood and leadership. From an African feminist perspective, every child is your child and in the three opinion pieces *Black families in trouble*; *Don't let kids lose their identity* and *Our children should not lose part of themselves* Bhengu writes not only as a journalist but also

as a mother. In *Black families in trouble* Bhengu shows that parents do not play their role of being role models to their children. In the other two opinion pieces, Bhengu alludes to the leadership role black parents need to play in their children's education. In this respect she criticises black parents for taking their children to schools where no African languages are taught. The point she is making is that through their preference for English schools, black parents weaken the influence of African culture and languages in their children's education. Her opinion pieces had the desired effect in that after their publication she received phone calls from black parents asking for a solution to their dilemma regarding the education of their children.

Ruth Bhengu's opinion pieces are in many ways compatible with views of African feminism regarding the role of women in society and by extension in careers such as journalism. As a black woman journalist she continues to raise burning and crucial matters in society as a way of opening debates and leading in such debates. In doing that Bhengu seeks for solutions in those matters and she involves black parents to suggest such solutions on their own. The analysis in the next section is of news reports of the other four selected black women journalists.

6.3. News Reports

What follows is an analysis of political news reports at the *Sowetan*. When discussing political news reports, it is important to distinguish between hard and soft news. The former deals directly with governance and politicians while the latter deals mainly with general issues. The concept of 'political news reports' is used by the researcher to refer to hard news, which was also regarded as 'pure politics'. The difference between hard news or 'pure politics' and soft news extended to the titles of all the black journalists at the *Sowetan*. Reporters were either reporting as general reporters or political writers.

At times, it appears as if there was a thin line between 'soft' and 'hard news'. One also gets the impression that 'hard news' was considered 'hard' based on how government would respond to the political debates in the media about issues. For example, HIV and AIDS particularly became a political matter when former President Mbeki started

political debates around whether HIV causes AIDS and it became a bone of contention between government and the press in general (Sparks, 2003:85). It is for this reason that just after 1994, HIV and AIDS was treated as a health topic in the media including the *Sowetan* hence it was reported by women under health matters. The interesting part is that at the *Sowetan* political matters were mainly reported by men journalists except for a few women journalists who made it into politics such as Pamela Dube. As a result HIV and AIDS matters were mainly reported by women between 1994 and 1999. Ironically, when women reported on topics like HIV and AIDS they did groundwork for male journalists because later on when such topics were considered as politics, then male journalists would take over from them.

As far as HIV and AIDS were concerned, the *Sowetan's* stance was more reactive than proactive. This is in direct contradiction with what African feminism as a theoretical framework stands for. African feminism espouses proactivity as opposed to reactivity. This then meant black women journalists who reported on HIV and AIDS at the *Sowetan* were at odds with one of the tenets of African feminism. Due to the fact that African feminism stresses proactivity and not reactivity, the *Sowetan* has in this regard contradicted this theory in that they would wait to see the manner in which an issue would take and then reacted accordingly. Once it became a political topic they would then assign it to journalists in terms of being male or female in most instances. In the analysis that follows a thematic approach is adopted and modelled along the three themes; namely *Power within the ANC*; *Women's rights and women abuse* and *Children's rights and child abuse*.

6.3.1. Power within the ANC

While still in prison former President Nelson Mandela wrote a letter to former President PW Botha in July 1989 indicating that the political turmoil in South Africa (during the apartheid era) could be resolved through negotiations between liberation parties and the former National Party-led government (Dube, 1997a:7). The fact that Dube (1997a:7) points out that Mandela had no mandate from his organisation - the ANC echoes the sentiments that were later raised by some members of the ANC that Mandela was a sell-

out (Lodge,2002:14). The matter led to the appointment of the former President Thabo Mbeki by the ANC although the former President Nelson Mandela had wanted Cyril Ramaphosa for presidency (Ibid). This matter continued to have a rippling effect when former President Thabo Mbeki was recalled in favour of the current President Jacob Zuma. As a result the continued tensions and fights within the ANC have always been displayed in many forms.

In her article, Dube (1997a:7) reports on what happened prior to Mandela's release from jail. As a black woman journalist who reported just when the democratically elected ANC-led government was four years old, she shows bravery and courage when she mentions that Mandela 'did not get a mandate from the ANC when he wrote the letter'. News reporting which included revealing controversial issues of the newly elected ANC-led government at that time was a great risk in that as a black journalist you were seen to be unpatriotic (Tsedu, 2000:3). However, bravery and courage are core components of African feminism, particularly in cases where women have to voice controversial issues caused by political figures (both men and women). In what could be described as post-1994 journalism speak, Tsedu (2000:3) describes Dube's courage as "maintaining high standards set by the predecessors who went to prison." In African feminism this is referred to as "courage" and "boldness" and triumph of African women "amidst obstacles without underestimating the gravity of the impediments or failing to advocate vigorously for their removal" (Nnaekema, 2005: 32). This quality remains outstanding in most of Pamela Dube's news reports. The discussion that follows illustrates this point more clearly.

Former President Nelson Mandela became the first black president of South Africa until 1999 when he stepped down peacefully. The news report, *Ginwala joins the ANC exodus* (Dube, 1998b:2) illustrates the effects of Mandela's announcement of his resignation as President of the Republic of South Africa in 1999. Many prominent ANC Members of Parliament (MPs) and cabinet ministers indicated their intentions to step down once Mandela resigned as State President. One such prominent figure was Frene Ginwala. Because of the power Ginwala had in government, she was not liked by all members of

the ANC caucus. In this news report, Dube (1998b:2) speculates that one of the reasons for Ginwala's reluctance to make herself available for possible nomination to serve in the cabinet of incoming President Thabo Mbeki was this hostility from members of the ANC caucus. However, Dube (1998b:2) does not indicate clearly as to whether the opposition faced by Ginwala was partly due to the fact that she was a woman or simply a powerful politician within the ANC. This news report together with the one discussed below, highlight tensions, divisions and conflicts of interest that continued to characterise the ANC then. What is striking about all this power struggle within the ANC is how these tensions continued through former President Thabo Mbeki's presidency to the current presidency of Jacob Zuma.

In *The changing fortunes of the powerful* Dube (1998c:19) writes about what a woman fortune-teller called Anne Barkhuizen predicted about what was going to happen to South Africa's politics after Mandela stepped down as president. There were many fears and uncertainties of what would actually happen when the next president took over from Mandela. At that time political analysts based their analyses on the conflicts and picture of what was happening within the ANC. One of the conflicts was the fact that there was a clique in the ANC which did not like Cyril Ramaphosa; who was seen as being groomed for presidency by President Mandela (Spitz & Chaskalson, 200:20). All this 'grooming' of Cyril Ramaphosa was happening while Thabo Mbeki was deputy president of the Republic of South Africa.

Barkhuizen's predictions were that there was going to be political chaos and collapse when Mandela resigned (Dube, 1998c:19). Despite speculations and rumours about the possibility of Cyril Ramaphosa ascending to the presidency of the ANC and that of the country, Barkhuizen predicted that Thabo Mbeki was the one who was going to ascend to power. She however indicated that Thabo Mbeki's presidency will be short-lived due to the in-fighting in the ANC. Barkhuizen also predicted that a woman president with a name starting with an "F" was going to ascend to power. The interesting part of this report was that the fortune teller was a woman who also predicted that a woman president was going to get into power. It is a well-known fact that the Mandela and Mbeki

presidencies were characterised by giving prominence to women leadership. Pamela Dube reports more often about this aspect of the two presidencies.

Though not at the time that was predicted, some of the predictions in Pamela Dube's report eventually came true. The significant one being the recall of former President Thabo Mbeki by the ANC. Other predictions did not happen in the manner in which Barkhuizen had predicted. The immediate death of former President Mandela for example, did not happen. It is also a fact that the political chaos Barkhuizen predicted in this report was to an extent true. This claim is confirmed by the political divisions and camps within the ANC leading to the ANC Polokwane national electing conference in 2008. At this conference the division between the Mbeki and Zuma camps was quite evident (Phala, 2009).

Tensions and fights within the ANC and its formations continued way beyond the Polokwane conference. One such tension is illustrated in Dube's report, *Thandi Modise was not threatened*. In this report Dube (1997d: 2) particularly shows how canvassing for the position of president of the ANC Women's League was shrouded in controversy. Some candidates contesting for this position claimed that they were intimidated. One of them was Thandi Modise who claimed that she received death threats. According to Dube (1997d: 2), Modise claimed to have received death threats from Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's friend and ally Sally Peterson. Madikizela-Mandela was one of the candidates contesting for the presidency of the ANC Women's League. Peterson denied having threatened Modise and in turn accused Modise of lying. The matter was so serious such that it was referred to the ANC's National Working Committee for investigation. Although this report shows tensions in the ANC Women's League, tensions have been simmering in almost all formations of the ANC and in structures of the mother body.

Furthermore, a well-known scandal broke out when former President Thabo Mbeki and former ANC Women's League President Winnie Madikizela-Mandela had an exchange at the ANC's 50th election congress in Mafikeng (Dube, 1997e:1). The news report *Winnie bows out of race* shows how a group in the ANC was against the election of

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela into the position of deputy president of the ANC. Although some people nominated Madikizela-Mandela, she declined the nomination after receiving advice from some of ANC structures. The exchange and the decline of the nomination showed that all was not well in the ANC. Jacob Zuma was subsequently elected deputy president of the party at the Mafikeng conference.

Fights and tensions within the ANC have unfortunately affected the running of government because the ANC is the ruling party with a sizeable majority. Since 1994 when the ANC ascended to power, there has been a gradual distinction between party and state. Under the current political climate, this tendency of a thin line between party and state is understandable though not excusable. The ANC emerged as the favourite political party of the electorate for three successive national elections. It also controls eight of the nine provincial legislatures in the country. Though the ANC has internal strife, the electorate continues to show confidence in the party by retaining its power since 1994 to date. It can therefore be argued that so far internal conflicts have not significantly eroded the ANC's power base. This might be the reason that the ANC consolidates power by allowing the lines to be blurred between state and party.

In the next report *Carolus keen to take up new post* Dube (1997f:6) shows how the ANC-led government implemented its Affirmative action policy by specifically empowering women and black people in general. In the report Dube (1997f:6) praises the ANC-led government for giving a powerful position to a woman hence it is said to be "ground-breaking" - meaning it was unusual for women to acquire such positions in the past. This view is what African feminism strongly promotes as a way of accommodating and acknowledging the powerful role of women in society.

One of the negative defining features of the ANC- led government is corruption of public representatives and civil servants. Reporting on corruption by the ANC- led government prompted politicians like former President Thabo Mbeki to accuse the media of being unpatriotic (Tsedu, 2000:2). In addition, Sparks (2003:85) argues that the Thabo Mbeki government in particular accused the press of going beyond 'watchdogism and regarding

themselves as being in opposition to the government'. There have been constant tensions between South African black journalists (male and female) at the *Sowetan* (and all other media) when they reported on corruptive tendencies of the democratically elected ANC-led government (Tsedu, 2000:2).

The news reports *Duarte's case to be handled internally* and *Duarte's rise and fall* show how the former MEC of Safety and Security in Gauteng Jessie Duarte was accused of practicing corruption (Dube, 1998g:2). The Moerane Commission was set up to investigate allegations against Duarte of not following appropriate channels in securing a state vehicle after hours and taking a partner (friend) on an official trip to Portugal. In *Duarte's rise and fall*, Dube (1998h: 10) describes the opposition that Duarte was faced with as an MEC both at work and in the ANC. While there were allegations levelled against her, Dube (1998h:10) shows that whatever the outcomes were going to be, Duarte might have fallen out of favour with certain "comrades" who had leverage within the ANC and by extension in government. Power and influence in the ANC extends to government because under ANC rule there appears to be a thin line between state and party. According to Dube (1998h: 10) one of the challenges Duarte faced was that she was a woman who faced the wrath of male chauvinists who could not take it when a woman came to lead a traditionally male dominated department. From an African feminist perspective, problems like chauvinism cannot be dealt with by women fighting against men. Such problems could be dealt with effectively when men are invited to become part of the solution to these problems. Dube's (1998h: 10) news report raises this point sharply and goes on to argue that Jessie Duarte's fight can only be won when there is an intervention from the ANC. The ANC intervention will mean everyone (both men and women) in the organisation form part of the resolution to the problem.

The following news reports: *Ginwala joins the ANC exodus*; *Thandi Modise was not threatened*; *Winnie bows out of race*; *Duarte's case to be handled internally* and *Duarte's rise and fall* highlight tensions and fights as well as corruption that occurred within the ANC then. In these news reports Pamela Dube shows how the fights replicated themselves even among women in the ANC Women's League. As a journalist Pamela

Dube exposes the negative contribution made by women – she argues that at times women can resort to desperate means (Dube, 1997d:2). They are capable of being killers, murderers and can be ruthless at times. Pamela Dube does not allow her gender to interfere with her objectivity as a political journalist. This is a fair observation to make since there has been a cry by feminists researchers that women’s representation in the mass media tends to be stereotyped on the basis that women are not given a platform to represent themselves (Sesanti, 2009:210). African feminism’s view is that women must be encouraged and given platform to air their views and feelings. The challenge though is which views do women journalists portray about fellow women? Do they provide only the positive or both the negative and positive sides? The point that requires action is that providing one side of the story in news reporting further propagates stereotypes about gender bias, whereas presenting both sides of the story gives credibility to women journalists and makes a mockery of the outcry of women’s misrepresentation in the media.

The period between 1994 and 1999 is sometimes referred to as the Black Economic Empowerment period in the media industry (Mabote, 1996:320). This was the period when the *Sowetan* newspaper was sold to the New African Investments Limited (NAIL) - a Black Economic Empowerment company which was owned by ANC members like Cyril Ramaphosa and the late Dr Nthato Motlana (a personal physician of Nelson Mandela). Mabote (1996:323) observes that there were ideological clashes between the new owners of the *Sowetan* newspaper and its staff (journalists). Most of these journalists were Pan Africanist and Black Consciousness adherents. Ideological clashes between the new owners and the journalists meant that the journalists’ reports which were not favourable to the ANC government would be questioned by the ANC-inclined owners. Nelson Mandela who at that time was president of the country also questioned some of the political reports of the *Sowetan* newspaper (Ibid). The implication of all this was that it was risky for a black journalist to be critical of the ANC government (Mabote, 1996:323).

6. 3.2. Women's rights and women abuse

6.3.2.1. *Women's rights in health*

The issue of women representivity continued to be discussed in many forums and organisations (e.g. political, social and economic) in South Africa as indicated in *Women meet to formulate policy* (Majola, 1994a:15). The news report is about a conference held to discuss issues pertaining to women's health, which perpetuate stereotypes and discriminatory practices against women. Health issues such as HIV and AIDS, and abortion as well as violence against women and the coverage of women by the media were the main points of discussion. Women felt that wherever policy is formulated (including in health) they should be part of such discussions so that policies that emerge do not oppress women.

In *Women's rights are threatened* Majola (1994b:21) discusses another controversial matter regarding the choice women have to make namely, abortion. Majola (1994b:21) shows how some stakeholders in society including political parties such as the erstwhile National Party were opposed to women opting for abortions. She also shows how views like these continue to oppress women. It was on the basis of many gatherings and discussions that eventually abortion was legalised despite the fact that some stakeholders (such as the Religious groups) in society opposed it.

The two news reports discussed above touch on the problem of sidelining women on issues affecting them in society, particularly women abuse. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that all people are equal before the law (South African Constitution, 1996:7). Section 187 of Chapter 9 of the constitution discourages any discrimination against gender issues. This means the political climate of the country was such that women should be protected, empowered and included as stakeholders of society in dealing with all issues. Before 1994, black women were discriminated against through race and gender. This made the government to set up a Commission on Gender Equality which monitors the progress that government departments are making in addressing the empowerment of women and related matters (Kaunda, 2004:34). While the black women journalists at the *Sowetan* reported against the abuse of women and their empowerment,

the main subject that came up was the resistance against the empowerment of women from a traditionally male-dominated society particularly post-1994.

However, equality between men and women is nothing new in African society. In African feminism, neither women nor men have ever been undermined in providing solutions to problems society faces. This point is reiterated by Nnaekema (2005:32) in that, “African feminism resists the exclusion of men from women’s issues, on the contrary, it invites men as partners in problem solving and social change.” Both men and women have always been part of the solution to societal problems. However, it is true that in South Africa during the apartheid era black women in particular have been undermined by their society. In reporting about the rights of women in health matters, Pearl Majola was reacting to the political climate of the country then, which was not necessarily driven by what theories like African feminism stand for. African feminism argues in favour of the protection of the rights of women and Pearl Majola’s news reports above represent values that African feminism stands for. African feminism advocates for the inclusion of women in decision making as opposed to men making decisions on their behalf.

6.3.2.2. Women’s rights and political representivity

Women look to equal say in polls was written immediately after the first democratic elections when there was still under-representivity of women in parliament (Bhengu, 1998a: 2). According to the report, there were only 10% of women in decision making positions like parliament and that did not reflect the country’s demographics of more women than men in society. At a symposium held in Johannesburg to discuss the matter, a plan of action was made and a task team was elected to ensure that the representivity of women became 50/50.

In addition the report shows the involvement of both men and women in ensuring that the empowerment of women became a reality. Another report which discusses the empowerment of women is entitled, *Keeping parliament friendly*. A conference held in October 1998 in Cape Town was meant to encourage political organisations to

accommodate women in their candidates lists for the second national democratic election to be held in 1999 (Dube, 1998i:9).

In discussing the representivity of women in parliament the issue of motherhood had to be considered (Dube, 1998i:9). Accommodating motherhood particularly to women parliamentarians was discussed. At the conference it was agreed that parliamentary sessions needed to accommodate nursing mothers and women who have children who come from schools in the afternoons, otherwise women parliamentarians who are single mothers were going to have a difficult time to embrace both roles.

The two news reports *Women look to equal say in polls* and *Keeping parliament friendly* highlight the transformation that was taking place through the empowerment of women in the political sphere post-1994. The constitution of South Africa advocates equal rights for all irrespective of their gender, religion, colour or creed (South African Constitution, 1996:7).

One of the positive spin offs of the conference was that institutions like parliament and political parties were audited and compelled to have equal representivity of 50/50 between men and women including in the candidates national elections lists (Dube, 1998i:9). The interesting part is that Dube (1998i:9) raises the point of motherhood and the fact that it was raised as a crucial matter in accommodating women as parliamentarians. The fact that women parliamentarians who are also single mothers might have a difficulty in embracing both motherhood and being parliamentarians. These reports do not only show equal representivity between men and women, but also show that there is no way in which women can be separated from motherhood as African feminism advocates. The separation of the two roles makes the role of women unfulfilled in their careers and in society according to the theory.

6.3.2.3. *Women's rights in literacy and media*

Encouraging women to use the mighty pen is a report about one of the many projects called the Africa Writing Project (Rantsekeng, 1998a:21). The project encouraged African women in particular to write so that they could express their anger, experiences and views about matters affecting them.

This report touches on a sensitive topic regarding the misrepresentation of women in the media. In modern times, the news report shows that women cannot only articulate their minds verbally but through writing as well. The male-domination of the mass media made women to believe that they could not articulate their minds through writing. The launching of the Africa Writing Project was thus a step meant to empower women in the media. It was launched by stake-holders such as non-governmental organisations in South Africa's post-apartheid society. Its aim was to make African women stop mourning and start implementing solutions as African feminism advocates (Rantsekeng, 1998a:21).

6.3.2.4. *The fight against women abuse in relationships*

The next report entitled, *A safe place for women* by Majola (1994c:14) discusses interviews she had when she visited a place of safety for abused women. She discusses experiences of two women namely, Maria and Bonggi who were in abusive relationships until they had to quit. The place of safety is described as a place set by People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) where women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse stay for protection.

The last report under this section *Women killed in love tragic triangle* shows the cruel manner in which a man killed his girlfriend, her cousin and aunt (Bhengu, 1997b:2). This happened after the girlfriend Sonto found out that the unnamed man had lied to her by saying he was not married when in actual fact he had a wife where he came from. When she enquired about the matter, he took out a gun and fired at the three women who were present during the enquiry.

The abuse of women is a broad issue which includes among other things domestic violence, the lack of promotions and empowerment of women in the work place and in political structures (such as parliament and government sector) as well as the misrepresentation of women in the media (Rasool, Vermaak, Pharaoh, Louw and Stavrou, 2002:168).

Violence against women was greatly debated in South Africa and it continues to be a hotly debated subject in many forums, projects and conferences. Organisations such as POWA, Family Association of South Africa (FAMSA) and many more started mushrooming everywhere in the country as a way of combating the problem (Rasool *et al*, 2002:168).

While it is true that the rate of abuse is quite high in South Africa as Rasool *et al* (2002:168) point out, Sesanti (2009:213) shows that the original space of an African woman has always been challenged by some African men. In many African societies women have always occupied prominent roles, but there were also many cases where women were downgraded to lower positions – that is where patriarchy came in. In the same manner the abuse of women in African society came in due to the fact that after years of colonial rule, Africans became alienated from their culture and in-between African culture became bastardised (Sesanti, 2009:221).

In reporting about the abuse of women, the two women journalists (Majola, 1994c:14) and (Bhengu, 1997b:2) strongly condemn the practice. News reports like these do not only expose women abuse but make the public aware of the gravity and seriousness of the problem. This is again in line with views of African feminism in that women journalists are not “sitting and folding their arms” but show resistance to practices that perpetuate male domination in the name of culture, such as the killing of a spouse or girlfriend, etc. In African feminism, women are regarded as mothers of the nation. Therefore killing or abusing a mother is totally unacceptable. These reports on women abuse are meant to condemn and expose the problem of women abuse. The discussion of

news reports in the section that follows shows that the abuse of women has a ripple effect on children. It affects children psychologically, emotionally and socially.

6. 4. Children's rights and child abuse

Post-1994, the rights of children became another issue under the spotlight. It was realised that male domination in society was accompanied by the abuse of power through violating the rights of both women and children (Marshall & Herman, 2000:39). The empowerment of women and representivity in the political sphere meant that the problems of children as in their rights and abuse would be addressed. Children were abused physically (beating, child labour, not sending them to school), sexually (engaging them in sexual activities) and all related activities indicated below (Ibid).

6. 4.1. Rape, incest and neglect

South Africa's abuse of children range from rape, incest, child prostitution by and through parents, child trafficking, physical neglect and all other forms of abuse (Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004:23). In dealing with the problem of child abuse in particular, Marshall and Herman (1998:8) observe that stakeholders like the judicial system of South Africa, religious institutions and police stations are not properly equipped to deal with the problem. In the news report *Child Abuse Law Blamed* Bhengu (1994c:12) shows how children's organisations and individuals felt about child abuse law during 1994. The feeling was that there was no justice for rape victims. In many cases suspects (who are mostly men) were given bail and left to intimidate the victims whom they had raped before. There is a whole list of issues on why organisations and individuals during that time felt that the law was too lenient on perpetrators of child abuse. For example, if the victim was a baby who could not testify in court, then the perpetrator would be granted bail and come back to rape the baby even more. The perpetrator usually did this without any sense of remorse or shame. What is worse is that members of the community seemed helpless since the perpetrator had been released through bail. The granting of bail to an alleged child rapist sends the message that children are no longer safe in that community.

The report *Child Abuse Law Blamed* in particular gives a general view about how South Africans and children's organisations and one unnamed community organisation from Dobsonville indicated that child abuse law was too lenient for perpetrators (Bhengu, 1994c:12). One view that many South Africans indicated was that magistrates and prosecutors who dealt with cases of child abuse should be women (Ibid). Again the fact that women abuse and child abuse are two sides of the same coin is reiterated in that this view shows that women will have empathy as mothers and bearers of children to victims of abuse. This view however, shows a gender bias because if women are the only ones who persecute and deal with child abuse cases, then men might feel sidelined and not as part of the solution. This view therefore is contradictory to what African feminism upholds – men and women as part of the solution to society's problems. While it might be helpful to have women as prosecutors and dealing with child abuse cases, men should also be given a platform to learn to be fathers to every child – a view promoted by African feminism.

In *Girl missing from sanatorium*, the writer Bhengu (1995d: 5) brings out two important issues namely, the negligence of patients in public institutions such as hospitals and sanatoriums; and the abuse of children at these institutions by health professionals, caregivers and workers. The unnamed girl mentioned in the news report, who is also mentally disturbed, went missing probably as a result of lack of proper monitoring and adequate patient security at the sanatorium. A closer reading of the report reveals that the staff might have done something amiss. It could be anything from child trafficking and related issues since there is no clear indication of how the child went missing. It is expected that the staff at the sanatorium should look after patients such as the missing girl and also protect them but evidence seems to suggest that they did not do so. This is a clear case of negligence which is also part of child abuse. The worst part is that the abuse is done by people who are in authority who are supposed to know better about the implications of negligence to children who are mentally disturbed. This news report further confirms that South Africa is a country where child abuse has become prevalent in families, institutions and society in general.

Similarly, the rape of children by people close to them (relatives and friends) is shown in the news reports discussed below. In *Teacher accused of rape*, a 10 year old mentally disturbed girl who is also dumb was raped and impregnated by her teacher (Bhengu, 1998e:2). While going through the ordeal of indicating what had happened to her (needless to mention it took a considerable long time), the teacher in the meantime resigned from the school and disappeared. He could not be found anywhere. The mother of the girl pointed out that the girl had been raped before by both the driver of the taxi she used to go to school with and her step-brother. With this story Bhengu (1998e:2) reiterates the point that black men are the ones who mostly abuse defenseless children and women. Bhengu (1998e:2) in this news report shows a society that has deteriorated where men are no longer protective but have become like animals which do not care who they sleep with. The mother of the child shows how almost every man the girl gets in touch with, sees her as a woman, wife or girlfriend and not as a child. African feminism views such a society as a society where one stakeholder (men) are not playing their part and therefore it is a society where things are falling apart.

In an incident related to the one above, a principal of a school for deaf children in Tzaneen (Limpopo province), Mr George Xitlavana allegedly raped more than one girl at the school in turns (Bhengu, 1997f:3). The report entitled *Principal faces rape charges* shows how the principal was released on a bail of R1000-00. In this case in particular, the Human Rights Commissioner, Mr Jerry Nkeli indicated that the criminal justice system did not address the rights of disabled persons. In other words, this news report shows the South African justice system as part and parcel of the abuse that is happening in society.

In another news report, *Two year old rape victim's life doomed* shows how a two-year old girl's rights were violated when she was raped repeatedly by a family member until her private parts were damaged (Bhengu, 1994g:1). Since the two year-old could not testify in court, the unnamed suspect was released. This is another example of how inefficient and ineffective the justice system had become since 1994. There could have been no further ways of proving more than the doctor's medical report(s) and questioning the suspect. Leaving the suspect makes him to be dangerous to children and society. Again

the semen in the child could be tested in order to compare it with that of the alleged perpetrator. Releasing an alleged perpetrator simply because the child cannot point at him is a serious indication of a society where child abuse has become a norm and where the justice system is not prepared to curb it. African feminism promotes the protection and love of children and this news report exposes a society where African values as embodied in African feminism are no longer considered.

Residents attack man is another report which shows how angry residents of a squatter camp in Daveyton followed an alleged child rapist known as Rastaman who lured young girls to his shack, gave them sweets and raped them in turns (Bhengu, 1994h: 2). One of his victims a six year-old girl was raped and killed and the suspect was always running away from the police. One evening the angry residents burnt his shack and handed him over to the police.

Although this report indicates the anger of residents in a squatter area it also represents the anger of many black South Africans about the justice system in South Africa and how it continues to handle the abuse of children and by implication their violated rights. The irony of this situation is that the residents of the squatter settlement understand that children need to be protected by everyone in society (male and female). Since the justice system is perceived to be protective towards the perpetrators (and not the abused children), the residents decided to take the law into their hands. What the residents have done is actually what African feminism advocates. In a country where perpetrators will always be released and come back to abuse and kill children, it is best to show the perpetrator that the African society cannot accommodate such lawlessness.

The child abuse news reports reveal a number of issues. One of them is that the moral fabric of the black South African society has deteriorated since democracy after 1994. The underlining message in all of these reports is that all black women journalists who reported on the above selected reports about child abuse put the blame on the justice system of South Africa during the period 1994 to 1999. This point is clearly illustrated in one of the opinion pieces by Bhengu (1994c:14) where she argues that in rape and abuse

cases involving children, magistrates and prosecutors should be women who will have feelings for the child victim. The justice system is a product of deliberations by law makers and politicians who are themselves parents. If parents produce laws that are unable to protect their children, then society is in trouble. In addition, if those who administer justice lack empathy for defenseless victims of heinous crimes then the moral fibre of the black South African society has deteriorated to alarming proportions. Should the gender of magistrates and prosecutors really matter in dispensing justice for child victims and abused women? African feminism argues that gender is not an issue since society is made up of females and males, both of them need to work together to build society. As long as they are adults then they need to take responsibility to protect children.

While in the cited news reports these black women journalists show that South African society has lost its moral fibre, they also reveal that the black African component in particular of the South African society, abuses women and such abuse is extended to children. Because abusers are mostly men, males are usually not part of the solution to child and women abuse. Men in all the above reports are portrayed as monsters and enemies of women and children. An interesting twist to this discussion is that it is not only black men who are raping children that are portrayed as monsters and enemies of children and women, but male magistrates and prosecutors in the justice system of a black government. They are seen as promoting the status quo. Bhengu (1994g: 1) in one of her articles insinuates this when she mentions that a rape suspect of a two year old girl child was released on bail on account of the fact that the two-year old child could not give testimony in a court of law.

So the picture of men in most of these reports is that of a terrifying figure whereas in African feminism men are viewed as parents/fathers and part and parcel of society's solution to problems that might arise (Nnaekema: 2005:32). The other underlying message in the reports is that if black men continue abusing children and black women are no longer treated with respect, then the black component of the African society and by implication the entire black South African society is in a crisis and needs to be

rescued. All the black women journalists who wrote the reports on women and child abuse depict a society that has departed from its African moral values as espoused by African feminism. This is contrary to the democracy that black people in South Africa fought for.

6. 4.2. Children in prison

Suffer little prison children is a report which gives a picture of what it is like for children who are in prison with their mothers (Bhengu, 1999i:10). Although there are crèche facilities, one woman prisoner called Thandi said that prison was not an appropriate place to raise children.

The striking thing about this report is that Bhengu (1999i:10) discusses how resilient black women can be when they face tough situations like imprisonment (Bhengu, 1999i:10). Bhengu (1999i:10) shows how the motherhood factor comes out even in difficult situations since that is an inborn quality. Despite the fact that there are black women who might throw away children, motherhood is something that is inborn. In this report men are the underlying cause of the misery of women and children. Bhengu (1999i:10) emphasises this assertion when she claims that in most crimes committed by these women “...a man was involved or reason for committing crimes”. *One prisoner assaulted another woman after discovering that she was sleeping with her man. The other was arrested for theft because her partner had refused to maintain the child.*”

This further confirms the fact that South Africa continues to be a male dominated society politically, socially, economically and in all other spheres which affect the lives of women and children in one way or the other.

7. Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the data. The data has been analysed under three main categories namely, *Power within the ANC; Women's rights and women abuse; and Children's rights and child abuse*. There are also common themes identified (particularly in the news reports) in the analysis which have been given as subheadings. The data was analysed following African feminism as a theoretical framework. The data analysis shows how black women journalists displayed courage by airing their views and opinions fearlessly. Although black women journalists reporting on politics were few, they were effective. For instance Ruth Bhengu as the only woman columnist, added diversity to the news angle.

In news reports or in columns black women journalists at the *Sowetan* condemned, criticised, praised and exposed what was happening in South African society at the time. In many instances these black women journalists criticised black political figures irrespective of their gender. These black women journalists did not only report about the negative side of government, they also reported on positive policy positions of the ANC-led government such as the appointment of women into positions of influence previously occupied by males. In so far as social issues were concerned, black women journalists at the *Sowetan* newspaper exposed the abuse of black women and children.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Recommendations

7. Introduction

This study has sought to explore the political role that black women journalists played at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999. The study also shows that journalism is a profession that was traditionally male oriented and as a result, the role of black women journalists in South Africa and elsewhere has been undermined and/or ignored. This situation had a rippling effect on the *Sowetan* in that the political role that its black women journalists played (1994 – 1999) has been undermined. This Chapter concludes the entire study and also gives recommendations for future research.

In Chapter 1 the researcher introduced black journalism, its historical development, the emergence of the *Sowetan* newspaper, the problem statement and motivation for the study.

Chapter 2 gives a background of how women entered into journalism as a profession and the kinds of experiences they encountered and continue to encounter in this profession. The experiences of black women journalists within the South African context has also been discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 examined African feminism as a theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 discussed the research design and the qualitative research methodology. A case study was used to examine the *Sowetan* newspaper. The research design and content analysis approaches were used under the qualitative research methodology.

Chapter 5 presented the research findings on the black women journalists' writings at the *Sowetan* from 1994 to 1999.

Chapter 6 presented an analysis of the data.

Chapter 7 presented the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

7.1. Concluding remarks

The core of this study is that the political role played by black journalists at the *Sowetan* was mainly assigned to black men while black women were undermined. One believes the reason might be that black women journalists at the *Sowetan* were not taken seriously. The literature shows that journalism is still a male-dominated profession not only in South Africa but throughout the world. However, there is a gradual change in the attitudes towards women journalists and black women journalists in most media sectors including newspapers like the *Sowetan*. The period of the study (1994 to 1999) shows very little transformation in as far as the implementation of policies such as Affirmative Action is concerned and as a result the findings of the study cannot be used to generalise about the treatment of black women journalists at the *Sowetan* currently. As a result, the researcher also acknowledges that the current treatment of black women journalists at the *Sowetan* might be different from that of the period 1994 to 1999.

The following are the highlights of the study and the conclusions thereof.

7.1.1. The political role of black women journalists at the *Sowetan vis-à-vis* their experiences (1994 to 1999)

The *Sowetan* as a black newspaper was established to play a political role of fighting against and exposing the apartheid rule. The main question that the study sought to answer was: *What political role did black women journalists at the Sowetan play from 1994 to 1999?*

The answer lies in the evidence emerging from the news reports and opinion pieces of five black women journalists at the *Sowetan*. It has emerged from this study that in its

celebration of 25 years of existence, the *Sowetan* has not acknowledged the political contribution of its women journalists. The patriarchal tendencies displayed in this regard, emanate from the past era before 1994 and to a certain extent after 1994. The literature review section shows that black women journalists in South Africa and at the *Sowetan* newspaper faced racial and patriarchal barriers. The racial barrier was mainly outside the newsroom whereas the patriarchal barrier was inside and outside the newsroom. Patriarchal tendencies at the *Sowetan* were displayed in many ways. One of them was the fact that in politics there were fewer women journalists. In sports there were no women journalists at all. For example, all copies of the *Sowetan* during this period indicate that there were no women in sports. In certain cases, women journalists would be general reporters as pointed out earlier on. There seems to be no evidence to suggest that the women journalists at the *Sowetan* (from 1994 to 1999) failed to do their work simply because of their gender.

This study shows that black women journalists at the *Sowetan* reported the experiences and views (including frustrations) of women in the black society. These black women journalists also represent views of black women in general. Despite the hostilities that individual journalists could face from chauvinistic male colleagues and a chauvinistic male readership, black women journalists showed courage and boldness in reporting about political issues. In their reporting they also criticised the ANC-led black government in its liberal laws and corruption.

The promotions and general attitudes towards black women journalists at the *Sowetan* (1994 to 1999) are also discussed in brief. The chauvinistic attitude in the newsroom has been mentioned earlier and will not be repeated. Promotions for women seem to have been very slow at the *Sowetan* during the period under review. Many women journalists seem to have been working at a junior level. Ruth Bhengu's position as a columnist was a rare honour for a woman journalist at that time hence she was the only black woman journalist with a column. Similarly, Pamela Dube's position as a political reporter was not common for black women. However, women who were given these privileges at the *Sowetan* made tremendous impact that was even noticed by male readers.

The fact that some women journalists were reporting on almost anything, meant they were overworked and as such could not specialise. This kind of situation can easily lead to demotivation especially in a skewed competitive environment where males have an upper hand. Black women journalists could not stay in this situation forever. In trying to trace the selected black women journalists whose reports were analysed in this study, the researcher found that most have left the *Sowetan* possibly for greener pastures elsewhere. The researcher has come to the conclusion that environments such as these (where these black women journalists were subjected to) can contribute to a high turnover as revealed by the Glass Ceiling study in Chapter 2. Lower salaries might have been another contributing factor to the departure of black women journalists at the *Sowetan* (this issue is not discussed directly in the study but it is implied in the issue of promotions) The basis of this claim is the fact that black women journalists were not promoted to senior positions. The work they did was more at a junior level.

Another important observation is that in the history of the *Sowetan* newspaper, that is from 1981 to date, no woman ever occupied an editorial position.

7.2. Recommendations

The literature review section discussed experiences and struggles (or challenges) of women journalists (black and white) in the journalism profession globally. There are also suggestions that have been made in Chapter 2 on how to deal with those challenges. In this section, the researcher makes a few recommendations for the journalism profession and also identifies areas of future research.

The period 1994 to 1999 in South Africa, was a transitional period from apartheid rule to democracy. The new government put in place policies like Affirmative Action, which at that time were tried out as an attempt to unify the South African society. The situation concerning the treatment of black women journalists could not have changed much from that of the past. Currently, there is a lot of work that is being done to promote black women to influential positions in political journalism, financial journalism and to

editorial positions. There is therefore a need to make a comparative study of two black newspapers, such as the *City Press* and the *Sowetan* to see how each one of them has made progress in promoting black women journalists in general.

Another area of comparative study could be the writings of black male journalists *vis-a-vis* those of black female journalists at the *Sowetan* after 1994. Such a study could reveal how males reported on issues as opposed to the reporting of females. This could reveal the influence of gender on news reporting.

In conclusion, a study on the opinions of black male journalists after 1994 and how these journalists viewed their fellow black female colleagues at a newspaper like the *Sowetan* or any other newspaper could be useful in order to understand the political role of black journalists after 1994 and gender implications thereof.

8. Chapter summary

The chapter discussed the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The study shows that black women journalists at the *Sowetan* (1994 to 1999) were generally undermined despite the fact that they played a significant political role in black journalism in general and at the *Sowetan* in particular. Their boldness was coupled with leadership and the motherhood angle. The *Sowetan* failed to acknowledge the role and contribution which enhanced the quality of the newspaper's reporting by giving a balanced view of black men and women.

In this study the researcher acknowledges that the situation between 1994 and 1999 might have been completely different from what it currently is at the *Sowetan*. Finally, the researcher suggests future research in comparative studies on gender issues at the *Sowetan* and any other black newspaper in South Africa.

Bibliography

- Bhengu, C. 1998a. Women look to equal say in polls, *Sowetan*. 16 November 1998. p2.
- Bhengu, C. 1997b. Women killed in love triangle, *Sowetan*. 11 June 1997. p2.
- Bhengu, C. 1994c. Child Abuse Law Blamed, *Sowetan*. 20 December 1994. p12.
- Bhengu, C. 1995d. Girl missing from sanatorium, *Sowetan*. 2 February 1995. p12.
- Bhengu, C. 1998e. Teacher accused of rape, *Sowetan*. 26 August 1998. p2.
- Bhengu, C. 1997f. Principal faces rape charges, *Sowetan*. 07 November 1997. p3.
- Bhengu, C. 1994g. Residents attack man. *Sowetan*. 13 October 1994. p2.
- Bhengu, C. 1994h. Two year old rape victim's life is doomed, *Sowetan*. 11 October 1994. p12.
- Bhengu, C. 1999i. Suffer little prison children, *Sowetan*. 22 March 1999. p10.
- Bhengu, R. 1996 a. Shouldn't Dr Zuma take sick leave now? *Sowetan*. 11 June 1996. p11.
- Bhengu, R. 1995b. Payment of *ilobolo* a sensitive issue, *Sowetan*. 9 May 1995. p12.
- Bhengu, R. 1995c. Widow's forum pull hearts strings. *Sowetan*. 24 October 1995. p16.
- Bhengu, R. 1997d. Sisters do it themselves, *Sowetan*. 12 August 1997. p16.
- Bhengu, R. 1995e. Black families in trouble, *Sowetan*. 2 May 1995. p1.

Bhengu, R. 1994f. Don't let kids lose their identity, *Sowetan*. 29 November. 1994. p16.

Bhengu, R.1996g. Our children should not lose part of themselves, *Sowetan*. 10 September. p12.

Biko, S. 2004. The Definition of Black Consciousness. In. C. R. Stubbs (Ed). *Steve Biko: I write what I like*. Pan Macmillan: Johannesburg. Pp 52-65.

Carter, C. Branston, G. and Allan, S. 1998. *News, Gender and Power*. London: Routledge.

Chambers, D. Steiner, L. and Flemming, C. 2004. *Women and Journalism*. London: Routledge.

Cropp, F. Frisby, C. M. and Mills, D. 2003. *Journalism across cultures*. Iowa: Blackwell.

Deuze, M. 2004. Global Journalism Education. In A. S. De Beer and J. C. Merrill (Eds). 2004. *Global Journalism: Topical Issues and Media Systems*. Boston: Pearson. Pp 128-141.

Dube, P. 1997a. Madiba's letter to former president PW Botha, *Sowetan*. 18 July 1997. p7.

Dube, P. 1997b. Ginwala joins ANC exodus, *Sowetan*. 12 March 1997. p2.

Dube, P.1998c. The changing fortunes of the powerful, *Sowetan*. 17 September 1998. p19.

Dube, P. 1997d. Thandi Modise was not threatened, *Sowetan*. 23 May 1997.p2.

- Dube, P. 1997e. Winnie bows out of race, *Sowetan*. 18 December 1997. p1.
- Dube, P. 1996f. Carolus keen to take up new post, *Sowetan*. 6 October 1996. p6.
- Dube, P. 1998g. Duarte's case to be handled internally, *Sowetan*. 10 July 1998. p10.
- Dube, P. 1998h. Duarte's rise and fall, *Sowetan*. 27 March 1998. p10.
- Dube, P. 1998i. Keeping parliament female friendly, *Sowetan*. 28 October 1998. p9.
- Drayton, K. C. 2004. *Motherhood: How it affects Women Journalists' Experiences*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Florida: University of Florida.
- Du Plooy, G. M. 2001. *Communication Research: Techniques, methods and applications*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Flick, U. Von Kardoff, E. and Steinke, I. What is Qualitative Research? In U. Flick, E. Von Kardoff, and I. Steinke (Eds). 2004. *A companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. Pp 1-11.
- Haffajee, F. 2006. Gender equality? Eish! *Rhodes Journalism Review*, 26 September 2006: 19.
- Jensen, K. B. 2002. *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*. London: Routledge.
- Johnson, S.1991. An Historical Overview of the Black Press. In K. Tomaselli, and P.E. Louw (Eds). *The Alternative Press in South Africa*. Bellville: Anthropos. Pp15-32.

Kaunda, L. 2004. *An investigation into the recruitment and career advancement of female political journalists in English language South African newspapers (1993-2003)*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Port Elizabeth: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Karam, B. 2008. Gender and the Media. In P. J. Fourie (Ed). *Media Studies: Policy, Management and Media Representation. Volume 2. Second edition*. Cape Town: Juta. Pp305-328.

Kent, S. 1998. Gender and Prehistory in Africa. In S. Kent (Ed). *Gender in African Pre-history*. Walnut Creek: London. Pp 9-21.

Latakomo, J. 2006. The voice of the people. In L. Maseko (Ed). *Sowetan Celebrating 25 years of THE SOUL TRUTH*. Johannesburg: Absa. Pp 26-31.

Lee, V. E. Marks, H.M. and Byrd, T. 1994. Sexism in Single-Sex and Co-educational Independent Secondary School Classrooms. *Sociology of Education* 67(2):92-120.

Mabote, R. 1996. Changes in print media ownership in South Africa. *Ecquid Novi* 17(2):319-326.

Majola, P.1997a. Women meet to formulate policy, *Sowetan*. 18 December 1997. p1.

Majola, P.1994b. Women's rights are threatened, *Sowetan*. 20 April 1994. p.21.

Majola, P. 1994c. A safe place for women, *Sowetan*. 14 March 1994. p14.

Manganyi, N.C. 2004. Truth Is Always In Motion: Aggrey Klaaste in conversation with N. Chabani Manganyi. In N. C. Manganyi (Ed). 2004. *Transition and Transformation in South African Society: On Becoming a Democracy*. University of South Africa Press: Pretoria. Pp 111-115.

Marshall, A. and Herman, V. 2000. *Child Sexual Abuse in South Africa: Resources aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Cape Town: RAPCAN.

Maseko, L. 2006. Origins of the Black Press. In L. Maseko (Ed). *Sowetan Celebrating 25 years of THE SOUL TRUTH*. Johannesburg: Absa. Pp6-10.

Mashumi, V. 1995. Bhengu is tops, *Sowetan*. 6 March 1995. p10.

Mathiane, N. 1997. Black Female Journalists relegated. *Rhodes Journalism Review*, November 1997:31.

Mathiane, N. 1997. The Stars and the very dark sky. *SABC News*.1997:1-6.
<http://www.rjr.ru.ac.za/rjrpdf/rjr-no24/Herstoriespdf>. accessed 17 March 2009.

Mayring, P. 2004. Qualitative Content Analysis. In U. Flick, E. Von Kardoff and I. Steinke (Eds). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. Pp 266-269.

Mouton, J.1996. *Understanding Social Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Mouton, J. 2003. *How to succeed in your Masters and Doctoral Studies: A South African Guide and Resource Book. Fourth Impression*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Mphahlele, E. 2006. Foreword. In H. A. Mashabela. *A people on the Boil: Reflections on June 16 1976 and Beyond. 30th Anniversary Edition*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

Mulemfo, M.M. 2005. *Thabo Mbeki: A Renaissance Voice*. Pretoria: Durrant and Viljoen.

Nnaekema, O. 2005. Mapping African Feminisms. In A. Cornwall (Ed). *Readings in Gender in Africa*. London: The International African Institute. Pp31-40.

Nghidinwa, M. M. 2008. *Women Journalists in Namibia's Liberation Struggle (1985-1990)*. Klosterberg: Basler Afrika Bibliographien.

Phala, R. K. 2009. To Polokwane and Back: Reflections on the 52nd National Conference. *Umrabulo*. 31 August 2008. www.anc.org.za/umrabulo31. accessed 13.04.2010.

Rabe, L. 2006. Glass ceiling, concrete ceiling. *Rhodes Journalism Review*. 26 September 2006: 20-21.

Rantsekeng, P. 1998a. Encouraging women to use mighty pen, *Sowetan*. 30 April 1998. p21.

Rantsekeng, P. 1998b. Triplets need aid, *Sowetan*. 30 April 1998. p4.

Rasool, S. Vermaak, K. Pharaoh, R. Louw, A. and Stavrou, A. 2000. *Violence against Women: A National Survey*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Raubenheimer, L. 1991. From Newsroom to the Community: Struggle in Black Journalism. In K. Tomaselli and P. E. Louw. *The Alternative Press in South Africa*. Bellville: Anthropos. Pp93-132.

Richter, L. Dawes, A. and Higson-Smith, C. 2004. *Sexual Abuse of young children in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Robinson, G. J. 2005. *Gender, Journalism and Equity*. Broadway: Hampton Press.

Robinson, G. J. 2008. Journalism as a Symbolic Practice: The Gender Approach in Journalism Research. In L. Martin and D. Weaver (Eds). *Global Journalism Research-Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp 79-89.

Schubert, M. 1997. Recognise the female majority. *Rhodes Journalism Review*. November 1997:6.

Sesanti, S. 2007. Distinctly African or dimly African. *Rhodes Journalism Review*. 27 September 2007: 34-35.

Sesanti, S. 2009. African women speak up. *The Media*. July 2009:34.

Sesanti, S. 2009. Reclaiming space: African women's use of the media as a platform to contest patriarchal representations of African culture - womanists' perspectives. *Critical Arts*, 23(2)209-223.

South African National Editors Forum. 2006. *Executive Summary of Glass ceiling 2*. Johannesburg: SANEF. http://.sanef.org/download-files/diversity/glass_ceiling_executive_summary.html. accessed 17 March 2009.

South Africa. 1996. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108*. Government Printers: Pretoria.

Sparks, A. 2003. *Beyond the miracle: Inside the new South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

Spitz, R. and Chaskalson, M. 2000. *The Politics of Transition: A hidden history of South Africa's negotiated settlement*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Steady, F.C. 2005. An investigative Framework for Gender Research in Africa in the new millennium. In O. Oyewumi (Ed). *African Gender Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp313-331.

Sudarsaka, N. 2005. The status of Women in Indigenous African Societies. In A. Cornwall (Ed). *Readings in Gender in Africa*. London: The International African Institute. Pp25-30.

Tsedu, M. 1998. Questioning if guilt without punishment will lead to reconciliation: The black press relives its own horrors and seeks justice. *Nieman reports* 52(4):1-5.

Tsedu, M. 2000. Journalism in Transition in South Africa. *Nieman reports* 54(3)1-6.

Tunstall, J. 2002. Trends in news media and political journalism. In R. Kuhn and E. Neveu (Eds). *Political Journalism: New challenges, new practices*. London: Routledge. Pp229-241.

Wasserman, H. 2006. Tackles and sidesteps: normative maintenance and paradigm repair in mainstream reactions to South African tabloid journalism. *Communicare*, 25(1):60-78.

Weaver, D.H. 2004. Journalists: International Profiles. In A. S. De Beer and J. C. Merrill (Eds). 2004. *Global Journalism: Topical Issues and Media Systems*. Boston: Pearson. Pp 142-150.

Wigston, D. 2007. A History of the South African Media. In P. J. Fourie (Ed). *Media Studies: Media and Society. Volume 1. Second edition*. Cape Town: Juta. Pp 4-58.

Wimmer, R. D. and Dominick, J. R. 1991. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction. Third Edition*. California: Wadsworth Publishing.

Worden, N. 2005. *The making of modern South Africa. Third Edition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.