1. Portfolio Introduction
2. Media Policy and Regulation

A Government of the people, by the people and for the people is dependent on the people having access to information, information that is free, fair and accurate. In this discussion we look at how democracy is based on freedom of expression and the freedom of the media

* 1. Freedom of Expression, Media and Democracy

The media has always been seen to serve specific functions and roles. The nature of the role of the media is largely dependent on the type of political system it works within. From a Western perspective, the function of the media is largely to support democracy. Broadly speaking, democracy is still defined in the way that Abraham Lincoln phrased it as a ‘Government of the people, by the people and for the people’

There therefore needs to be a constant to and fro of information between the elected leadership and the citizenry. The media therefore provides the platform for this to and fro flow of information. (Fourie, 2008; Pitout, 2007)

The effective flow of information is based on the media’s ability to operate in a condition of freedom of expression.

Denis McQail (2005, pp. 192-193) posits that Freedom of Expression is the basis of all the theories. He points out that Freedom of Expression is a condition rather than a criterion used to measure the performance of the media.

There are differing views on the concept of freedom of expression, and these are largely based on the free market approach and the socialist approach to freedom of expression. The market approach maintains that journalists should be free from all outside controls, the media should not be servile or manipulated by power, and therefore there is no need for a national press policy to ensure freedom of expression. The Socialist approach maintains that the opinions and views of all people are published, and that a free press is necessary to counter opposition. It is therefore important that a national press policy is in place to ensure freedom of expression. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

* 1. The Fourth Estate

The media has long been seen as a powerful force to be used to support and uphold democracy. It has been seen as such an integral part of democracy that it should be part of the democratic system. Thomas Carlyle, attributed the term to Edmund Burke, who used the term in a parliamentary debate in 1787 saying “There are three estates in Parliament, but in the reporters’ gallery yonder, there sits a fourth estate more important far than they all” (Ranjan, 2014)

Ranjan (2014) maintains that democracy rests on three pillars, that of the legislative, executive and judiciary, he posits that the ability of the media to reach every corner of a state, gives them immense power and that they should be seen as a fourth pillar of democracy.

He says the pivotal role of the media is to mobilise the thinking of the masses as democracy requires informed citizens, to ensure the principle of rule by the people.

The role of the fourth estate is therefore twofold, to inform the citizenry but also to create a feedback loop between the Government and voters.

* 1. Role and Functioning of the South African Media

Various theories have been formulated to explain how the media fulfils these functions in different societies, these include the libertarian approach, the social responsibility approach and the developmental approach. The theories differ on issues such as purpose, usage, control, what is forbidden, and ownership. But in essence, the libertarian theory sees the role of the media as being the watchdog of Government, while as the name of the theory suggests, the social responsibility theory sees the media as playing a role of social responsibility, while developmental theory sees the role of the media to ensure social development (Cilliers, et al., 2008, pp. 20 - 21)

The main theories of the mass media, that of, libertarianism, social responsibility and developmental are prevalent in the South African media, and explains the view of the South African media.

The South African media landscape is vast for it’s population. We look at two media outlets. Their editorial policies outline the roles and functions they wish to fulfill. Remember this is a normative look and is essentially not positive.

For this exercise, we look at the public broadcaster, the *South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)* and the Weekly newspaper, the *Mail and Guardian.*

The *SABC’*s editorial policy clearly states

“To heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. To lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by the law. To improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person. To build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations” (MediaWise, 2011)

This shows a heavy leaning to developmental journalism, a move to achieve what is in the national interest, and to achieve social development.

The policy goes on to say

“The *SABC* is governed by the Charter of the Corporation, which enshrines the journalistic, creative and programming independence of the staff of the corporation, and the constitutionally protected freedom of expression.” (MediaWise, 2011)

This shows a more libertarian approach to media theory, once again, we are not saying that the normative approach, or how things are supposed to be is the same as the positive approach, or how things actually are.

The *Mail and Guardian’s* editorial policy states

“Our journalistic duty to inform the public trumps all other considerations, whether they are financial, political, personal or any other non-professional interests. This includes the business interests of the paper itself. We will avoid conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest.” (Mail & Guardian, 2010)

Here we see again the importance of independence of the media, very much in line with Libertarian theory.

If we look at the slogans of other media outlets, *ENCA’s* ‘No Fear, No Favor’ or *ANN7’s* ‘The truth unfolds’ we see a leaning towards libertarianism, while all the while most media outlets subscribe to the ‘cliché’ to inform, educate and entertain, this is indicative of an approach mainly leaning on libertarianism, but with social responsibility and development at the core.

* 1. The Freedom of Expression Institute

The Freedom of Expression Institute is a non-profit organisation, aimed at fostering the right of self-expression and the freedom of expression, not only through the media, but by individuals themselves. The Organisation was founded in 1994, through a merger of three organisations, The Campaign for Open Media, the Anti-Censorship Action Group and the Media Defence Trust. (FXI, 2016)

* 1. FXI and Freedom of Expression

The FXI has long been involved in establishing a voice for freedom of speech, in the recent past, the organisation has been vocal on the censorship by the SABC of the broadcasting of material showing visuals of property being destroyed. (FXI, 2016)

‘The FXI and FXN view the decision by the SABC not to air visuals of protests it deems violent in its news bulletins as an act of censorship. This action by the SABC effectively denies citizens access to critically important public information. Many South Africans depend on the SABC as their primary source of news. The move further represents a narrowing of editorial independence through increasing managerial interference within the public broadcaster.’ (FXI, 2016)

The FXI has participated in public protests, and through it’s networks has instigated a meeting between the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF), probably the most important media ‘organisation’ in the country and Government. (FXI, 2016)

The FXI does not only work in South Africa, but throughout the African continent, and their work can be felt throughout the sub-continent.

1. Media Management
   1. Media and Communications Market
      1. Introduction

Research in Motion, the producers of Blackberry, once held over fifty percent of the market share. Today the company is no longer manufacturing the iconic phone. (Reed, 2015) Blackberry has gone through the four phases of De Jong’s product life cycle model. This essay looks at the four phases of Blackberry’s product life cycle.

* + 1. Introduction Phase

The introduction phase marks the introduction of the new product, or product range to the market. Companies generally advertise their products and brand heavily during this phase, outlining the innovation of their product, in an attempt to create a demand for the product. The cost of the product is at this stage very high, this is largely in an attempt to recoup the research and development costs of the product, the product may also be priced very low, in an attempt to achieve market penetration (Bardoel & van Cuilenburg, 2010)

Mike Lazaridis and Douglas Fregin founded Research in Motion in 1984, in Waterloo, Canada. RIM enabled wireless communication for point-of-sale terminal equipment, and worked on modems and pagers, paving the way for mobile devices in the future.

The introductory phase, began in 1998, with the launch of the 900 Inter@ctive pager, a two-way wireless pager. It enabled peer-to-peer messaging, could send and receive fax messages and provide delivery and read receipts. The first true blackberry was introduced to the market in 1998, the RIM 950 wireless handheld, it had a patented keyboard, which made it easier to type with. (Hill, 2013)

The greatest innovation by RIM was the introduction of the Blackberry email service, launched in 1999. It was the first service that allowed emails to be sent through a phone. (Hill, 2013)

Blackberry was aimed at professionals, allowing them o be unchained from their desks, allowing them to be connected, even when mobile. At this point there was no competitor for the services provided by blackberry. With a Qwerty keyboard and email on the go service, demand for the device exploded (Stern, 2014)

RIM listed on Nasdaq, and raised over 250 million dollars, this led to a phase of rapid expansion (Hill, 2013)

* + 1. Expansion Phase

Brands enter the growth or expansion phase, when sales start growing exponentially. Brand managers will begin to increase distribution networks, and add features to the product. The brand will be expanded to new customers, either geographically or demographically. It is also at this stage that new competitors may enter the market, after seeing the success of the product. (Shah, 2016)

In terms of Blackberry, by 2004, the company had over one million subscribers, just three years later this number had skyrocketed to over 10 million subscribers. RIM began expanding with a distribution deal in China. The company also expanded their demographic reach, including internet navigation, cameras and chat features on it’s devices. The brand was no longer aimed at only the professional for sending and receiving emails, but at the mass market for both gaming and chat features. (Reuters, 2013)

At the same time, competitors began entering the market. Apple launched the iPhone in 2007, while Google launched the open source android platform in 2008. (Reuters, 2013)

This increase in competition pushed Blackberry into the maturity phase of the product life cycle

* + 1. Maturity Phase

Increasing competition and the limitation of market space, pushes products and brands into the maturity phase. Fierce competition and limited market space could force brands back into a segment of the market, they may look to become quality leaders. Prices are usually driven up, seeking to be a premier brand and aimed at a more mature customer base, with disposable income. (Shah, 2016)

By 2008, Blackberry faced fierce competition, due to the launch of the Apple iPhone and the Android platform. The brand was up against the likes of HTC Dream and the Palm Pre as well as the iPhone. Blackberry’s counter product, the Blackberry Storm was glitchy and did not perform as well as expected. Blackberry released the Blackberry Bold in 2010, and by 2011 reached their highest peak with revenue at almost $20 billion. (Reuters, 2013)

By now Apple had released the iPad 2, and a number of android tablets had also been released, Blackberry decided to enter this market, and released the Playbook, but it was a dismal failure, due to the lack of calendar and email applications. This and a host of other incidents sent blackberry careening towards the decline phase (Hill, 2013)

* + 1. Stagnation / Decline Phase

Once a product enters the decline stage, market support may be withdrawn completely, and revenue will depend on a small segment of previous and loyal users. The most important decision is to take the product off the market completely, especially if the production costs increase as volumes drop. An alternative is to re-purpose the product, or more likely to find alternative markets, like emerging markets, India, Africa etcetera. (Shah, 2016)

Blackberry entered the decline stage, after not being able to keep up with developments by the iPhone, Ipad, and other android devices. (Hill, 2013)

The phone that had helped people communicate during the 9-11 New York City, World Trade Center attacks, after cellular networks went down, and the phone that helped organize the London riots in 2011, was now facing a steep decline. (Hill, 2013)

In October 2011, the company experienced severe service outages, video apologies and offers of free applications did not placate the customer base. (Hill, 2013)

The delay of the launch of the Blackberry 10, further added to the incline of the decline. It was announced that the device would be launched in 2011, but only arrived in 2013. The Z10 and Q10 were launched in an attempt to regain market share, but a verdict of ‘too little, too late’ came from many quarters. (Reuters, 2013)

Blackberry’s competitors were also now offering affordable pay as you go options, and customers began ending their contracts, as soon as the two-year contract periods came to an end. (Hill, 2013)

Blackberry has now decided to stop producing handheld devices. The company will focus on software development, including security and applications, to be sold on to other companies. (Reuters, 2016)

* + 1. Conclusion

Research in Motion began in 1984, and launched the first Blackberry in 1998, the company saw rapid expansion and maturity, with its highest peak in 2011. Since then the company has been in decline.

Having gone through the product lifecycle, the company has now decided to stop manufacturing hardware, and focus on software development.

1. Representation
   1. Representation Defined

“Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: A hyper-real.” (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

In making this statement Baudrillard was speaking to the four phases of simulacrum, that of a faithful copy, the second stage is a perversion of reality, the third is the masking of a profound reality, and the fourth is pure simulation, with no reality or basis, ergo the hyperreal.

One only has to think of this progression in the case of the former Minister of health in South Africa, Manto Tshabalala Msimang, the first phase was a faithful copy, media houses reported, that she said

“Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang used the opportunity of a parliamentary media briefing to urge journalists again to spread her message that Aids sufferers should use olive oil, lemon and garlic to boost their immune systems.” (Nair, 2004)

The perversion of reality followed soon afterward, as is evidenced by an article in *Independent newspapers*

“The consumption of garlic, beetroot and lemon delayed the development of HIV into "Aids-defining conditions", Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang said on Tuesday.” (Roux, 2006)

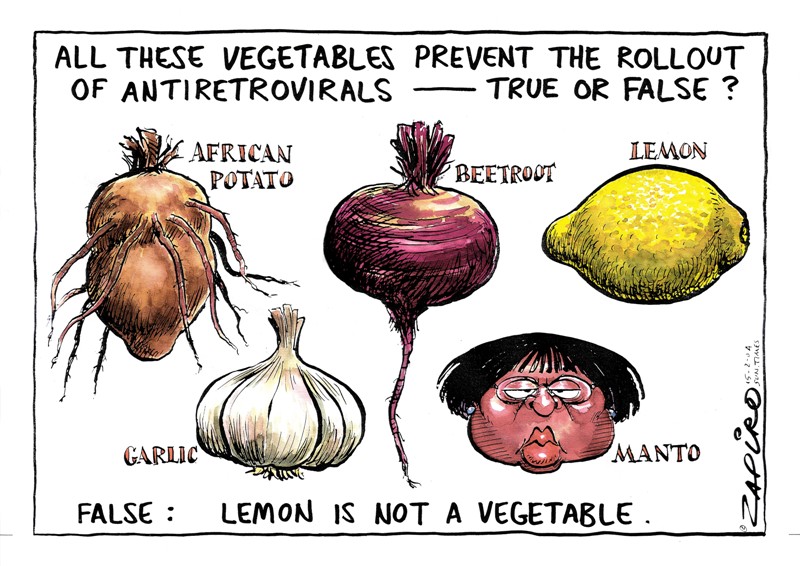
The perversion of reality followed soon afterward, as there was no profound reality, but where the perception became reality, the dailymail in the UK espoused as much

“South African newspapers on yesterday joined the fray, describing the Toronto display as "a salad stand" and demanding President Thabo Mbeki - who is also often accused of mishandling the AIDS crisis - sack his controversial minister.” (Dailymail, 2006)

The fourth stage is pure simulation, none of the good that the person has done is acknowledged, only the perceptions abide, as was in the case with the death of the Minister, as evidenced by the article in the Guardian

“South Africa's former health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, who gained notoriety for her promotion of lemons, garlic and olive oil to treat Aids, has died. She was 69.

Tshabalala-Msimang died in a Johannesburg hospital today from complications related to a liver transplant in 2007, said the ruling African National Congress (ANC).” (The Guardian, 2009)



*https://pen.org/blog/work-south-african- 1*

It follows that Baudrillard’s four phases follow most news items, or rather that most news items follow Badrillard’s four phases.

* 1. Media and the Construction of Identity
     1. Introduction

Identity, answers the basic question of ‘who am I’, this may seem simple enough, but inherently one can identify as one thing or many things at the same time. For example, one can identify themselves as being male or female, South African or African, skilled or unskilled. The key facets of identity, gender, social class, age, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity play significant roles in determining how we understand and experience the world, as well as shaping the types of opportunities and challenges we face. (Thrope, 2013)

Identity is not something we are born with, it is a socially and historically constructed attribute, controlled by external factors, such as interactions with family, peers, organisations, institutions and the media. Identity can also be looked at as a concept of self, the knowledge of who we are, this combined with a cognitive self awareness, produces an identity of self. (Worsham, 2011)

Combining the two factors, internal and external, therefore produces an identity. While this essay delves into the role of the media in the construction of identity, it should be borne in mind that several of the other factors alluded to above, play a role in the construction of identity. (Worsham, 2011)

To examine the role of the media in the construction of identity, this essay uses the recent ‘#RhodesMustFall’ campaign and looks at two opinion editorial pieces published in local newspapers. The campaign kicked off a debate among students, as to their identity, and while the editorials look into the justification of the actions of the students, this essay focusses on the primary question of identity.

It is important to note that the opinion editorials used in this essay are not those of a journalist or editor, but reflects the idea that the media has allowed divergent views to be represented in the mainstream media. A movement from the media-centricity of the past.

* + 1. Media and Identity

The recent #RhodesMustFall campaign, which kicked off at the University of Cape Town, has highlighted a number of issues within the South African Higher Education system, including the perceptions of a lack of transformation and the inequality seemingly caused by ever increasing university fees. What can not be ignored however is that the campaign and ensuing protest action highlighted a search for identity among tertiary students, much like the Black Consciousness Movement that began in the 1960’s. The participants in the campaign were predominantly black, who found a common identity as being previously disadvantaged, or previously exploited.

This essay looks at two opinion editorials, published in South Africa, from two very different perspectives, one is a piece written by Mike Berger, on *politicsweb,* titled, Chaos on Campus what is to be done (Berger, 2016) (Addendum ?) The other appeared in the *Mail and Guardian,* titled, Rhodes Must Fall: How black women claimed their place, written by Mbali Matandela (Matandela, 2015) (Addendum ? )

Fourie (2008:244) points out that “We should further recognise that the construction of identities takes place as a result of contestations and power struggles…to talk about identity construction in post-apartheid South African media…is also to talk about politics, about inequality, and about power”

Here Fourie is dispelling the myth that the media is all powerful, and the plays a central role in the construction of identity, he posits that identity construction is the result of power struggles. The #RhodesMustFall campaign has been recognised as a wider campaign aimed at bringing about transformation in Higher Education Institutions.

“The students believe management has ignored cries for transformation and the pain endured by black staff and students as a result of racism at the institution.” (Pather, 2015)

Berger (2016) argues, however, that the main reason for the campaign is to psychologically disarm whites from their own interests in the country, and to provide activists with an impenetrable moral fortress from which they can justify their actions. Berger’s argument is that while protesting black students are claiming their own identity, they are wiping away the identity of their white counterparts, and all this for the ultimate objective of gaining power. This takes the argument back to Fourie’s position that the construction of identity is couched in political power struggles.

Looking at South Africa’s past, the identity of self in terms of race was meticulously categorised and implemented from above. The ‘pencil test’ was a case in point

“For almost 30 years during apartheid, officials used a pencil test to classify some coloured people as black and others as white.Race classification was dependent on whether the pencil slid out of your hair (that made you white) or got stuck (which made you officially black). This and other tests caused thousands of families to be torn apart when paler or darker-skinned relatives, or those with curlier hair, or different features, were placed in separate categories and were therefore forced to live apart.” (Ndlovu, 2008)

Fourie (2008:245) argues that it was not only race that was categorised, but that gender and sexual orientation was also seen as natural and fixed, and not open for debate, even though these categories shifted as part of the dynamic process.

In post-apartheid South Africa gays, lesbians, and transgender people sought to construct their own identity, it is evident in newspaper reporting, how widely the now commonplace terms such as LGTB have become, the acronyms are even becoming longer, as the author in the editorial refers to the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) community

In her opinion piece, Matandela (2015), explains how balck feminists and members of the LGTBQIA community used the #RhodesMustFall campaign to advance their own cause and construction of identity. The community sought in the main to affirm their rights as black women, and made significant progress, from important moves, like heading up sub-committees in the movement, to smaller but symbolic gestures.

“The song *Nantsi indonda emnyama* meaning: “Here is a black man” was changed to include black women by adding *Nangu umfazi omnyama*, which means: “Here is the black woman”, to the lyrics.” Matandela (2015)

* + 1. Conclusion

The construction of identity is based on internal factors, that of self-knowledge, but largely also that of external factors, interactions with family, communities, peers, institutions and the media. It is therefore important to note that it is not only the media that plays a role in the construction of identity.

To take this further, identity construction is the result of political power struggles, and a growing desire to find or construct an identity for oneself, a right that was denied under Apartheid.

It is clear that the South African media has come a long way from blind commitment to Government or blind commitment to the revolutionary movement. The media is today more affable to the idea of divergent views, and allows for a construction of identity less dependent on the media than ever before.

* 1. Gender and the Media
     1. Introduction

In this short essay we look at the issue of stereotyping, and the impact it has had on society. The mass media has often been accused of promulgating stereotypes, in terms of gender, race, culture, religion and many other types. In this essay we will briefly delve into the role of the media in this respect.

* + 1. Gender and Stereotyping

1. Theory of Gender

The basic definition of gender is the physical attributes that culture and society impose on men and women, and not the biological attributes that define men and women. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

The Theory of Gender is, however, a complex, and much debated theory, as Emily Allen posits (2011)

“this area of study is incredibly complex, perhaps more so than any of the others, given the tendency of such theorists to employ the strategies of other critical schools in their analysis of gender and sex. As a result, sex and gender theorists can be divided into various sub-schools that bring together the insights of disparate approaches”

The study of Gender is roughly divided into two areas, femininity and masculinity. Femininity, is the notion that typically girls are brought up to be feminine, in the clothes they wear, the role they take up in a household, and the occupations they hold. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

The study of femininity is further divided into the studies of feminism, a movement where women began fighting for equal rights, the right to vote, own property, and to earn a living. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

Another study is the study of liberal feminism, a fight against poor wages and job opportunities. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

Marxist feminism borrows from the ideas of Marx and Engels, of the notion of the haves and the have-nots, with men being the haves and women being the have-nots. Socialist feminism takes it a step further, including race, language and culture. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

Radical feminism is extreme and radical, calling for the total separation of the sexes. (Cilliers, et al., 2008)

Men’s studies grew in response to feminism, believing that men are the victims, not women. Several different types of ‘man’ have emerged, since the beginning of feminism in the 1960’s.

The ‘new man’ played ‘mummy’, but also had a career, and was emotional and unrepressed.

The ‘new-man-as-narcissist’ , men who were well groomed and well attired.

The ‘yuppie’ is a glamorous, high earning man with a number of ‘toys’

Then came the ‘new lad’ this man is not muscular, and is viewed by some as ‘soft’

The ‘metrosexual man’ is a heterosexual man, that has adopted many of the gay traditions, that of beautifying themselves, drinking what is traditionally called softer drinks, and is slightly effeminate.

The ‘übersexual man’ is much like the ‘metrosexual man’ except that he bulks up at the gym as well.

1. Stereotyping has almost become a ‘dirty’ word in the South African lexicon, yet it remains a reality. The Merriam-Webster dictionary describes it as ‘to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same’. In terms of gender, the media has offered very basic stereotypes for men and women, with men being portrayed as adrenalin seeking, hard-working, goal-orientated and unemotional, while women are portrayed as beautiful, stay-at-home mothers, who are in tune with their emotions.
2. An advertisement for disposable consumer products company, Bic, appearing in Glitz Magazine in 2016 (Addendum ?)

was indicative of the gender stereotype believed by many to exist. The advert depicts a woman in a business suit, with the tagline “look like a girl, act like a lady, think like a man, work like a boss” The advert played on the stereotype that girls are pretty, and behave like ladies, but to achieve success in the workplace, they have to think like a man, playing on the stereotype, that men are the superior gender in the workplace. after much criticism, particularly on social media, the advertisement was withdrawn, with the company offering an apology “We’re incredibly sorry for offending everybody,” the company [**wrote on its Facebook page**](https://www.facebook.com/BicSA). “That was never our intention, but we completely understand where we’ve gone wrong.” (Glitz Plus Magazine, 2016)

* + 1. Conclusion
  1. Media and the Environment
     1. Article Summary

In an article appearing in *Independent On Line (IOL)*, titled, Vietnam wants Rhino sanctions, the World Wildlife Fund is calling on Vietnam to clamp down on illegal Rhino horn trade, or face sanctions. It is reported that the Organisation will make the call at the 17th Conference of the Parties (CoP17) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites) which takes place in Johannesburg from September 24 to October 5. The organisation is also calling for the COP parties to give greater trade protection to a range of species, including all eight species of Asian and African pangolins, thresher and silky sharks, devil rays, African grey parrot, rosewood trees, and flapshell and softshell turtles. (Bamford, 2016) (Addendum ?)

* + 1. What is Environmental Journalism

Environmental journalism is the reporting and publishing or broadcasting of current events, trends, issues and people associated with the non-human world. Environmental reports tend to be more interested with those aspects of the non-human world that humans interact with.

In South Africa, and arguably in the rest of the world, environmental journalism has taken a back seat, to the seemingly more important issues of social, political and economic nature. South African newspapers tend to focus on just a few major issues in the environment, these include climate change, water quality, and Rhino poaching.

Bamford’s (2016) article looks at a call by the WWF to impose sanctions on Vietnam, due to the illegal trade in Rhino horn. It is therefore a current affair, and deals with the non-human world, but great emphasis is placed on human interaction with the non-human world.

* + 1. Objective Reporting

No journalist or indeed any person can be truly objective, human beings are victims of circumstance and as such have deeply entrenched value systems and identities. As a journalist, what is necessary is to ensure that any piece of copy is balanced. The American Press Institute says it is not the journalist, but the method that must be objective “  
*Objectivity called for journalists to develop a consistent method of testing information – a transparent approach to evidence*…the method is objective not the journalist” (Dean, n.d.)

Helen Bamford, has quoted in her story, the organisation calling for the sanctions, that being the WWF, and has also quoted the Minister of Environmental Affairs, on the issue of number of arrests in the country. While the WWF and the Minister, are reliable sources, given that the organisation is globally recognized and due to the Minister’s official position, very little effort has been made to get a response from the affected party, that being the Vietnamese government. The author gives no indication that any attempt was made to contact the Vietnamese authorities for comment, this is sorely lacking in the piece and makes the entire article unbalanced.

Independent sources, such as local wildlife authorities to explain the scale of the problem with regards to Vietnam, and an economist to explain the impact on South African – Vietnamese trade relations if the sanctions were to go ahead.

* + 1. Who was consulted

Bamford has spoken to or quotes, Ginette Hemley, the senior vice president Wildlife Conservation at the WWF, and head of the delegation to COP17.

“Despite widespread evidence of rhino horn openly for sale in Vietnam, the authorities have made no significant rhino horn seizures within their borders and have reported no successful prosecutions. Ginette Hemley, WWF Head of Delegation to Cites said ending the illegal rhino horn trade and helping to save Africa’s rhinos was clearly not a priority for the government.‘Specifically, Vietnam must agree to enact new regulations to treat wildlife crime as a ‘serious crime’ with a minimum sentence of four years in prison; legislate to treat fake rhino horn as real rhino horn for enforcement and prosecution purposes; and successfully target and prosecute illegal traders and traffickers.’” Bamford (2016)

The WWF is an internationally recognised body, working in 100 countries and supported by over 6 million people (WWF, 2016)

She also quotes the Minister of Enviromental Affairs, Edna Molewa, who is an appointed cabinet member, who speaks I her official capacity. “This week Minister of Environmental Affairs Edna Molewa said there had been a significant increase in the number of arrests of alleged poachers this year.” (Bamford, 2016)

As alluded to earlier, there are no experts consulted, to give a local perspective or indeed an economic impact assessment on the call that is being made, there is also no response from the Vietnamese Government on the allegations being made against them by the WWF.

* + 1. Factors Influencing Contextualisation

The additional sources cited above would have lent more credence and substance to the story, but often these kind of environmental stories have to be kept short, in order to allow more space for what is deemed to be more important in terms of political, social and economic impact.

The World Wildlife Fund has highlighted some of the challenges faced by environmental journalists, these include a lack of environmental and scientific training among journalists, limited access to environmental data, the existence of ‘forest mafia’ or ‘poaching syndicates’ who threaten journalists’ professional work and personal lives, challenges that come with keeping complex issues as short as possible, due to short attention spans, the mediation of citizen concerns by interests of Government or large corporations, wildlife journalists have to deal with the priority of other subjects such as terrorism, poverty, economy, politics, and international relations and the lack of training and resources to effectively do their work. (WWF, 2016)

These are but some of the issues at play, that lay the context for environmental writing. In this case, it seems, that the key factor was a lack of time and space, it was easier to speak to the WWF, who would be willing to talk as they were making the call, and to pull out some facts and figures from a press statement issued by the Minister, and cobble a story together, than delve deeper into the subject matter at hand.

* + 1. Article

The full article can be found in Addendum ?

* 1. Media and Violence
     1. Programme Summary

*Ray Donovan* is an American crime drama created by Ann Biderman for cable network, Showtime. The drama is set in Los Angeles, California. The premise of the story is based on Irish-American, Ray Donovan, played by Liev Schreiber, who, originally from South Boston, works for the powerful law firm Goldman & Drexler, representing the rich and famous. Donovan is a "Fixer": a person who arranges bribes, payoffs, threats, and generally clears up problems that the rich and famous get themselves into. Donovan is portrayed as no common gangster, but a professional person, good at his job and devoted to his family. (Internet Movie Data Base, 2013)

The title character, Ray Donovan, is violent by nature, it is argued that violence has been bred into him, by his father, Mickey, played by Jon Voight. It is also an integral part of his job, as a fixer, he has to seem dangerous, and the only way he can successfully portray that image, is by being violent. In the episode ‘*Yo Soy Captain’* Donovan visits a therapist, who says “Ray, we need to talk about your violence” the creators have still managed to make Donovan a likeable anti-hero, in that the people he hurts, seem to deserve it. UntitledTv.com surmised it as “Ray Donovan fetishizes violence and the threat of it…the show is actively trying to make your brain associate violence with something positive” (Team, 2015)

* + 1. Definition of Violence

Most dictionaries have a synonymous definition for violence, which is the intentional use of force, intended to cause harm to another living being. The World Health Organisation comprehensively defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation." (Violence Prevention Alliance, 2016)

Violence in the media is defined as the portrayal of violent behavior or threats of violent behavior. Huesmann(2007) states that “Most researchers define media violence as visual portrayals of acts of physical aggression by one human or human-like character against another.”

This is evident in the depiction of Ray Donovan in the *Showtime* series. While much effort is taken to portray the character as a morally upright person, he is at heart violent, and some may argue that the efforts to depict him as a professional person, with a loyalty to his family, is an attempt to romanticisise the violence in the series.

Andrew Donaldson (2016) sums up the violence of the series, in his review he writes “It's a dangerous world of blackmail, criminal behaviour and, needless to say, a reasonably high body count. This, after all, is the dark side of public relations.”

* + 1. Media Violence and Real World Violence

There has bee much debate and research on the causal relationship between media violence and real world violence. Huesmann (2007) asserts that “Since the early 1960s research evidence has been accumulating that suggests that exposure to violence in television, movies, video games, cell phones, and on the internet increases the risk of violent behavior on the viewer’s part just as growing up in an envienvironment filled with real violence increases the risk of them behaving violently.”

Three theoretical perspectives have been put forward to explain the possible effects of media violence on the audience, Pitout (2007) defines them as the traditional media effects perspective, the cultivation perspective and the active audience perspective.

The traditional media effects perspective was formulated after the success of propoganda campaigns during the second world war. The audience was largely seen as the passive receipients of the information, while the media was seen as all powerful. This perspective assumes a direct causal relationship between media violence and real world violence, or on screen violence and the behaviour of those who view the portrayed violence. (Pitout, 2007)

The cultivation perspective, or the power of culture perspective, looks at the media’s ability to cultivate the perception of violence by the audience. Cultivation theory asserts that high frequency viewers are more susceptible to media messages and the belief that they are real and valid. Heavy viewers are exposed to more violence and are affected by the Mean World Syndrome, a belief that the world is far more dangerous than it is. (Davie, 2010)

“if one stays inside and watch news about crime all day, one might be inclined to believe that the crime rate is far higher than it actually is and they might easily become the victim of a crime. Or in another sense, it can perpetuate stereotypes such as “all Asians are either smart or ninjas” or “every black male is most likely a criminal.” These are ridiculous notions, but possible parts of a paradigm that can be conveyed by heavy exposure to media messages.” (Davie, 2010)

The active audience perspective states that the audience is not merely a passive recipient of the message, but are cognitively and emotionally involved in making sense of the message. This perspective asserts that scholars can not assume that the meaning of the message is fixed before transmission, as the meaning of the message must follow a process of negotiation between the recipient and the message itself. (Oxford University Press, 2016)

In terms of *Ray Donovan,* the active audience perspective should be used. Donovan is portrayed as a complex character, one that is inherently violent, but with a moral justification of his actions. It is therefore up to the audience to interact with the message, that being that violence is the only solution, in order to make the decision either cognitively or emotionally, and oftentimes sub-conciously whether there is a justification of the message or not.

* + 1. Short Term versus Long Term Violence

A number of research studies have been undertaken to ascertain the effects of on screen violence in terms of both long and short term exposure. These include studies by the Kaiser family and research by Eron and Huesmann. The only commonality between the research is that they have all been more or less equally criticised. (Pitout, 2007)

Short term exposure studies have shown an increased heart rate, perspiration and a tendency to inflict pain on others, these experiments have, however, been criticised due to the short term exposure in the laboratory and the artificial environment of the laboratory. The Kaiser family research project found that almost half the parents of children between four and six years old demonstrated aggressive behavior from television. (Pitout, 2007)

Pitout (2007) points out that the majority of children almost ninety percent are more likely to imitate positive behaviour from television programmes like the ‘Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles’

Eron and Huesmann conducted research into long term exposure to on screen violence. Their study found that childen who were exposed to violent television content when they were eight, were more likely to get into trouble with the law in tehir teenage years, when they were visited again at the age of thirty, those who had been exposed were more likely to have criminal records, use violent disciplinary measures to bring up their children and act aggresively towards their spouses. (Pitout, 2007)

This research also received harsh criticism, Rhodes (2013), postulates that the research was sloppy, unscientific and inadequate, as only three of the chidren who commited violent crimes as children were interviewed years later. He also says that exposure to other variables, like violence at home or within a community were not taken into account.

*Ray Donovan,* follows on the same anti-hero genre, exploited over the years from the *Godfather* trilogy, to *The Sopranos,* to *Boardwalk Empire* and countless others. The series can only be looked at in the short term, if only due to the fact of the length of the series. The series does provide short term exposure to violence, but as Rhodes points out, many other factors must be taken into account before a causal realtionship can be established.

* + 1. Conclusion

Violence and aggression may be easy to define, and there may be comprehensive definitions and understanding of media violence, but there is still no clear understanding or agreement on the impact of media violence on real world violence. While it seems that there is a causal link between on screen violence and real world violence, it would be foolish to assume a direct causal relationship between the two. Many other factors, including socio-economic circumstances, family relationships and psychological states must be taken into account when looking at the impact of the portrayal of violence and the behavior of the audience viewing the portrayal.

1. Conclusion
2. Sources Consulted
3. Addendum A