

**THE TREATMENT OF VIOLENCE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN
BROADCASTING CORPORATION'S TELEVISION NEWS:**

**A comparative analysis between
TV1 and CCV News from 14 March to 26 April 1994**

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstand Beweeging
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization
CCV	Contemporary Community Values
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SA	South Africa
SADF	South African Defence Force
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
PAC	Pan African Congress
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
TV1	Television One
VO	Voice Over

DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-dissertation is my own original work and that all other sources of reference have been acknowledged.

This mini-dissertation has not been submitted previously by me for a degree at this or any other university.



ANDREW MAMPURU APHANE

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the portrayal of violence on SABC Television News programmes, these being CCV News, presented at 19h.00 and TV1 News at 20h.00. The literature reviewed reveals that Television News is an ideological construct that differs from one media organization to the other.

This study focuses on the theories of media organizations which inform ideas about how Television News is produced. It is believed that to understand why Television News is presented the way it is, depends on ideologies applicable in the media organizations. It became difficult to write about violence without broadly looking at its producers.

Data was obtained by comparative analysis between the SABC News broadcasts, CCV News and TV1 News, recorded at the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Natal in Durban. The comparative analysis also included a reception study of the viewers from four areas. Two urban and three semi-urban areas were chosen as research sites using questionnaires, and interviews were conducted at Temba location which is a semi-urban area.

The major findings of the study were that in its News broadcasts, the SABC appears strongly to favour certain parties, notably the African National Congress. There were few reports of ANC's involvement in the shooting of people. There was also a lack of consistency in the reporting of violent incidents. This is indicated by much reliance on the security forces and the police as News sources and the use of maps and graphics instead of showing video material of the actual incidents.

The attitudes expressed by the respondents to the questionnaires reflected a dissatisfaction with the status quo and indicated that perhaps the SABC faced a mammoth task in covering both the election campaigns and violence. Some respondents suggested that the SABC could have extended its News programmes' duration to accommodate more crucial items.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The future of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), as a public broadcaster has come under the spotlight during the period of transformation in South Africa. This can be attributed to its position, control, structure and the role it played under the apartheid regime.

The SABC was set up statutorily by the Broadcasting Act of 1936, as later amended. The Act describes the SABC's main function as being 'the broadcasting of programmes with due regard to the interests of the English, Afrikaans and Bantu cultures¹'. The point of departure here is that in terms of the logic of separate development, racial groups were different, distinct and not interested in issues pertaining to others. This kind of establishment view still prevails in the SABC's News channels. According to the present structure, Television One (TV1) News is presented in either English or Afrikaans whereas the Contemporary Community Values (CCV) News is polarised into Sotho and Nguni languages. The structure is actually based on race and ethnicity. The Broadcast Monitoring Project (BMP) stresses that the SABC has argued CCV and TV1 cater for different communities and it is therefore to be expected that News coverage will differ between the stations. This study investigates the extent to which 'black' News and 'white' News broadcasts portrayed violence.

According to the Broadcast Monitoring Project (1993:2), SABC News' infrastructure has led to much criticism. There are ethnic divisions within CCV News, between Nguni and Sotho channels, but these are less pronounced than the racial divisions between TV1 and CCV.

Perhaps the central aim of the SABC could be to provide News programmes of wide range and diversity over a reasonable span of time for practically all tastes, for both large and small population groups. The central aim of this dissertation is to analyze some of the crucial transformation developments in the SABC, with particular emphasis on the portrayal of violence in News programmes. The fundamental point in this regard is to assess the extent to which SABC Television News channels, ie TV1 News and CCV News, reported and treated violence in the given time span.

Before the April elections of 1994 political parties, in particular the ANC and PAC, were highly critical of SABC News programmes. They viewed former South African President Frederick Willem de Klerk as the mouthpiece of the previously ruling National Party. Since then there have been some attempts to restructure SABC policies. As part of the transformation process of the SABC, the corporation provides accountability to the full spectrum of the South African public in providing 'accessible, high quality broadcasting services' and commits itself to the interests of the South African public. In March 1993 the new SABC Board was established. It was seen as a gate-opener and symbol of societal status. The SABC believed that the new SABC Board would assume a totally different form from its predecessor.

As a result of the SABC Board's commitment to the transformation process, the SABC introduced its Ethical Code and Editorial Guidelines for Editorial staff on 23 March. This document clearly states policies and principles as well as the aims and objectives of the SABC as a public broadcaster in terms of promoting accuracy, balance, impartiality, fairness, credibility and diversity of opinion in News items ² (SABC Ethical Code, 1994:3).

The 'objectivity' or 'impartiality' of Television News and current affairs programmes is another area of investigation, since there are different understandings of the two concepts. The two concepts also deal with the control and selection of News. This point is illustrated by Connell (1980:14) who argues that the picture and definition found in the News can be 'biased' and distorted because journalists construct and compile information differently and are not autonomous and independent from their organizations. Journalists are part and parcel of the expectations set up by their organizations and are expected to perform within their framework.

The SABC's Ethical Code and Guidelines for Editorial staff states that the SABC aims at developing and informing the public through the dissemination of news and ideas concerning issues that affect the public on a daily basis ³. The central question is how the SABC defines the public, for the public has different tastes.

The main rationale behind this study is that before the general elections of April 1994, the SABC's reporting of violence was subjected to a variety of criticisms: that it inflamed volatile situations; that it created alarmism and misperceptions among the public; and that attention to violence, suffering and injustice has been selective, and even skewed by its political sympathies to National Party.

This study uses empirical information, that is, recorded tapes, interviews and structured questionnaires to address the following:

- How the SABC has lived up to its expectations of serving the public, in particular in its portrayal of violence on TV1 and CCV News programmes;
- How closely the portrayed violence corresponds to reality in society;

- What people interviewed through Structured Questionnaires believe to be the main cause of violence; and
- How people interviewed in the reception study responded in terms of their perceptions of impartiality and the coverage of violence on SABC News.

The starting point of the study is that SABC News should be investigated with a critical eye, because during previous elections the National Party received exposure while other parties were prescribed in a different way (Louw 1993:34). Historically, the views and opinions of the National Party officials were given prominence disproportionate to their newsworthiness. Opposition views were only quoted when it was to the advantage of the National Party to do so ⁴ (Steytler, 1989:2)

From this perspective, it will be important to investigate the question of fairness exercised by the SABC television channels, that is TV1 and CCV News, in order to see how violence has been treated and accommodated. The question of fairness is important to investigate because it will show how News items equitably reflect relevant facts and significant points of view, how persons, institutions and events were being dealt with and how interviews were conducted, especially the time given to the interviewees. Therefore, I assume that during the period under investigation, SABC News channels were fully committed to the principle of promoting accuracy, balance, impartiality, fairness, credibility and diversity of opinion. The study will attempt to uncover the extent to which these principles are accomplished and maintained.

What is important about the principles outlined above is that they are sometimes not effective because of the question of ownership. The SABC was a state owned or financed media

institution during Nationalist government rule. As a result its 'unfair and biased reporting and presentation of News' cannot be neglected.

The past actions of the state-owned media do not inspire confidence in their future ability to report fairly. Real fears exist that they will not be able to act according to the existing standards of fairness required during an election campaign (Steytler, 1989:2).

The question of evaluating the SABC's principles as endorsed in its Ethical Code and Editorial Guidelines for Editorial Staff will show the extent to which reporters and journalists understood violence as News, its image, how and why it was portrayed as it is, and the influence of the state or other powerful groups like political organizations, eg. the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), National Party (NP) etc. Louw (1993:36) accentuates the fact that the state under National Party rule owned the SABC, which was seen as the most powerful News medium.

The investigation of the portrayal of violence on Television News bulletins should be located within specific historical, social, political and economic developments. The period under examination, 14 March to 26 April 1994, was fully contested. It was the period when South Africa was still faced with the transition process, undertaking tasks of national reconstruction and innovation. At one stage before the elections, it appeared as if the elections may not be successful because of the escalation of violence.

In my examination, I shall limit myself to the treatment of violence on SABC-Television News because very little research has been done on this. Most of the research accomplished so far is not based on the portrayal of violence on Television News. The most noted research include the works by Dr. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli: The Politics of Discourse and the Discourse

of Politics: Images Of Violence And Reform On the South African Broadcasting Corporation's Television News Bulletins July 1985-November 1986 and also the Broadcast Monitoring Project, 6 Months of the new SABC Board.

The issues to be examined as far as the treatment of violence on TV1 and CCV News is concerned include the following:-

- the definition of violence.
- the distinction between public violence, in particular political violence as opposed to other forms of violence.
- violence in 'terrorism'.

According to Barrie Gunter (1987:2), broadcasters are frequently attacked by politicians, social groups and the Press for not implementing sufficiently tight control over the showing of violence on television programmes.

The SABC in its Ethical Code of Conduct, released in March this year, stresses the showing of violence as a problem. Violence cannot be divorced from the processes that society goes through. It occurs in the public sphere and it becomes very difficult to implement 'hard and fast rules'. The inclusion and exclusion of violence on television remains a problem.

This study has been organised into seven chapters. The efforts of the SABC as public broadcaster as a whole will be highlighted, with particular focus on the presentation of and the portrayal of violence in the News before the first, all-inclusive, non-racial elections.

Chapter Two defines Television News and argues that News is ideologically constructed. In discussing the concept of ideology, I have employed the ideas of Stuart Hall's (1978) consensual paradigm. This chapter also defines major concepts of the study such as:- News, violence, 'manipulative and market models' and ideology.

Chapter Three is devoted to a literature review and presents an argument about the influence of control and ownership of media organizations. The control and ownership of media organizations is important to examine because these factors can affect the manner in which News is treated on television. The emphasis could serve to highlight some issues such as the external and internal factors that impact on News items and journalistic practices. This chapter also deals with the ideology of Television News, which provides a broad understanding of how Television News is constructed. Diverse interpretations of violence and the question of objectivity are dealt with.

Chapter Four defines the concept of political violence and tries to locate it in the South African context.

Chapter Five discusses the tapes of the SABC Television News programmes recorded from 14 March to 26 April. The period is important because South Africa was plagued by violence and election campaigns during this time.

Chapter Six is about the methodology used in accomplishing this study and it discusses the methods used to accomplish the study. The methods include structured questionnaires and interviews with selected members of the public. It identifies different interpretations of how

members of the public feel about the portrayal of violence on both CCV and TV1. Chapter Seven concludes this study.

Finally, a word about sources used. This study has been undertaken through an analysis of primary material pertaining to the SABC and its activities, supplemented by secondary material, especially in earlier chapters. From the outset I recognised the desirability of interviewing the SABC staff. Unfortunately, this has not been successful. Some of the difficulties included time and financial constraints.

This has created an unfortunate gap in the study, especially given the documentary material on the organization. However, this did not affect the significance of researching the treatment of violence, and the SABC as an important media organization of this period. In the light of the above, I have attempted to produce an objective account of the SABC within these constraints.

ENDNOTES

1. Lucas Oosthuisen, (1987:57)

This provision is still reflected in the SABC 's declared mission. In the Annual Report of 1988 its 'Mission' is defined as the maintenance of a quality broadcasting service which takes cognisance of and adapts to the demands of time, takes accounts of the wishes and needs of different languages and cultural groups in South Africa so as to inform and entertain them constructively, and projects a positive message about South Africa and its people.

2. SABC Ethical Code, (1994:3)

This is one of the 'Values and Visions' envisaged by the SABC Board. Other aspects include sensitivity to the diverse nature of South African Society and to the need for justice and healing, commitment to the truth, impartiality, equitability and fairness to all people without regard to any divisive features or characteristics, a common South African commitment to independence and autonomy for the SABC.

3. Ibid, p.18.

These principles imply that information must be truthful and not distorted to justify a conclusion.

4. Steytler, (1989:2)

It is quite clear that the apartheid government used the SABC to further its political motives, by setting its agenda in terms of coverage of political party leaders and events.

CHAPTER TWO

Defining Television

This chapter attempts to investigate the meanings and implications of some of the concepts which have been employed in this study. The concepts include Television News, violence as News, ideology, the 'manipulative' and market models used in the process of selection of News. There are several questions that one would ask about Television News such as:-

What is Television News?

How is it presented?

To whom is it targeted and why?

All these questions appear to be fundamental to this study, but the most important one could be, how does television, particularly Television News, create meaning?

Not all events taking place qualify as News, suggests Eve Bertelsen (1989:175). Selection of News is a significant step. According to the market model, News is selected in terms of 'what the public is interested in, and what is in the public interest' (Windshuttle 1984:262). Both bases of News selection agree that the demands of the public determine the News content, and both claim objective reporting. From this perspective News can be seen as the reporting and presentation of events which have been selected, and cannot reflect everything that happens. The SABC, in its Code of Ethics and Editorial guidelines, explains its position on News selection.

The SABC Code of Ethics (1987) states that 'News values and weighing of News are determining factors in affording airtime to political events and expressions'. This indicates its power to decide which issues would enter the public sphere of awareness, and defines the conditions in which News could be presented, decides who speaks on the events or topics that have been selected and who tries to manage the debates and discussion ¹.

Therefore, Hartley (1987:4)'s reference to Television News as factual information that the viewers need in order to be able to participate in their society is not sufficient. It remains ambiguous, with no mention of the ideological implications that surround the question of News being referred to as 'factual' information. The questions that could be raised are:-

What is factual information?

How is it selected from the 'other' information, and why?

I contend the 'meanings' of concepts like News and violence depend on certain historical and organisational contexts and practices. Media organisations play a major role in the production, selection and distribution of News to the public. But their problem lies in choosing what they want on behalf of the public. Oosthuizen (1989:6) states that in South Africa, the SABC, especially during the apartheid government era, was dominated by an anthropological view according to which the public was treated as reactive beings rather than as active factors and initiators in a social environment.

Having said this, I would like to outline some theories of what governs News construction. Television News is located within the discourses that shape it. These discourses could include social, political and historical contexts within which News is produced and consumed. As part of those discourses, News could be controlled and shaped differently, and I would

argue that neutrality in News is impossible. The fact that News is about distribution of knowledge, implies relations of power. The question concerns whose News should be distributed.

I would like to investigate theoretical positions that will inform or enable me to locate the function of SABC journalists and reporters. The theoretical positions attempt to account for the way in which News is constructed. The models used are:-

The 'Mass Manipulative Theory' and

The Critical and Dominant Ideological Framework.

The Mass Manipulative Theory

The mass manipulative model perceives the institution and its journalists acting directly and effectively in the interests of the owners, whose interests in News broadcasting may be quite opposed to the public at large and to any true presentation of events in the world. In the strongest sense, those in power have control over production.

This kind of approach is well characterised by Boyd-Barret (1987:163) who argues that the owners of organisations are solely owners in terms of their positions, having control over the means of mental production so that those who lack the means of mental production are subordinated to it.

Control over the production and distribution of ideas is concentrated in the hands of the capitalist owners of the means of production. As a result of this control, their views and accounts of the world receive insistent publicity and come to dominate the thinking of subordinate groups, and this ideological domination plays a role in maintaining class inequalities ². (Boyd-Barret 1987:163)

Boyd-Barret's (1987:65) conception is derived from Marx's understanding of the relations of power that 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas ie. the class with the ruling material force in society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force'³. This suggestion could be positioned and argued in relation to what is going in the South African media organisations.

Abercrombie et al (1980:40) argues against Marx's concept that the ruling ideology is similar to that of the state. They argue that the ruling class's control over the mental production 'means that these cannot be a subordinate culture, for all classes are incorporated within the same intellectual universe, that of the ruling class'³. Ideology is an instrument in the hands of those who have power. This kind of instrumentalist theory is similar to the instrumentalist theory of the state.

The ruling class has power to decide how 'knowledge' should be selected, produced and disseminated to those who have no access to the media. News as 'knowledge' could be about power relations. The media journalists, reporters, and editors can consciously or unconsciously work within the parameters set by the ruling class. The question is, how is it that the subordinate group come to hold beliefs which guarantee subordination? (Boyd-Barret, 1987:76)

Firstly, ideology of the ruling class can be conscious and unrecognised to the subordinate classes. This is especially so when the subordinate classes interpret it in the way that the dominant class understand their world view and according to the categories supplied by the dominant groups, and not according to their own class interests. (Masterman, 1987)

Ian Connell (1978:75) argued that 'the media belong first and foremost to the region of ideology'. The media were perceived to reflect the ideological interests of the dominant classes. Stuart Hall (1982) emphasises what he labelled 'the rediscovery of ideology' in media studies, to attack both the liberal and positivist manipulative paradigms. The criticisms were based on the perspective that reality could no longer be perceived as simply a given set of facts.

it was the result of a particular way of constructing reality. The media defined, not merely reproduced 'reality' (Hall 1982:65).

According to the mass manipulative model, Television News is deliberately distorted and biased by the ideas of 'the ruling class who directly intervene in the production and censorship of news'⁴. Bennet (1982:47) argues that the ideology of Television News carries with it the implication of distortion. The distortion of News occurs when the 'media institution takes the bourgeois society as its point of departure and its starting point' (ibid). In this way, the distortion of News cannot be interpreted as telling lies but as the direct or indirect effect of the action of the dominant social relationships, which although acting on the consciousness of individuals, do so in a way that is profoundly unconscious as far as they are concerned. Masterman (1987:190) supports the view that ideology, far from being conscious and explicit can be unrecognised, as racist ideologies in News items can be unconscious within our everyday practices, ways of thinking and language.

The Marxist interpretation of News construction dismisses the notion of objectivity and impartiality in the media. Marx and Engels (1965) gave the concept of ideology a privileged position in relation to the dominant form of mental representation. This can be conceived as the way in which those individuals who are economically dominant have power over what

should be selected as News. Thus the consciousness of those subjected to the ideologies is distorted in a way conducive to the perpetuation of existing relations of class domination (Bennet 1982:48).

From the above the concepts of 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' can be argued to be subservient to the ruling class or dominant

ideology. The media professionals, ie. journalists, reporters, editors etc, control the production process but the meaning of the messages produced are 'determined elsewhere in the dominant culture'⁵.

The Market Model

The market model sees the roles of professional journalists and media communicators as public educators and as 'libertarians' who are committed to providing what the public is supposed to want. This model argues that the responsible journalist selects those events which are in the public interest and then objectively portrays reality within the format and scope of the particular media concerned.

Gallagher (1982:162) does not simply accept the assertion purported by the market model. She centres the argument on how media institutions define the roles of their communicators. She argues that roles are not similar, but differ from one organisation to the other, and the communicator must operate within the context of those roles and values produced by the institutions. What is important to the communicator is the structural organisation of the

production which defines the roles of the individual communicator. What the public should know depends on the editorial policies and practices defined by the organisations and their relationship with the internal and external factors. She insists that the economic base of media organisation determines the public's right to know.

Different institutions have different roles for their practitioners. In bureaucratic institutions, as Gallagher (1982:166) maintains, the roles of journalists and reporters are a source of tension. The roles are ambiguous to the communicator and those bureaucratic institutions which do not apply standardised decision-making processes but believe in institutionalised expectations. These expectations are not explicit, and impede professionalism and creativity in their organisational contexts. The potential of the individual communicator will vary depending on the type of the organisation and on the nature of his individual role within it (Gallagher, 1982:162).

The SABC has its Code of Ethics for editorial staff which is a guiding light for its journalists. It stresses that its journalists must conduct their investigations within the accepted laws of South Africa. The laws are promulgated by the government and the SABC journalists are subject to them. The SABC Code of Ethics (1994) acknowledges the fact that democracy in South Africa implies free and open journalistic investigation but 'it sometimes becomes necessary to use clandestine methods to seek and check facts which are being deliberately withheld'⁶ (SABC Code of Ethics, 1984: 108).

Whatever information enters the public sphere goes through a number of stages. 'News is what an authoritative source tells a journalist'⁷ (Lodziak 1986:45). Therefore, it is very

difficult to assume that journalists possess the power to decide on issues which will enter the public sphere of awareness and discussion, define who will speak on the topics that have been selected and managed, and control the ensuing debates and discussions.

According to the market model, News items are selected in terms of public demand. What is in the interests of the public would include information which allows people to make informed choices in a democratic system. Iyengar and Kinders (1980:113) assess the role of Television News in relation to the public, especially in the American context, and concludes that its purpose is to shape public opinion, including existing beliefs and opinions.

Various scholars including John Hartley (1982:75) argue that for journalists to pick out newsworthy events depends on an informed paradigm of News values. Apart from the 'News values' process, the Glasgow University Media Group (1976:171) has identified other processes. These are that News relies on:

- Constraints of time, available resources or geography.
- 'Television values' or television material viewed as having a good visual appeal and
- The ideological atmosphere of the society which can tell what can be mentioned and not mentioned.

Most News is about individuals who have to be in a specific location within the society. Bertelsen's (1989) insistence that not all events qualify as News, is a clear indication that some events qualify as more important News than others. Galtung and Ruge (1981:56-58) argue that for an event to be deemed newsworthy, it should comply with the following requirements:

- * It must be recent

- * It must be concerned with elite individuals eg. the leaders of powerful political organisations
- * Elite-centred. The more the event concerns elite nations the more probable that it will become a news item.
- * It must be negative and
- * It should be surprising.

These conditions are well communicated by Lodziak (1986:45) who recounts that there are invariably ideological distortions in News. The News values of elite persons and nations, in conjunction with personal selection by News editors can lead to some of the more common forms of ideological distortion. News stories of complex events are invariably structured through personal value systems and a focus on leading individuals. This can lead to gross simplifications, misrepresentations, and significant absences in what is reported. Conrad Lodziak (1986:48) puts it this way:

significant absences arise, for example, when industrial disputes are presented as personality conflicts between a union leader and an industrial chief (ibid).

The elite or the 'knowns' in Gans' (1980:9) terminology could be political, economic, social or cultural figures whom journalists, reporters, editors and Television News directors would believe to be familiar names among the audience. Some of the 'knowns' or elite might not be those known by names but those people who 'occupy known positions, like governor of large state or major city' (ibid). The 'knowns' in Television News also include those people who are seen as 'alleged and actual violators of the laws and mores' (ibid). These could include people who break the law, or become involved in political scandals, or have murdered well known people.

Apart from the 'knowns', Television News has another category of unknown individuals seen in terms of their actions. This includes protesters, 'rioters' and strikers. These people are

shown in the News 'when they act in opposition, especially against government policies' (Gans, 1980:10). Some become victims of circumstances, mostly of violence, crime and natural or social disorders.

The categorisation of News cannot be understood as a true account or presentation of real situations. It is often an attempt to obstruct the quest for meaning. It tries to control and confine the meaning of social life. Television News does not actually tell us about society. It is concerned about certain aspects of society and tells us quite a lot about television⁷ (Fiske 1987:281). Certain topics are included and are treated in a particular way. This categorisation is part of Television News' attempts to mask its social process of presentation, presenting itself as objective, as driven by events in the real world. Objectivity is impossible to achieve even if it is desirable because it is compromised by subjectivity. Subjectivity marks the extent to which interpretation and construction are involved in News production.

Reporters sign off as both an individual and institutional voice. His or her function is to mediate between "raw reality" and the final truth spoken by the news reader. Different reporters can make different contributions to the same "truth", they need individual signatures so that their "truth" appears subjective, "nominated" and therefore lower in discursive hierarchy than the truth of the news reader (Fiske, 1987:288-289).

The SABC's Code of Ethics and Editorial Guidelines have committed it to 'impartiality' as opposed to 'objectivity'. Impartiality is seen as the cornerstone of its journalism. In this view, the criteria of newsworthiness is the best expertise available, and explanations of events will be investigated and tested against a variety of attitudes. People of all persuasions make their own contribution and interviews would allow those interviewed to air their significant contributions and grievances, and uniformity will be applied in the questioning of all sides. An impartial journalism implies that all sides have an opportunity to speak in a single News

item, or that other relevant views will be covered. A narrow focus showing only one side of an argument may not be justified, because selection of News should be based on the spread of ideas in society (SABC Ethical Code 1994:23).

In conclusion, Television News is a social product produced by media organizations. These media organizations are part of the society. According to Oosthuizen (1989:4) the policy that affects the media directly or indirectly is made by various interest groups in society which interact with one another. Thus media is not made in a vacuum but in a wide environment which may influence it directly or indirectly. The next chapter looks at some of the theoretical perspectives of media organizations.

ENDNOTES

1. Connell, (1980:16)
2. Boyd-Barret and Braham, (1987:163). Class inequalities remain the central structural axis of capitalist societies because most people in these societies get most of their information about the social structure from the mass media, and by and large control over their crucial flow of social imagery is concentrated in the hands of groups towards the top end of class structure.
3. Marx and Engels, (1965:61). In fact, they argue that those who own the means of production also control the distribution of economic resources. Hence, while their positions as owners make the capitalist class the dominant economic class, their control over the production and distribution of material goods and symbol systems provides the means through which their power can be maintained. The media can be used to dominate the subordinate group.

4. Abercrombie, (1980:4). The ruling class could be the state. The state has both political and economic power. This argument can be furthered by assessing a fundamentalist-Marxist approach as advocated by Murdock and Golding (1987) based on the assumption that the dynamics of the culture-producing industries can be understood in terms of their economic determination. The ideal behind this assumption is that the contents of the media and the meanings carried by their message are determined by the economic base of the organisation in which they are produced.
5. R. Teer-Tomaselli, (1992:15).
6. Connell (1980:17) argues against the importance of Television News and considers it to be a myth. He maintains that in a variety of studies, the pictures and definitions constructed by journalistic practices provide 'biased' or 'distorted' accounts of an independent and objective reality. They are distorted or biased because they are informed by a body of ruling and 'dominant ideas' which are said to 'belong' to the ruling political or economic groups.
7. SABC Ethical Code, (1994:109). The SABC accepts that in a democratic society investigative journalism should be open but in some instances, its journalists would be forced to use secret methods which must be approved by the editor concerned. If the editor has any doubt as to the legality of the methods, he/she will seek the advice of the SABC's legal team.
8. A. Bell, (1991:191). Alternative sources tend to be ignored, eg. individuals, opposition parties, unions, minorities, fringe groups and the disadvantaged. Among politicians it is ministers who have an overwhelming access to the media.
9. J. Fiske, (1987:281).

CHAPTER THREE

Some theoretical considerations of the media

Media organizations are part of society and as a result cannot be divorced from the wider norms and values within society. Processes can involve political, economic, social and legal policies that directly or indirectly are made by the various interest groups in society which also interact with one another.

Therefore, media policy is not made in a vacuum but in a wide external environment which may influence it directly or indirectly. The fundamental values prevalent in society form the basis of this external environment (Oosthuisen, 1989: 4). The basic argument can be how media organizations are controlled by the external and internal forces (Gallagher, 1982:154). It cannot be assumed that mass communication organizations are directing or even particularly effectively controlled by other powerful social institutions.

The question of control of the media

To examine these processes, Gallagher (1982:151) assesses what she believes to be the most fundamental question, that is 'who controls the media'. She broadens this question by arguing that the question of control appears to be significant because it indicates the extent to which media practitioners employed in their organizations shape output. The SABC has established a code of ethics and editorial guidelines for its staff that reflects policies on how information should be disseminated to the public. SABC journalists and reporters are expected to confine themselves within the parameters expressed by the guidelines. This

professional ethos includes accuracy, balance, impartiality, fairness, credibility, and diversity (SABC Ethical Code, 1994).

Gallagher (1982:154) describes the question of control of media organizations as a complex one, indicating the inter-relationship between external factors such as political, social and economic constraints against the internal limitations that can include professional ideologies, ownership, management structure, code of ethics, editorial policies and so forth.

Murdock (1982:122), in trying to assess and respond to the question of control, distinguishes two important levels of control. The first of these is 'allocative control', ie. the power of the shareholder to define the overall goals and scope of media organizations and to determine the way in which their productive resources should be developed. The SABC Board established in 1993 remains the major policy maker, laying down the full overall policy and strategy of the medium and deciding on expansion and rationalisation.

'Allocative control' is also vested in the hands of the shareholders who have the right to determine the overall question of control. The implication derived from this position might be that control over the production and distribution of ideas is also concentrated in the hands of the owners of the means of production; that as a result, the shareholders' understanding and account of the world receives much immediate publicity and so comes to dominate the thinking of the audience or viewers. This ideological imposition can ultimately result in preserving unbalanced situations of class inequalities (Boyd-Barret, 1987).

The other level of control, 'operational control', is based on decisions about how effectively resources are being used, and is also concerned with the implementation of policies already decided upon at the allocative control level. Gallagher's (1982:151-171) questions of who controls the media appear to be, broadly speaking, insufficient to elucidate theories of media organisations.

Murdock (1982:109) substitutes the question of who controls the media with specific fundamental questions: Where is control over large communication corporations concentrated? Whose interest does it serve, and how does it shape the range and the content of day-to-day production?

In pursuing the question of control, Murdock takes into account two factors. These are the media organizations' legal ownership and their economic ownership. The distinction between these two levels could mean that shareholders are not equal and that owning shares does not necessarily guarantee them any influence and control over the organizations' activities and policies.

Murdock's understanding of media control transcends Gallagher's argument. He stresses that for legal ownership to become economic ownership, the number of shares that one company holds determines the position.

The shares need to be 'voting shares' entitling the holder to vote in the elections to the board of directors - the company's central decision-making forum. Secondly, holders must be able to translate their voting power into effective representation on the board or that subsection of it responsible for their allocative decision (Murdock, 1982: 123).

To elaborate on the question of control of media organisations, Gallagher (1982:162-163) outlines three theoretical perspectives that she derived from recent studies of media organisations. The perspectives are:

- i) The liberal-pluralist view that perceives the media organisations and their practitioners as autonomous, responsible institutions and individuals.
- ii) The Marxist perspectives perceive the media organizations as well as their practitioners emerging from the dominant institutions and ideology of the state. The state is in most cases about governing, exercising and controlling power. The ideas of the state remain crucially significant.
- iii) The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; the class which is the ruling material force in society, is at the same time its ruling influencing force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it... (Marx and Engels 1974:136-7).

The fact that the 'ruling ideas' are dominant means that the audience could be subordinated to hold beliefs which guarantee their continued subordination. This perspective of dominant

ideology imposes what should be done, deciding and dictating how organizations should distribute which information. This could lead to a situation in which the media would be viewed as a monolithic structure operating in the interests of the few.

Masterman (1980:190) however contends that, depending on the environment, the dominant ideology cannot be simply imposed upon the subordinate groups at all times, 'but often appears to be acceptable, and even to speaks to the interests of the subordinate classes'.

In South Africa, media organizations cannot be divorced from the Marxist perspective. Pahad (1993:126) is much concerned with the monopoly of the media in South Africa and argues that they have suffered greatly from state oppression which curbed their freedom. State oppression denied working class people the ability to reflect upon their own lives. Popular access means the media should reflect the grievances, aspirations, feelings and degradation of these people's lives so that we can begin to understand what the majority of the people of this country are going through (Pahad, 1993:126).

Eric Louw (1993) in writing about the South African media, agrees with Pahad in maintaining that the state under the Nationalist government owned the most powerful news medium, that being television under the SABC. This created problems and it became difficult to distanciate broadcasting from the government. The state had political power and authority concerning what should be carried out. This is what McQuail (1993) calls the 'Authoritative' theory of the state.

The authoritative theory states that the level of true independence in broadcasting and of the SABC's journalists are ultimately subject to the authority of the government. The government could impose its authority upon broadcasting organizations through legislation, direct control of production, codes of conduct, use of taxation and other kinds of economic sanctions, controlled import of foreign media, and the right of appointment of editorial staff.

McQuail (1983:217) outlines five elements of the authoritative theory that media organizations could be subjected to:

- Media organizations cannot undermine established authority.
- They should always show subordination to authority.
- No offence to the majority, or dominant, moral and political values.
- Attacks on authority are highly condemned and could be viewed as contravention of the official policy, which could be serious criminal offenses.
- Censorship remains the only solution to enforce these rules.

McQuail (1983:217), in common with Gallagher, identifies the licensing of broadcasts as another form of authoritative control and a way used by government to gain direct access in order to address the needs of its constituency. The granting of broadcasting licenses to media organizations by the government remains a crucial determinant because they undergo review by the state to obtain relicensing or rechartering. The review process could be a direct scrutiny or an occasional assessment. Because of the complex relationship between the media institutions and other dominant social and political institutions, it can be argued that the media institutions will tend to reinforce, challenge or question prevailing social and political hierarchies (Gallagher, 1982:161).

The period of review has profound effects on all internal decision-making over the types of programmes, since the organizations tend to construct their programme schedules to gain the political support of various sections of the community. According to Gallagher (1982:160) since the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was established fifty years ago, it has been subjected to at least twelve major reviews which have affected its internal interests. One can argue that the story of broadcasting is in many ways a history of how broadcasting organizations set about the task of staying in business. The actual programmes reveal the institution's needs as much as the interests of the audience (Smith, 1973, 59). Therefore, the authoritative theory is about the exercising and reflection of power in programming output. It gives justification for the submission of the media to those who hold power in society, 'whether legitimately or not' (McQuail, 1993:217).

The last perspective is called 'social action analysis'. It analyses the relationship between media organizations and the external environment, how the organizations operate, and develops a hypothesis of the internal and external factors and the relationship between these factors. If we analyze the socio-historical development of media organizations, the analysis will help us to locate them within a particular social framework that will enable us to consider the relative importance of institutional and occupational factors in shaping media output (Gallagher, 1982:154).

Gallagher (1982:166) maintains that none of the theories mentioned above has received empirical justification. Therefore people should not assume that mass communication organizations are directly or even effectively controlled by other powerful social institutions,

because external constraints are stimulated by equally influential demands on the organizations themselves.

The notion of objectivity (in News presentation).

In a nutshell, the SABC does not believe in the notion of objectivity but has clung to impartiality as an achievable goal and a central justification of its role in bringing democratic practices to its News programmes. One of the reasons that could have led to the SABC's belief in the principle of impartiality could be the attack on objectivity which has taken place in the Twentieth Century, in particular from structuralists, post-Einsteinian physicists, and psycho-analysts (Fiske, 1987).

It should be borne in mind that when the media professionals speak of 'objectivity', they are actually reflecting and affirming their world view. Collins (1990:117) proposes that information in Television News output is produced, selected, organised, structured and biased. Lodziak (1984) maintains that the perceptions of individual journalists are defined by editorial policies which reflect an ideological position in relation to the economic and time constraints involved in News products, and in relation to the state, in particular the government of the day. Because of all these ideological factors which impact on the decision-making body, it can be argued that 'the News that we are presented with could certainly be other than it is' (Lodziak, 1984:49). Stuart Hall (1973:77) warned that News values appear to be a set of neutral, routine practices, but there is a need also to see formal News as an ideological structure -- to examine these rules as the formalization and operationalization of an ideology of News.

Gans (1979:182) writing on 'Deciding what is News' argues that objectivity is one means used by journalists to do away with conscious values. The value exclusion defends journalists against direct criticisms, and protects them against powerful critics for censorship and self-censorship. Objectivity justifies journalists' right to individual autonomy, and through objectivity they are able to select News.

The big problem facing the journalists in their selection of News items is the extent to which they apply personal detachment and disregard the implications of the News. Gans (1979:183) argues that journalists use objectivity to reach evaluative conclusions and to state their own opinions. Their intent is to exclude conscious personal values and their opinions become 'subjective reactions' which come from 'objectively' gathered News. Journalists try to live up to their expectations and definition of objectivity. Lodziak (1984:60) assessed the notion of objectivity as being impossible to achieve because News-production teams depend on News agencies which actually means a dependence on News which has already been selected for them. Cohen and Young (1981:53) fully support this stance, since for them News is the outcome of work practices and bureaucracies. It should not be forgotten that journalists are workers in their institutions and that perhaps some have been trained and socialised by their institutions to attain certain goals.

The reasons why journalists and News organisations fail to give an impartial account of events can be best explained by the theory of 'Mr Gates' or the 'gatekeeping' concept. The concept of 'Mr Gates' first appeared in the work of David White in the United States of America in 1950. The concept of the gatekeeper implies the powerful and often overly prejudiced 'Mr Gates' who selects, processes and organizes the information to be made

available to an audience which is by implication at least passive and unsuspecting (Gallagher 1982:153).

The theory of 'Mr Gates' is a form of censorship and selection of information. According to Lodziak (1984:61), the journalist is a gatekeeper who is consciously or unconsciously selecting, rejecting, emphasizing and de-emphasizing events so that News in its final form is a highly subjective product. Apart from the journalists, other gatekeepers are the News editors, whose overall function is to control the Newsroom as its chief censors. They have the power to decide which items are to be covered, and how they should be covered and this selection process is extreme censorship practice. Tuchman (1980:16) describes News as a 'window for the world'. The problem lies with the media people who decide where to build the window and this limits the receiver's understanding of the world. It can be stressed that what finally comes out as News is never a complete account of events of concern and interest to the public.

Gans (1979:183), in trying to argue against the importance of the notion of objectivity to journalists, argues that objectivity is used to protect the credibility of journalists because journalists' stories are shaped by the dominant discourses found in media organizations. Gans (1979:186) also stresses that journalists see objectivity in negative terms. It prevents them from reporting what they know to be lies. They cannot prove that sources are lying, for they have not been able to do the necessary legwork. This is why investigative reporters who have done the legwork are allowed to identify liars more explicitly. Nor do journalists know how to report politicians who are either unaware that they are lying or powerful enough to define honesty to suit their needs.

Having said that, I would like to conclude this chapter by stressing that media organisations possess attributes which include: hierarchical structure, an internal division of labour, the role of differentiation, clearly or ambiguously specified and accepted institutional goals, translated into specific policies and organizational practices which communicators should follow.

CHAPTER FOUR

Defining the meaning of violence

This section starts by broadly defining the term violence, and tries to establish the meaning of 'political violence'.

Violence ... occurs when the challenging group senses that the surrounding community will condone it, when hostility toward the victim renders it a relatively safe strategy (Gamson, W: 1974:39).

There are two commonly held, diverse schools of thought concerning the nature of political violence. Firstly, there are those people who argue that political violence is restricted to isolated black townships and poses no threat to the integrity of those who stay in the 'white' areas of South Africa. This belief rests on the comparison of events such as the Sharpsville Massacre of March 1960, the Soweto uprisings of 1976, and the Vaal townships violence of 1984, with all other events being relegated as brief, isolated spots of violence. These interpretations seem to rest on the belief that violent incidents occur in isolation, are not related and are contained within the confines of black townships. The other assumption was made by Lodge (1978) and Magubane (1979), who made no attempt to quantify political violence for the purpose of dismissing isolated incidents because only two or three people were killed instead an arbitrary 10 to 15, or because only one school was set alight in one week instead of four or five. Looking on the portrayal of violence on television, Barrie Gunter (1985:2) identifies three broad methods of portraying of violence:

- * The first perspective deals with the behaviour of the perpetrator of violence. It is defined in terms of the seriousness and intensity of the perpetrators' behaviour. It refers to behaviour which is considered

excessive or unrestrained, and this behaviour is accompanied by some justifications for the perpetrators's actions. This violent behaviour could be that which is perceived by some people to be immoral, antisocial or unjustified;

- * The second perspective examines the results of violence from the victim's point of view. This means that those most affected by violence were given the opportunity to articulate their own experiences; and
- * Another perspective in defining violence is to take into account killing, injuring and inflicting pain as 'violence' and to try to classify violent events in terms of their outcomes for victims.

Having said that, I would like to shift the focus to 'political violence'. The term 'political violence' is problematic. There is no universally accepted definition of political violence. Zimmerman (1983:6) also notes it as problematic and argues that the distinction between violence and political violence is arbitrary. He recommends that broad criteria for political violence should be given. Like Barrie Gunter, Zimmerman proposes that the victims, the intentions of the perpetrators, and the reactions of the public should be used as the basic criteria to distinguish whether or not violence has political overtones. He suggests a definition of political violence as being:

Acts of disruption, destruction and injury whose purpose, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and/or effects have political significance, that is intended to modify

the behaviour of others in a bargaining situation that has consequences to the social system. (Zimmerman, 1983:6)

Richard Clutterbuck (1986:14) describes political violence as violence with a calculated political aim; however it can be conducted or organised by people with the intention as well as the sophistication to make such political calculations. One of the political motives could be to overthrow the government through indirect, illegal, violent means. These include misrepresentation, deception or betrayal of trust, rioting, burning, bombing, kidnapping and killing of people ¹.

From the above, the calculated plot of political violence could be different in terms of various motives and settings. It could be employed as a means not only to undermine the authority of the state but to undermine the superiority of certain individuals within certain political parties. It could be used to ensure that certain organizations are recognised by the government.

During the period under examination, the SABC News channels, both CCV News and TV1, have often reported increased political violence in the PWV area as clashes between IFP and ANC supporters. During this period it was clear that the ANC, led by President Nelson Mandela, would win the elections. On the same note, the TEC (Transitional Executive Council), led by both the ANC and the National Party, tried to encourage the IFP and its leadership, together with other parties, not to boycott the elections.

Another incident of political violence to undermine authority was the bombing of Jan Smuts Airport by AWB members during the elections. The fact that the AWB opposed the elections

and ultimately boycotted them, could be seen as a way of undermining the authority of the TEC and of disapproving democratic changes. These kinds of political violence are differently understood by different institutions.

Richard Clutterbuck (1981:2) writing on how 'terrorism' is handled in a range of television programmes, both factual and fictional, proposes various elements that make violence political: these are violence in industrial disputes, in political demonstrations, and in 'terrorism'. Schlesinger, Murdock and Elliot (1983:2) identify three broad perspectives of violence, and have accommodated an understanding of political violence. The three perspectives are:

- * the 'Official' perspective;
- * the 'alternative' perspective; and
- * the 'oppositional' or popularist perspective.

The 'official' perspective comes from those people who speak on behalf of the state. These people could be representatives of the state, including government ministers, conservative politicians and security personnel. Their high status ensures that they are News sources as their opinions are considered important in News coverage. From the News analyzed in Chapter Five, the government through security forces and the police, reported violent incidents to the SABC. The TEC stressed the violence in KwaZulu and Natal was a direct effort by the IFP to prevent or disrupt the elections from taking place. The TEC welcomed then President F.W. de Klerk declaring the state of emergency in KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, new proclamations regarding the carrying of weapons in public were instituted. These precluded the carrying of illegal weapons, with fines and imprisonment of up to ten years. However, the official perspective is, according to Schlesinger et al (1983:2), by no means

a coherent set of ideas. It has limitations and irregularities in its understanding of the public and has its own confidential report prepared for the selected state and government officials. Therefore, the official perspective is by no means above conflict. A good example can be seen on the interpretation of terrorism.

the official perspective removes terrorism from the political arena by stressing its essential criminality. Meanwhile it places it firmly on the political agenda by presenting it as part of the Soviet Union's continuing attempt to destabilise Western democracies (ibid).

From the above, it can be seen that the state adopted different measures to combat terrorism. There is a need for the state to deal with violence, so as to maintain law and order. On the one hand Schlesinger, Murdock and Elliot (1983:3) argue that an exceptional threat to the state also requires an exceptional response which may entail suspending the due process of law and the right to trial. The official perspective might also incriminate all those who take up arms against the democratic order, including political parties opposed to the government, extra-parliamentary training etc.

As indicated above, there are tensions within the official perspective on the need to develop effective 'counter-terrorist measures' and the need to defend civil liberties. A good example occurred in the British parliament when the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1976 was debated in March 1983.

Some proponents of the official perspective, like Conservative MP Sir John Biggs-Davison, believed that exceptional threats to the state needed exceptional measures. Others, including Home Affairs Secretary William Whitelaw, appealed to all to deal effectively with the perpetrators of violence and saw the Act impinging on the freedom of the tradition of civil liberties (Schlesinger, Murdock, and Elliot, 1983:15).

The alternative perspective is based on a set of ideas, views, ideas, arguments, explanations and policy suggestions from those who accept that violence is not justified within the liberal democracies (Schlesinger, Murdock, and Elliot, 1983:16). During negotiations at World Trade Centre near Kempton Park in Johannesburg, the TEC, led by the ANC, condemned political violence in KwaZulu-Natal and East Rand black townships including Katlehong, Tembisa, Vosloorus and Alexandra. The ANC understood violence as a means of destroying the elections and turning the country to anarchy. The TEC tried to ensure that its own views received coverage in the media. It recognised and understood that violence was justified in certain political systems, and that interpretations of violence differ from one system to the other.

Schlesinger et al (1983:16-17) argue that the alternative perspective has its roots in the context of the upsurge of political violence and the growth of state repression. But it fails to challenge the 'official perspective's' claim for legitimate use of violent means. What the proponents of the alternative perspective do is to question the implications of excessive state repression for the rule of law and democratic rights, and question the official modus operandi of repression. Instead, they advocate strategies for political change and social engineering designed to deal with and alleviate violence and tackle its causes. This leads me to the last perspective which is called the populist perspective.

The populist perspective can also be referred to as the oppositional perspective (Schlesinger et al, 1983:25). It justifies the use of violence to pursue politically motivated ends. It is advocated by those who perform acts of politically motivated violence, or by those who

either speak for them directly or share their objectives. They are oppositional to the official views. Their actions can result in injury, death, and damage to property.

There are two main justifications used by those who employ anti-state political violence:

- * They believe that economically and politically the state is a repressive instrument which constrains those within it. Their actions are aimed at showing the state that political actions are possible and can be effective.
- * Political violence is seen as a necessary instrument especially during national or sectional liberation situations where the state is seen having adopted a 'colonial' rule towards another people or towards a section of its population. In this instance warfare becomes a realistic strategy to adopt, although it is rejected by the authorities.

Having provided an overview of political violence in South Africa, I would like to devote attention to the analysis of political violence as recorded and the case studies of two of South Africa's provinces, KwaZulu-Natal and Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging. Chapter 5 focuses on the theoretical framework in which this analysis is carried out.

Endnotes

1. These acts of violence mean that people pin their hopes on destabilising the state: by undermining the morale of its ministers, officials and security forces, including the police, by provoking them to over-react, and by driving the public to lose confidence in both the will and the ability of the government to control the situation. Fearing for the safety of their families, people clutch in desperation at the lifeline of a totalitarian or authoritarian leadership which seems to know what it wants to do and offers the hope of restoring order.

CHAPTER FIVE

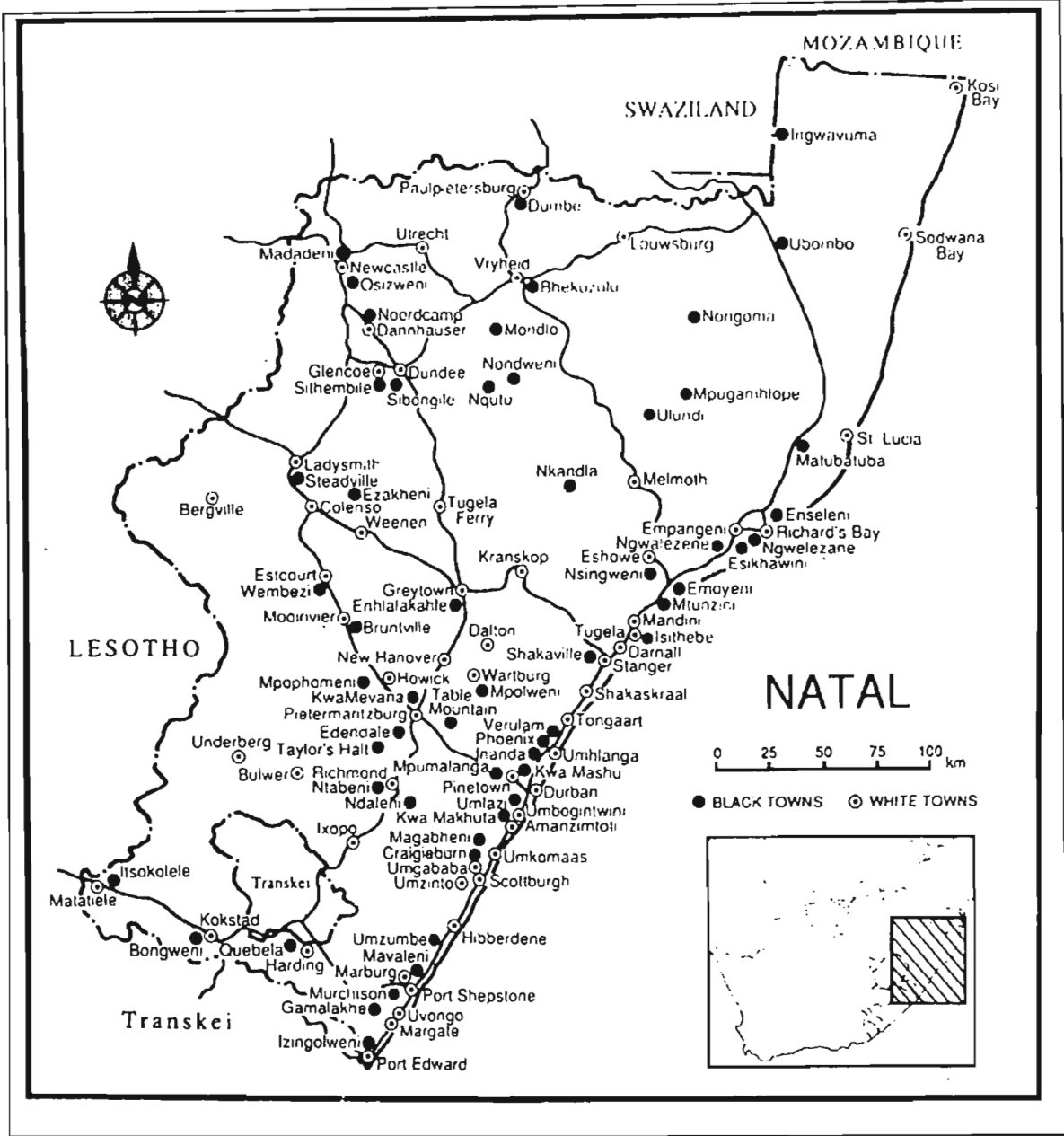
Analysis of recorded tapes

In this section there are two case studies of how the SABC television channels portrayed violence before the elections. These are: the KwaZulu-Natal case study, and the PWV area case study.

This section attempts to compare how SABC TV1 and CCV portrayed violence in these areas. The investigation included News broadcasts, reports from News presenters and original statements and eye-witness accounts from SABC journalists who have attended the events in a reporting capacity.

The News bulletins taken from CCV were originally broadcasted in Zulu. Those from TV1 were in English and Afrikaans. The transcripts used in this dissertation have been translated into English by myself.

Case Study: KwaZulu-Natal Violence



TV1 News on Saturday 26 March 1994.

This News bulletin covered the attack on Jacob Zuma’s parents’ house. The visuals indicated that the house was severely damaged and burnt down. Some people appeared in the visuals looking demoralised and shocked. A map of KwaZulu-Natal was used to indicate the location of the area where the incident took place.

There was a voice over by Marietta Kruger:

Whilst 16 people were killed in political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Jacob Zuma of the ANC said that the house where he grew up was burnt down and suspected that to be the result of political violence between the IFP and the ANC. His wife, Mrs Zuma, said that at the gathering held on Friday, they were told that all the ANC members' houses would be burnt down (ibid).

The lack of visuals showing both Mr Zuma and his wife raises the question of the importance accorded to Mr Zuma as the leader of the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal area. The lack of details concerning the 16 people killed as mentioned in the quotation, invites the criticism that victims of violence are not important. No names of victims were given, only statistics were reported. Although the CCV News failed to report this violence, Zuma's parents' house mattered most, not the lives of those died. The report implies that it was an act of political violence between the IFP and the ANC.

Lack of sufficient evidence, that is reports and interviews from eye-witnesses of both ANC and IFP, raises the question of impartiality and fairness. The fact that the TV1 relied on what Mr Zuma and his wife said implies that the report is one-sided.

Another discrepancy is the report by Veronica van der Westhuizen in KwaMashu. She reported that:

In KwaMashu, Mafilika Mbuli was killed as he was trying to mediate between the hostel dwellers and the ANC Youth League. He was shot dead on his way back home and in another incident a car was burnt to ashes (TV1 Nuus 26.03.94).

The accompanying footage is file footage of violence in the KwaMashu area, showing people running away from their houses. There is no relationship between the report and the footage. The scenes indicated no hostels or even the ANC youth. The opening sequence is a dramatic

shot as the camera focused on the running action in the street and burnt houses. The meaning of the footage might be misleading to the audience as it does not show the victim(s); instead of showing the burnt car, it shows burnt houses. Again, no eyewitnesses were interviewed. The coverage of violence in this manner is questionable and appears to be from the journalist's point of view.

As a result of the escalating level of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, the TEC proposed to the National Party government that a declaration of a state of emergency was inevitable. The declaration of the state of emergency was even reiterated by the ANC's General Secretary and chief negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa, who said 'it would ensure that free and fair elections are conducted in KwaZulu-Natal' (T.V. News 26.3.94).

TV1 News, 2 Saturday April 1994.

On Saturday, Television News covered the deployment of the SADF troops in KwaZulu-Natal. This was a result of the endemic violence in Natal. The main News story was how the troops would be deployed. The main visual and pictorial accompaniment was Colonel Franz Verfus using the map of KwaZulu-Natal to indicate the areas where the troops would be deployed. The visuals showed caspiers carrying soldiers moving in the village. The coverage indicated that the only means to stop violence was through the declaration of a state of emergency. The coverage of Colonel Franz Verfus indicated support for and justification of the state of emergency, as SABC journalist Veronica Oosthuisen reported:

Bambayi and KwaMashu are very quite during day time, it is only at night that violence usually erupts. It is where security will be needed most (TV1 News, 2.4.94).

This utterance was in support of the state of emergency.

Similar utterances were made on CCV News on Monday 4th April by an unnamed reporter.

The News was as follows:

Visual	Audio
1. Themba Makeleni in the studio.	Good Evening. As a result of the Easter weekend violence, the high police structure and the SADF will be holding a meeting in KwaZulu to try to control violence in the area. Captain van Niekerk of the security forces said that the meeting will address violence in Natal. They are also to discuss the role that the KwaZulu police will play in controlling violence. Three SADF groups will be distributed in Natal and the other groups will follow.
2. Procession of SADF troops vehicles moving in rural area and a close shot of Gatsha Buthelezi entering the church.	Unnamed reporter: Within a short time about 500 troops will be send to stabilise the situation in Natal. Even though the situation is tense, the police will try to cool it down. In Ulundi our reporter met Buthelezi who informed him that the tense situation in KwaZulu-Natal does not guarantee that he will not participate in the coming elections.
3. Camera shot of Buthelezi in front of the church interviewed by the journalist.	Buthelezi: If the negotiations or rather the discussions between the President de Klerk, Mr Mandela, His Majesty, King Goodwill Zwelithini, and myself do not come up with resolutions which can make it possible for us to participate in the elections, then of course we will continue to play a role of being opposed to the status quo.
4. Cut to people demonstrating carrying 'traditional' weapons.	Unnamed reporter voice over: In connection with the traditional weapons, Buthelezi could not see any reason why they should be forbidden.
5. Buthelezi standing in front of the church being interviewed.	Buthelezi: They are banning Zulu cultural weapons and people are still killed with guns.

From the above reports, we can see that CCV perceived the escalating violence in KwaZulu-Natal areas caused by the disputed status of King Goodwill Zwelithini and Inkatha's non-participation in the democratic process. The then KwaZulu Chief Minister, Gatsha Buthelezi

and the Inkatha Freedom Party were depicted as being responsible for the killings, demonstrated by the fact that he is the only person interviewed.

The picture showing the demonstrating Zulus, conveyed the most powerful message, that of Zulu national pride, symbolised in shots of chanting, ululating rural 'warriors' with their rhythmically knocking sticks and kerries (ibid). What is amazing is that this scene was repeated several times from different angles on CCV, and not on TV1. The most powerful shot was of an impi member pointing his cultural weapon directly at the camera. From this position the camera moved in a semi-circle, covering a large contingent of the Zulu impis singing their cultural song. The scene provided a message that the cultural weapons were part of Zulu culture and there was no way that the Zulus could do away with them. It also implied that the cultural weapons were not responsible for the killings and the Zulus were happy with these weapons. But in contrast to these weapons, CCV's Themba Makeleni wrapped up the News item by stressing the carrying of weapons in this way:

MAKELANI: The troops have been given extra powers to arrest and detain those who threaten public safety, and the maintenance of law and order. Fines and a maximum of ten years in prison will be imposed on offenses contravening the regulation. Some offenses include: the organizing of unauthorised military training and the construction of weapons. (CCV News 4.4.1994)

There were similarities between the discourses of Makeleni and that of colonel Franz Verfus, who strongly stressed the significance of the SADF and its ability to combat violence. The carrying of cultural weapons by the Zulus was from the government's point of view a threat to public safety. These cultural weapons were made and constructed by the Zulu people themselves. Therefore, it was illegal to carry them in public. It can be argued that violence on CCV News was interpreted from the government point of view.

Another discrepancy was how TV1 reported Buthelezi with regard to participation in the elections. The report was substantially narrated by the **Sky News** unnamed reporter:

Mr Buthelezi told Sky News that if the meeting between himself, the State President, F.W. de Klerk, Mr Mandela, and King Goodwill Zwelithini does not address the problem facing KwaZulu, he will not participate in the forthcoming elections (TV1, 4.4.94)

The above indicates that TV1 relied on other external agencies in presenting matters of national interest. The difference with CCV News was that Buthelezi was interviewed directly facing the camera, whereas Sky News in TV1 showed Buthelezi talking with a voice over. The information in this report was second hand information.

Apart from Sky News, the portrayal of violence on both CCV and TV1 News after the deployment of SADF troops in KwaZulu-Natal areas justified the state of emergency and the police presence. On Monday 4 April 1994, CCV News presenter Makeleni reported that,

the police reported that two people have been killed in Umlazi, and another two in Nongoma, despite the quietness in the surrounding areas (ibid).

The pictorial accompaniment was a map of KwaZulu-Natal indicating Nongoma and Umlazi. Although TV1 News provided a similar map, the report was different as TV1 News presenter, **Jan van Niekerk** reported that 'the KwaZulu police said two people in Umlazi and two in Nongoma died'. The causes of the killings are not mentioned. It appears as if the journalists of both CCV and TV1 News could not attend the Umlazi incident, because the only visuals shown were of a Nongoma shopping complex. Lack of visual material about the Umlazi killings implies that when violence first occurred, the police not the journalists were the people with details of the situation. The police visit to the scene where violence

occurred, also provided the journalistic team with the opportunity of following up the story themselves.

After F.W. de Klerk’s declaration of the state of emergency, much coverage was accorded to the security forces. Violence was reported in terms of what the security forces said. This kind of approach appeared on CCV News shown on Tuesday, 5 April 1994.

Tuesday, 5 April 1994.

The News bulletin began with the usual introduction of the News readers: Themba Makeleni and Noxolo Grootboom in the studio.

Visuals	Audio
1. Grootboom:	Colonel Verfus of SADF said he is much concerned with the continuing violence in KwaZulu-Natal (CCV News, 5.4.94)
2. Colonel Verfus	Verfus: A conception has been created that KwaZulu police have been confined to barracks and now will not operate on the ground. If one reads the proclamation, nowhere does it say the KwaZulu police does not operate. That was the decision of the people who drew up the proclamation and they will have to make the decision on that.

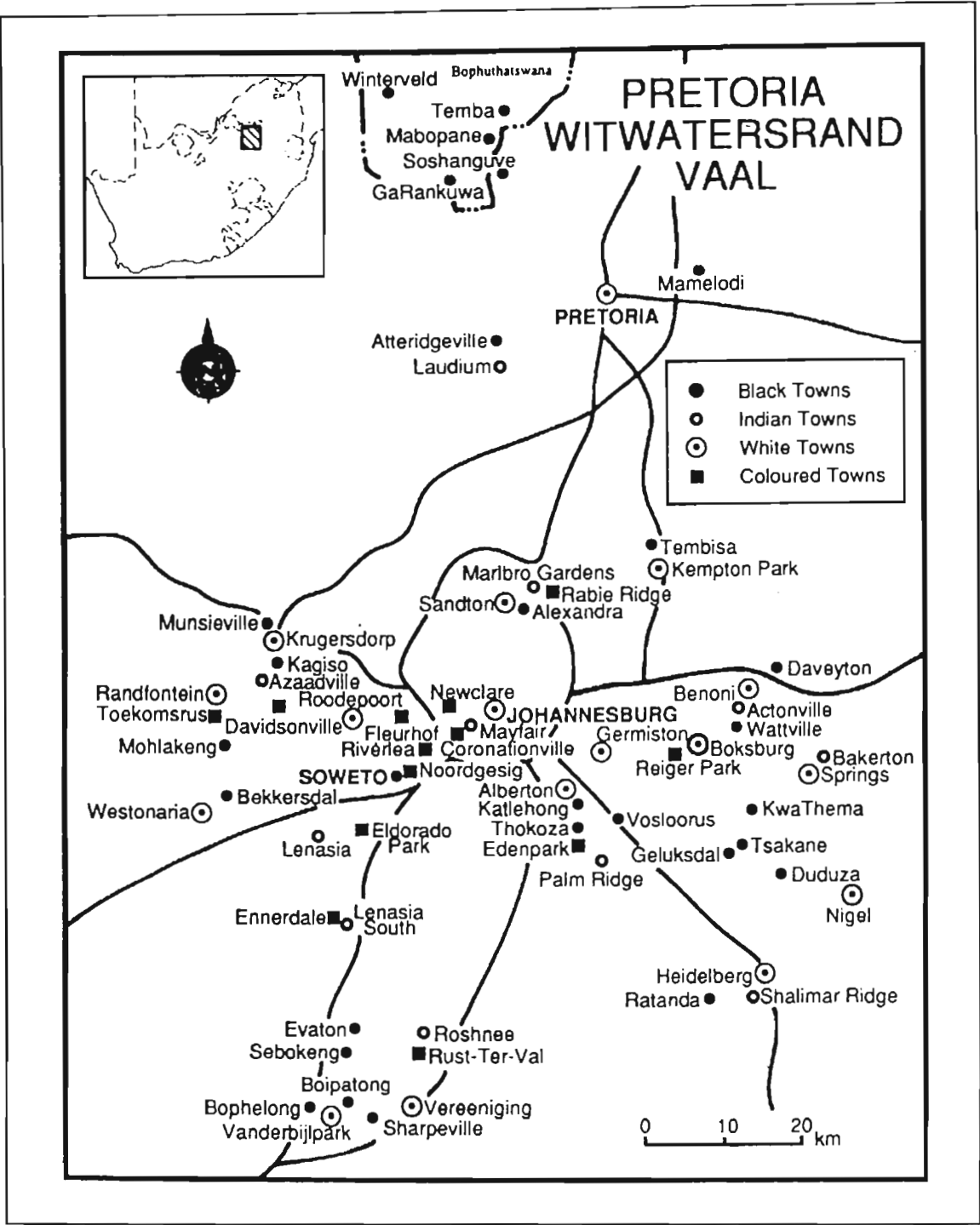
The images which preceded Verfus’ statement show the security forces in their vehicles in Bambayi. Then Verfus appears again facing the camera warning the people of KwaZulu and Natal about the carrying of weapons in public and the heavy fines that could be imposed. The warning seemed to have targeted the Zulu people, as Verfus went further to state that ‘it was not a ban on possession of weapons. The people who carry weapons in public as part of their culture are the Zulus’ (CCV News, 5.4.94)

From the above, the cause and increasing level of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal was presented and interpreted in terms of the carrying of weapons in public. The last statement made by colonel Franz Verfus, that the proclamation did not imply the ban on possession of weapons, did not explain the kind of weapons that the government was not banning. Also important is that the carrying of legalised weapons could incite violence. The News bulletin fails to state the cause of violence but reiterates measures that could be used to curb it. The possession of weapons without being displayed to the public could also cause violence. Although the cause of violence stemmed from political disagreements between the ANC and IFP, there is complete silence on the part of the ANC. There is no mention of ANC supporters clashing with the IFP supporters.

In some instances the journalists did not want to probe the cause of political violence, and this argument can be realised in Bongi Shishi's report for CCV News; 'during the day Bambayi and its surrounding areas are quite but during the night things start to go wrong' (CCV News 5.4.94). The journalist fails to indicate how and why the situation in Bambayi was that way. The statement lacks justification as no interviews with people staying in Bambayi were conducted.

Having indicated how political violence was reported in KwaZulu-Natal, I would like turn the focus to the PWV province.

Case Study: the PWV Violence



The violence which occurred in the PWV at the end of March and at the beginning of April was portrayed by both CCV and TV1 News bulletins as a clear manifestation of political violence between the two political organisations, the IFP and the ANC.

The most notable incident was clash between the IFP supporters and the ANC near the ANC headquarters at Plein Street, Shell House, in Johannesburg on the 16 March 1994. The clash occurred after the IFP supporters marched from Library Gardens in the city centre to ANC regional offices in Jeppe Street. After some shooting, they went to Shell House, where according to the survey conducted by the Human Rights Committee of South Africa (1994:5), 56 people died and 173 were injured. The march came in the wake of an ANC march which successfully took place a week before the IFP march, in West Street, Durban, where the ANC demanded free political activity in KwaZulu-Natal. The ANC believed that free political activity would ensure that elections were held in a free and fair manner.

On the one hand, the IFP was not part of the negotiation process, and amongst its demands were: a democratic South Africa with more powers given to regions, international mediation, the sovereignty of the Zulu monarch, and so on. Both SABC News channels covered the IFP march as follows.

TV1, Friday 26 March 1994.

During the evening after the IFP march in Johannesburg the main stories concerned the killings of people as a result of the march. The story of the march was the first headline of the bulletin. The report opened with the two News readers, Marietta Kruger and Riaan Cruywagen anchoring between the News stories. They appeared to be neutral and truthful.

Cruywagen: Good Evening. The biggest streets in the heartland of South Africa's economy, Johannesburg, came to a standstill as result of the Zulu march.

This kind of introduction presents different meanings to the march. Firstly, it could mean that the march was a blow to South Africa's economy and therefore was unacceptable, or that the march was historic and legitimate.

The News readers provided information on where the march started, why it took place, how many people were killed, and whether the police were brought to the scene or not. Although the journalist was unnamed, it seems that what was important was the report itself. The problem in their report was whether the march was organised by the IFP or KwaZulu royalists. The report continued as follows:

Riaan Cruywagen: Thousands of Zulu people marched through the streets of Johannesburg to pledge sovereignty to the Zulu Monarchy. The IFP had earlier asked for permission to continue with the march.

This report does not distinguish whether the march was organised by Zulus or the IFP. This kind of report also confuses the viewers. The point is that not all Zulu people were IFP supporters. It is also not very clear whether all the people present were Zulus. The report depended on the information supplied by the journalist and the cameraman. In another version of the clash, TV1 newsreader Marietta Kruger failed to acknowledge in her introduction the parties involved in clash. The point is that the News reader did not know the story and relied on the journalists who covered the event:

Marietta Kruger: Pandemonium broke out in which 300 people are reported to have been injured and 20 killed. Carrol Chryll and Jan Kobbie have the story.

Although the violence has been introduced, Carrol Chryll failed to point out that the clash was between the IFP supporters and the ANC. She was only interested at the statistics of those killed or injured. She was detached from the event, and appeared to be there to relay the truth, and remain aloof and uninvolved in the process of both presenting and making

News. She also appeared to be apprehensive, and avoided indicating the cause of the clash, and how the clash developed. It appeared also that she was unwilling to commit herself on the causes or consequences of the event, possibly because of a concern for her own safety.

Visuals

1. Cut marchers carrying sticks in Zulu attire dancing and singing.

2. Close up of a dead man.

3. Close up of person pointing to ANC headquarters.

4. Cut to the police carrying guns.

5. Cut to the injured victim.

Audio

Carrol Chryll: today near the ANC headquarters shots were fired. At least one person was killed so far. Marchers tried to seek security in nearby shops.

Unnamed victim VO: These people are shooting us, they are wrong.

Carrol Chryll, VO: more police were brought to the scene. During the course of the day nine people were killed and five injured. Many people are lying down with injuries. As more police were brought in, the situation remained the same.

Unnamed Victim, VO: the fire came from this building. The people were standing right there.

The above report is not concerned about the cause of violence. The journalist reports about the police. Even when the victim is shown pointing at the ANC headquarters, saying the shots came from the building, the journalists were silent in dismissing or supporting the statement. It appears the blame is on the IFP not the ANC.

TV1 News, 29 March 1994. On the third day after the IFP march in Johannesburg, the report opened with the usual studio introduction with news readers **Dhlomo** and **Reed** in the studio. The issue of the IFP march was still high on agenda. Dhlomo reported:

Tensions between the TEC and the IFP have reached a boiling point due to the bloody march in Johannesburg (TV1).

The statement indicated that the IFP was to blame for the killings, not the ANC. Although the IFP was blamed for directing the march to the ANC offices, the media continued to hide the shots that were fired by ANC security.

On the question of victims of violence, TV1 reported victims as follows:

Dhlomo: At least fifty-three people are reported to have died in violence in Johannesburg. The Goldstone Commission is considering preliminary investigations from both the ANC and the IFP.

The victims were reported as mere statistics. This kind of report differed from CCV News reported on Wednesday 30 March 1994. The CCV News on this day reported the results of the IFP march. The main item which received coverage was the killing of Mr Alwyn Van der Waldt. The report was as follows:

One of the deceased shot at the Library Gardens was Mr Alwyn van der Waldt, aged 33. He was sitting in his office facing the Library Gardens. The shot came through the window.

The visuals accompanying this report showed a broken window of the office, Mr Van der Waldt's wife together with his children. The journalist reporting the incident emphasised that the event was shocking. Although this item was clearly covered, the approach was changed when reporting on the black victims who were in the hospitals around Johannesburg. For example, in Hillbrow Hospital only visuals of victims were shown with no interviews.

To conclude this chapter, both CCV and TV1 News channels have been inconsistent in reporting political violence involving the ANC and IFP. The two case studies indicated how the SABC supported the government, the TEC, and the ANC thus implicating the IFP as main cause of violence. Both the government and the ANC were not implicated in political violence.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY

6. Research Design

The research design is described as the framework or scheme which provides for adequate and systematic investigation of a research problem. It is the overall plan which sets guidelines for conducting the research study (Polit & Hungler, 1991: 128). The objective of the present study is find out the community perception of the treatment of violence on television.

6.1 Subjects

The target subjects constitute the entire group of people about whom the researcher would like to draw conclusions and make generalizations (Polit & Hungler, 1991:131). In this study the subjects were drawn from both white and black middle class residents of East Bank near Alexandra, Protea North in Soweto, and Highlands North and Bramley, all situated east of Johannesburg.

For this study the four research sites were chosen based on the convenience of travel for the researcher. For selection of subjects a sampling frame was developed for each area using a list of all the people who posses television sets and watched Television News during the period under examination (14 March to 26 April 1994). What follows is a table indicating how the research was accomplished.

TABLE 6.1 **Total subjects and selected sample for study.**

Area	Total subjects	Selected Questionnaires
1. East Bank (Alexandra) 2. Protea	36	30
North (Soweto)	36	30
3. Highlands North	36	31
4. Bramley	36	30
Total	144	121

The procedure was pursued for each area. An equal number of subjects were selected in each area. All subjects deserved to be selected in the sample but for the researcher to arrive at 40 subjects, stratified random sampling was used in selecting the sample. The stratification was based on age, ranging from 20-29; 30-39; 40 and above. These ranges tried to accommodate people who might be in possession of television sets and able to watch Television News. There is general agreement that this kind stratification increase representativeness (Polit & Hungler, 1991).

6.2. Research Techniques

6.2.1. Unstructured interviews

On the 2nd September 1994, a preliminary examination was accomplished by the researcher conducting some semi-structured interviews with the local people of Temba location near Hammanskraal north of Pretoria. The information derived from these interviews was utilised to construct a structured questionnaire. Three residents of Temba location were separately interviewed. The interviewees were informed about the purpose of research and assured that the information received would be treated as confidential. The interviews were as follows:

Interview No 1

Researcher: What is your name?

Resident 1: I am Dan Mashishi.

Researcher: Where do you live?

Resident 1: Temba Township.

Researcher: How old are you?

Resident 1: I am 39 years old of age.

Researcher: Do you watch Television News?

Resident 1: Yes.

Researcher: When did you watch Television News, that is any time between 14 March and April 1994.

Resident 1: I watched Television News during both March and April this year.

Researcher: Which Television News channel did you watch?

Resident 1: I sometimes preferred to watch both CCV and TV1 but due to the fact that on Wednesdays attend evening classes at Vista University watched TV I.

Researcher: Were the news channel (s) watched reporting violence?

Resident 1: I would say yes, because there was political differences between the IFP and the ANC. The kind of violence that dominated television screens was politically motivated.

Researcher: How was violence shown on Television News?

Resident 1: It depended on the nature of violence. Pictures were used especially for violence in Natal when the IFP people were implicated as responsible for the killings. The pictures were used to make a clear report to the viewers. It was very rare to report ANC as killers.

Researcher: Were you able to differentiate between the victims of violence and those who witnessed it?

Resident 1: Victims of violence were mostly men and women and children. In some cases were interviewed. Eye-Witnesses were also interviewed by television journalists.

Researcher: What about the amount of time given to the victims and eye-Witnesses to explain their positions?

Resident 1: The time given was too little and biased to reveal the information.

Researcher: Do you think the victims and eye-witnesses were able to address themselves to the questions asked by the journalists?

Resident 1: Some were unable to address themselves to the questions because of fear, of being exposed to the public and communication problems.

Researcher: Finally, do you think the coverage of violence was fair on both channels?

Resident 1: It was fair to bring attention clearly to the viewers exactly what happened in other South African areas.

Interview No 2

Researcher: What is your name?

Resident 2: Jones Tompa.

Researcher: How old are you?

Resident 2: 26 years old.

Researcher: Do you watch Television News?

Resident 2: Yes.

Researcher: When did you watch Television News, that is any time between 14 March and 26 April 1994?

Resident 2: March to April 1994.

Researcher: Which Television News channel did you prefer to watch?

Resident 2: I preferred to watch CCV news channel.

Researcher: Did the news channel report violence?

Resident 2: Yes, it was black on black kind of violence involving the political parties, in particular the ANC and IFP, as well as the soft rebellion conducted by the far right wing.

Researcher: How was violence reported?

Resident: The pictures shown were of blacks killing one another, taxi ranks bombs and eye-witnesses reporting such incidents.

Researcher: Did you differentiate between the victims of violence and those people who witnessed it?

Resident 2: Yes. The victims were sprawled on the ground and witnesses gathered to around the scene.

Researcher: What about the amount of the journalists gave the victims and eye-witnesses to explain situations.

Resident 2: At some instances the journalists were showing a measure of bias for the ANC.

Researcher: Do you think the victims and eye-witnesses were able to address themselves to the questions asked by the journalists?

Resident 2: No. some, instead of answering the questions asked, involved themselves in attacking the other party.

Researcher: Finally, do you think the coverage of violence was fair?

Resident 2: No most incidents were not covered. It was as if violence occurred only in certain areas such as KwaZulu-Natal, and PWV. The political violence in the Eastern Cape was not adequately covered on television.

Interview No 3

Researcher: What is your name?

Resident 3: I am Maki Eikens.

Researcher: How old are you?

Resident 3: 45 years old of age.

Researcher: Which Television News channel do you prefer to watch?

Resident 3: I prefer to watch TV1 news channel.

Researcher: Did you watch Television News, that is any time between March and April 1994?

Resident 3: I watched it during both months, that is March and April.

Researcher: Were the Television News reporting violence?

Resident 3: Yes. Political Violence between the IFP and ANC.

Researcher: How was violence reported?

Resident 3: There were visuals used to show events.

Researcher: Did you differentiate between the victims and witnesses of violence?

Resident 3: In many instances the journalists spoke on behalf of the victims but the victims of violence were people lying down on the ground, either dead or injured.

Researcher: Do you think the journalist gave the victims and witnesses enough time to explain situations?

Table 7.6. Distinguishing between the victims of violence and witnesses.

Victims shown	Frequency	Percentage
Dead bodies /Injured people	106	87,6
No victims	12	9,9
Missing cases	3	2,5
Total	121	100

7.1.7. Time accorded to interviewees by television journalists.

The majority (96,7) of respondents for both TV1 and CCV news reveal that the television journalists accorded the interviewees too little time to reveal the information. They also stressed that there was also a measure of bias as most of the interviewees were ANC supporters. Three (2,5) respondents showed that the journalists gave the interviewees fair amount of time to express their feelings violent situations. Only one respondent (0,8) did not answer this question. (see Table 7.7 for statistics)

6.2.2. The Questionnaire

This portion consists of ten open-ended questions about Television News and the reporting of violence. Information gathered from the interviews served as a guide in the development of the questionnaire.

6.2.3. Ethical considerations

Since participation in research of any kind is voluntary, each questionnaire had a covering letter in which the researcher introduced himself, explained the nature and purpose of the study and requested the respondents to participate in the investigation by completing the questionnaire. The respondents were given a guarantee that all information provided would be treated confidentially.

6.3. Collection of data

The self-administered questionnaires and return envelopes addressed to the researcher were delivered by the researcher assisted by his friend Monareng Mokgoba, to each subject. The respondents were to complete the questionnaires in their own time and return these to Jankie Mokonyane in Hillbrow. In some cases, the researcher was able to have the questionnaires completed whilst visiting the subjects. Although this was time consuming and costly, it ensured the respondents received and completed the questionnaires and the researcher would be able to talk with him. Personal contact was advantageous as the respondents indicated willingness to take part in the research study.

6.4. Limitations of the study

There are some weaknesses with regard to the use of questionnaires as a means of obtaining information. According to Polit & Hungler (1991:172), the use of questionnaires offers the following limitations:

- the subjects may forget about them, the response rate might be low and serious biases might be reflected.
- respondents might misinterpret questions, thus offer wrong information leading to erroneous conclusions.
- the questionnaires can only be used for educated people, and respondents might not answer all questions.

I encountered financial problems in collecting the questionnaires timeously and some responses were received later than the actual deadline.

However, the use of questionnaires offers the following advantages:

- save time, energy, money and allows researcher to cover the targeted geographical area and to reach the subjects.
- gives a guarantee of confidentiality and well thought answers can be given.
- lack of face to face interaction might preclude researcher bias.

Having said this, I would like to turn to the results and findings of the questionnaires assessed.

7. Results

7.1. Sample description

7.1.1. Introduction

The sample description for the study was drawn from all people who watched Television News from March to April 1994. This was done after consultations with these people to find out whether they watched Television News during the period under investigation. The subjects were selected using stratified random sampling as described at the begining of this chapter. A total of 144 questionnaires were distributed and 121 usable questionnaires were returned which is an 84% response rate.

7.1.2. Age

The ages of the respondents ranged from 22 years to 57 years and the mean age was 37 years. (see Table 7.1)

Table 7.1. Age distribution of respondents.

Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 29	30	24.8
30 - 39	46	38.0
40 -	45	37.2
Total	121	100

7.1.3. Watching Television News

When asked to indicate when they watched Television News, that is any time between 14 March and 26 April, 57% of the respondents claimed to watch News during both March and April, twenty six (21,5%) watched it in April and twelve (9.9%) respondents in March. (see Table 7.2.)

Table 7.2. **Period of watching Television News.**

Period	Frequency	Percent
March - April	69	57,0
April only	40	33,1
March only	12	8,3
Uncertain	2	1,6
Total	121	100

7.1.4. Preferred Television News channel

Slightly more than half (52,9) of the respondents watched both TV1 and CCV and 29,8% preferred CCV only while 17,3% watched TV1 only. (see Table 7.3.)

Table 7.3. Preferred Television News channel

Channel preferred	Frequency	Percentage
TV1 and CCV	64	52,9
CCV (only)	36	29,8
TV1 (only)	21	17,3
Total	121	100

7.1.5. Whether Television News channel(s) reported violence.

All respondents for both TV1 and CCV agreed that both channels portrayed violence during the period under investigation. (see Table 7.4.)

Channel	Frequency	Percentage
TV1 and CCV	64	52,9
CCV only	36	29,8
TV1 only	21	17,3
Total	121	100

7.1.5 The Kind of Violence reported.

The majority (98,1) of respondents showed that the kind of violence reported was political violence involving political parties, in particular the ANC and IFP. Only two respondents

(1,6) indicated that there was also social violence whereby women were killed. (see Table 7.5.)

Table 7.5. The kind of violence reported

Kind of Violence	Frequency	Percentage
Political Violence	119	98,1
Social Violence	2	1,6
Total	121	100

7.1.6. Distinguishing between the victims of violence and those who witnessed it.

Most of the respondents (87,6) indicated that both TV1 and CCV news showed the victims of violence on their screens. They indicated that the victims were in the form of dead bodies, and patients interviewed in hospitals. Very few respondents (9,9) indicated that victims of violence were not shown on both TV1 and CCV as were represented by statistics. There were only three (2,5) missing cases.

Table 7.6. Distinguishing between the victims of violence and witnesses.

Victims shown	Frequency	Percentage
Dead bodies /Injured people	106	87,6
No victims	12	9,9
Missing cases	3	2,5
Total	121	100

7.1.7. Time accorded to interviewees by television journalists.

The majority (96,7) of respondents for both TV1 and CCV news reveal that the television journalists accorded the interviewees too little time to reveal the information. They also stressed that there was also a measure of bias as most of the interviewees were ANC supporters. Three (2,5) respondents showed that the journalists gave the interviewees fair amount of time to express their feelings violent situations. Only one respondent (0,8) did not answer this question. (see Table 7.7 for statistics)

Table 7.7. Time allocated to interviewees by journalists.

Time allocated	Frequency	Percent
Little time	117	96,7
Fair time	3	2,6
No response	1	0,8
Total	121	100

7.1.8. Interviewees ability to address themselves to the questions asked by journalists.

When asked to respond to the question of whether the people interviewed in violence situations were able to answer the questions asked by journalists, most (71,0) respondents indicated that some people interviewed were unable to address themselves to the questions because of fear, and of being exposed to the public. About 26,3% respondents stated that some people instead of answering the questions asked about violence, they condemned the other parties. Only three respondents did not answer the question.

Table 7.8. Interviewees ability to respond to the question asked by journalists.

Questions asked	Frequency	Percent
Unable to respond	86	71,0
Condemning other parties	32	26,3
Missing cases	3	2,4
Total	121	100

7.1.9. Fair coverage of Violence.

When asked whether the coverage of violence was fair, the majority (83,5%) of the respondents stated that most incidents were not fully covered. They stressed that Television News channels covered violence as if it was happening in the East Rand and Natal, whereas there was violence in other parts of the country. Only few (16,5%) believed that the coverage of violence on television was fair.

Table 7.9. Coverage of Violence.

Coverage	Frequency	Percent
Unfair	101	83,5
Fair	20	16,5
Total	121	100

8. Discussion of Results.

8.1. Interviews

The three residents interviewed were selected because they watched different news channels. For instance Maki Eikens watched TV1 whereas Jones Tompa preferred CCV. The two channels operate separately. Interview no 1 with Dan Mashishi is important because he watched both news channels.

All the residents indicated that both CCV and TV1 news bulletins were dominated by political violence featuring political parties, especially the ANC and the IFP. Resident 1 believed that the showing of the ANC and IFP clash was of the political differences which prevailed between these two parties. Resident 2 perceived the this violence as 'black on black violence', that is the kind of violence whereby the black people fought against each other.

There is a considerable agreement that the use of visuals to report violence enabled the residents to distinguish between the victims and witnesses of violence. Jones Tompa indicated that the "the victims were sprawled on the ground and witnesses gathered around the scene". This remark was reinforced by Maki Eikens who stressed that the victims of violence were people who appeared to be dead or injured. Resident 1 also indicated that victims of violence were men, women and children. This kind of judgement is far from supporting the fact that the victims were the subjects of political violence.

On the question of time that the journalists accorded to the victims and eye-witnesses to explain the situations, two of the three residents emphasised that the journalists showed some measure of bias towards the ANC as opposed to the IFP. None of the residents indicated any journalistic bias or support towards the IFP. If that was the case, it means the SABC journalists were failing to commit themselves to the principle of impartiality as endorsed in the SABC Code of Ethics for its staff. It is not surprising that all two residents conclude that the coverage of violence was not fair because the IFP was portrayed as the main cause of violence. Resident 2 also indicted that CCV reported violence as if it was only happening in KwaZulu-Natal and the PWV, thus excluding other areas.

8.2. The Questionnaire

Having assessed the reactions of the residents interviewed, I would like to shift the focus to the respondents of the questionnaire. A considerable number of respondents (52,9%) preferred to watch both TV1 and CCV news whereas 29,8% and 17,3% preferred to watch either CCV or TV1 respectively. This is important as it allows one to give a balanced account of the perceptions on both news channels.

The data revealed that all respondents agreed that TV1 and CCV portrayed violence during the period under examination. Like the assessment made in chapter 5, the majority (98,1%) of the respondents indicated that the kind of violence reported was politically motivated. These respondents supported the interviewee from Temba township who stated that it was political violence involving the ANC and the IFP. Only two respondents indicated the showing of social violence specifically involving women. The recorded tapes examined in

chapter four show that the portrayal of violence on both TV1 and CCV involved the political struggle between these political parties.

A majority of respondents (87,6) supported the residents' perception that the visuals on both TV1 and CCV were used to show the victims of violence. This majority indicated that these victims appeared as dead bodies and injured people on television screens. This means that the viewers were able to distinguish between the victims of violence and the witnesses.

Of concern to most (96,7) respondents was the amount of time the journalists accorded to the victims and witnesses. They argue that there was too little time accorded to the interviewees. In the recorded tapes analysed, I have stressed that in many instances the journalists appeared to report on behalf of the victims and witnesses. Some news bulletins indicated that the police reported as witnesses. The journalists should try to balance their reports by providing a balanced account of events. This could be achieved by allowing the witnesses to report their own stories.

On the question of whether the coverage of violence was fairly covered on both TV 1 and CCV news, the majority (83,5) expressed dissatisfaction about the lack coverage of violence in other parts of the country. The tapes examined are dominated by violence in KwaZulu-Natal and the PWV.

The analysis indicated a concern over the SABC's definition and treatment of political violence. Therefore, there is a need for SABC to conduct a broad research programme

investigating the aspirations and feelings of its audience. The next chapter concludes the study and provides some recommendations and suggestions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to explain the manner in which the SABC Television News, TV1 and CCV News treated violence before the general elections of April 1994.

Since similar research has been done in South Africa by the Broadcast Monitoring Project (BMP) and Dr Ruth Teer-Tomaselli in her dissertation, The Politics of Discourse and The Discourse of Politics: Images of Violence and Reform on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's News Bulletins July 1985-November 1986, the researcher has a valuable basis for the comparison of the SABC-TV News channels.

Although the empirical research of this work has yielded some interesting and potentially important results in the field of broadcasting in South Africa, it can also contribute to the SABC's commitment to the transformation process. This research is not comprehensive, but can only be regarded as a pilot study in a controversial field and which now needs further research with more heterogeneous groups in order to create a broader data base for meaningful comparison. However, the study has examined some basic assumptions relating to the media and the dominant hegemony. According to Stuart Hall (1980:136) the meaning of Television News is predetermined by its relation to the dominant ideology. The information which the broadcasters encode as messages has already been signified in a hegemonic manner and the broadcasters function to:

reproduce the dominant definitions precisely by bracketing their hegemonic quality and operating instead with displaced professional coding which foregrounds such apparently neutral-technical questions as visual quality, News and presentational values, televisual quality, 'professionalism' and so on (Hall 1980:136).

The literature review has shown that what News programmers produce is not a true reflection of reality. This argument is supported by Stuart Hall (1982:65) that media reality is no longer viewed as given facts, but is a particular way of constructing reality and the media defines and reproduces its own version of 'reality'. This is because News is produced through selection. The process of selection depends on different institutional practices. Various institutions define 'reality' for the audiences differently. The problem that faces the SABC now is how to define reality under the new government. During the reign of the Nationalist Party government, the SABC was perceived as its mouthpiece. The SABC's Code of Ethics for Editorial Staff, released in March 1994, is to be welcomed because it stresses the principles of accuracy, balance, fairness and impartiality. Of much concern is the extent to which these principles will be applied. In the literature review, it has been argued that one of the constraints that can impede the exercise of these principles is the SABC's relationship with the government. The government needs the support of the media, in particular broadcasting to promote the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

Although the SABC tries to establish clear cut boundaries from the government of the day, the big question is who will be responsible for its funding and for how long? The funding of the SABC seems to a problem as the question was raised by viewers during the **Newsline** and **Agenda** programmes shown on Sunday 11 December 1994. During these programmes, viewers were requested to phone the chief executives of the SABC in the studio and suggest

how best the SABC could be funded. At the moment, the SABC still depends on the budget from the government.

In Chapter 5, I have argued that the reports on violent incidents have been one-sided, not implicating the ANC, while the variables that determine the outcome of political violence are the characteristics of the groups involved, in this regard the IFP, ANC, the government and its agents; the SADF and the Police force. The SABC Code of Ethics for Editorial Staff provides hope concerning the future reporting of SABC News bulletins. The perceptions of the SABC have changed and are still continuing to change over time. The SABC's stereotype of the ANC during the period under review is unacceptable if the imbalances of the past are to be redressed. According to the dictionary meaning, stereotype is a 'conventional formulaic and usually over-simplified conception, opinion or belief' (Heritage Dictionary, 1973:1264). According to Walter Lippman (1922) there are a number of stereotyping theories. Stereotypes are seen as:

- * about oppressed groups,
- * about groups with whom we have little or no social contact,
- * not structurally reinforced,
- * rigid and so do not change.

The analysis of the recorded tapes identified some of the stereotypes that News bulletins applied to the IFP, and the methodology section showed how the majority of respondents (83,5%) showed concern about the News bulletins' apparent support for the ANC. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, (1992:308) writing about the images of violence on the SABC's Television News bulletins, argues that stereotypes function by identifying and putting a negative evaluation on salient and characteristic features of persons or groups. The key point is that

stereotypes establish these defined negative characters as **innate** characteristics, thus inverting their status to a cause rather than an effect (Teer-Tomaselli, 1992:308).

Recommendations

The SABC News editors and journalists should gather information from time to time concerning problematic journalistic practices such as those involved in the reporting of violence. The journalists' work setting is fully under the editorial control of the SABC, particularly in regard to reporting sensitive issues such as political events. More importantly a strategy for achieving balance in political reporting should be striven for, in terms of impartial investigation, time accorded to interviewees and airing of opposing viewpoints. A perception of a lack of journalistic impartiality by SABC journalists is highlighted by the majority of the respondents who argue that journalists did not accord a fair amount of time to the interviewees because they (the journalists) appeared to be biased towards the ANC.

Notwithstanding the fact that journalists are controlled by the SABC Code of Ethics for Editorial Staff, they should be accorded more autonomy and independence for selecting and implementing the principles of impartiality, balance, fairness and accuracy. They should also actively participate in policy decision making with regard to aspects such as News selection, reporting methods etc.

Future research is recommended using qualitative approaches. This might give insight into the determinants of News selection and News reporting. Studies of this nature might also prove valuable to transforming a media institution like the SABC into an accountable public broadcaster.

APPENDIX 1: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRES

In this questionnaire a number of questions are asked about your knowledge of the treatment of violence on SABC-television news. This will allow me to make comparisons between the different groups of people who will complete the questionnaire.

Please answer the questions that follow and elaborate where expected.

Personal details

Name_____

Age_____

Residence_____

Telephone No. Home_____, Work_____

Questions

1. When did you watch television news, that is any time between 14 March and April 1994.

2. Which television news channel(s) did you prefer?_____

3. Were the television channel(s) reporting violence? Yes or No.

4. If your answer is yes, what kind of violence was reported? describe it briefly_____

5. Were the pictures used to explain violence? Yes or No. If your answer is yes, support your statement._____

6. Could you distinguish between the victims of violence and those who witnessed it? Why do you say so?_____

7. Who were interviewed in violent incidents? Explain._____

8. Do you think the interviewers gave the interviewees a fair amount of time or was there any bias? Explain._____

9. Do you think the people interviewed were able to address themselves to the questions asked. Yes or No. Give reasons for your answer._____

10. Do you think the coverage of violence incidents was fair? Explain briefly._____

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