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Poor, black and female:
An analysis of South African print media framing of people living with HIV/AIDS

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Grndei001

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in HIV/AIDS & Society

Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town

September 2005
COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: [Signature]
Date: 5th September 2005
Abstract

Media coverage of HIV/AIDS issues influences how the public views the epidemic and people living with HIV/AIDS (PWAs). This dissertation investigates how two key large circulation English language newspapers in South Africa frame PWAs.

The research examines both the content of selected print media, Sunday Times and Daily Sun, and the context in which journalists work. In relation to the latter, the study adopts a critical political economy perspective of the media which argues that political and economic constraints on media organizations in tension with human agency by journalists and editors impacts on the content of newspapers and other mass media. This thesis examines HIV/AIDS coverage from the beginning of January until the end of April 2005 through the use of content analysis. Most previous research in relation to HIV/AIDS reporting in the print media has concentrated on the politicization of coverage during key moments in South Africa’s HIV/AIDS history. This period was deliberately chosen to be both contemporaneous and in order to examine the routine representations of PWAs during ‘ordinary times’, when HIV/AIDS was not high on the political agenda. Qualitative research in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews was also conducted with five reporters and editors in order to explore in greater detail issues relating to HIV/AIDS reporting.

This research found that the print media in South Africa frames the HIV/AIDS epidemic in a gendered and racialised way. From print media reports examined, the picture painted of PWAs is usually black, female and poor. Official sources continue to dominate coverage, but PWAs are gaining a voice in news reports. The language used in these reports is becoming more positive and empowering, but is still regularly stigmatizing.
Acknowledgements

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France-Presse</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
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<td>AMPS</td>
<td>All Media Products Survey (newspaper readership levels)</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARV</td>
<td>anti-retroviral (drugs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<td>JCI</td>
<td>Johannesburg Consolidated Investments</td>
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<td>MMP</td>
<td>Media Monitoring Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAIL</td>
<td>New Africa Investments Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naspers</td>
<td>Nasionale Media Beperk</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPB</td>
<td>Nasionale Pers Beperk</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Press Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA</td>
<td>People living with HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABC</td>
<td>South African Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanef</td>
<td>South African National Editors' Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPA</td>
<td>South African Press Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSDI</td>
<td>Semi-structured in-depth interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Treatment Action Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TML</td>
<td>Times Media Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific &amp; Cultural Organisation</td>
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CHAPTER 1:
Introduction

1.0 Introduction
The HIV/AIDS epidemic is multi-faceted. Like epidemics that have preceded it, HIV/AIDS is not just a medical condition, but one that affects all aspects of social life. Therefore, the only way to truly understand the disease is through a multi-disciplinary approach which incorporates a wide range of perspectives, from bio-medical to sociological, from behavioural to public policy, and beyond. With approximately 15 per cent of South Africans infected and many millions more affected by the disease, HIV/AIDS is now a part of everyday South African life (UNAIDS, 2004a).

It is also one of the key challenges facing South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa today. South Africa is the country with the highest number of HIV positive people living in it, approximately 5.3 million. Women are the more affected, with 2.9 million females living with the disease. There were an estimated 370,000 AIDS-related deaths in the country in 2003 and 1,100,000 children aged 17 or younger have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Sub-Saharan Africa contains just over ten per cent of the world’s population, yet it is home to almost two-thirds of all those people living with HIV/AIDS globally (UNAIDS, 2004a).

Because of the enormity of the challenges posed by the disease, research into HIV/AIDS at all levels of social life is needed, including the media. It is the purpose of this dissertation to investigate how people living with HIV/AIDS (PWAs) are framed by the news media in South Africa. This is a two-pronged examination, analysing both the content of selected press and the context in which journalists construct this content.

Firstly, the thesis will examine, from a theoretical perspective, how media practices in relation to HIV/AIDS reporting are shaped and constrained by the tensions between structures and agency\(^1\). This research adopts a critical political economy approach to the media (see Chapter two). Selected printed press are then quantitatively analysed over a

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\(^1\) I adopt Croteau & Hoynes definitions here, where structure refers to reoccurring patterns of social behaviour which suggest constraint on human action and agency refers to intentional human action (2003: 20-21)
specific period of time to examine how PWAs are framed in the news media. Finally, qualitative research is conducted through in-depth interviews with role-players in the media to investigate the context in which decisions on HIV/AIDS reporting are made.

1.1 HIV/AIDS & the news media

The mass media are the most important institutions in the production of our view of the social world (Bagidikian, 2000). News coverage is often the first source of information on a new issue and many people depend upon the media for news and information; the way the media present this information in turn may have a significant impact on how people view these issues (Beamish, 2002: 2). In relation to HIV/AIDS, the media have played a major role in its construction and presentation, as they have with other diseases (Berridge, 1992: 13). This impact on HIV/AIDS representations is varied and can be contradictory.

News and current affairs have the potential to inform their audiences of basic issues, new developments and topical debates around HIV/AIDS. The media can be instrumental in disseminating knowledge on complex issues like CD4 counts, developments in anti-retroviral treatments and the search for a cure or vaccine for the disease. But, these issues are complicated and it is not always the case that journalists will have all the correct information at their fingertips (Goga, 2000).

There is also a significant difference between informing media consumers and educating them. Knowledge is a pre-requisite to attitude and behaviour change, but it does not always follow that having the correct information will deliver results. In relation to attitudes news media also have an ambiguous role. They have the ability to raise awareness of public figures living positively with HIV/AIDS. However, they may reinforce fear or stigma in relation to disclosing HIV status (Berger, 2004: 2-3).

Agenda-setting is another important way in which the media influence society. It would be wrong to conceive of the media in democratic societies as deliberately setting the news agenda; the media tell society what to think about, not what to think (McCombs, 1997).
They guide the reader into placing importance on the news issues which are given most prominence in the newspaper, have the snappiest headline, are accompanied by photographs and are reported on for sustained periods (de Wet, 2004: 99). It is also a two way process with both the media and the public contributing to agenda-setting. While the media retain the upper hand in this power relationship, if an issue does not appeal to the public it usually will not form part of the news agenda (de Wet, 2004: 100).

As agenda setters, media can also influence politics and policies. This is, arguably, their most important role. Through shifting the media focus or frame, journalism may cause a shift in public opinion which, in turn, can cause the political priorities to change (Curran, 2002). In terms of the South African situation, news coverage is credited as having had a significant impact on the government’s decision to agree, after much resistance, to a national programme of anti-retroviral treatment for all those who need it. Similarly in a global context, media content and public opinion have forced pharmaceutical companies to drop the costs of such life-saving drugs (Berger, 2004:5).

Thus, the media are important agencies of influence. However, this is not to say that the rather simplistic view of the media as indoctrinators is correct. Rather, the way media exert influence is “complex and contingent”. The media act as “powerful agencies of reinforcement” (Curran, 2002: 158-9). This means the media mainly encourage people to act in a way that is consistent with prior held beliefs and behaviour. Perhaps the most significant way that the media influence their audience is through the framing of the everyday:

The media can persuade, change and mobilize. However, the principal way in which the media influence the public is not through campaigning and overt persuasion but through routine representations of reality. This power of definition influences public understandings of the world, and in indirect and contingent ways, public attitudes and behaviour. (Curran, 2002: 165)

This dissertation is concerned with the everyday representation of people living with HIV/AIDS in the print news media. While the media are not the only influencing factor on how the public views the epidemic, they are one of the most prevalent and play an important role in how we view the social world.
1.2 Central Research Question

The central research question that this dissertation aims to answer is:

How do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?

In order to answer this question comprehensively, three sub-questions were formulated:

1. How frequently are PWAs used as sources in news reports?
2. What type of language is used in HIV/AIDS news reports?
3. From print media reports, what picture is painted of PWAs?

The political aspects of the HIV/AIDS debate have dominated the news coverage of the epidemic in South Africa and much media research has already been carried out in this area (see Stein 2001, 2002; Shepperson, 2000; Cullinane, 2001; Galloway, 2001; Bird, 2002; Finlay, 2004; Delate, 2003; Siyam'kela, 2003; Tapfumaneyi, 2004; Jones, 2001; Media Monitoring Project, 2001, 2003; de Wet, 2004). It is hoped that by concentrating this research on how people living with HIV/AIDS are framed in selected South African print media, this paper will complement the growing body of literature on HIV/AIDS and the media, rather than repeating research already undertaken.

These studies have also shown, almost as an afterthought, the relative absence of the voices of PWAs in HIV/AIDS media coverage to date. The prominence of political actors and lack of voices from those infected with the disease points to the commercial agenda of newspapers (this point will be further discussed in Chapter two). But, it also warns of the potential dangers of using political sources as primary information providers as their views often flow practically unedited to the public. This becomes problematic in a country like South Africa where the credibility of such political sources is great and where there may be conflicting messages (de Wet, 2004: 110). One only has to think about the debate sparked by President Thabo Mbeki over whether HIV causes AIDS or Health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang advocating nutrition over anti-retroviral treatment as cases where the source is respected by the public and yet their message contradicts public health policy.
This concentration on the politicisation of HIV/AIDS coverage has meant a neglect of examining how those most affected by the disease are framed by the media. It is hoped this dissertation will shed some valuable light on both the media content and the decisions taken in newsrooms regarding the framing of PWAs.

Recent research has shown that the voices of people living with HIV/AIDS are the most popular and effective in prevention efforts (Tapfumaneyi, 2004: 46). The public responded most enthusiastically to media content which involved PWAs and to messages of hope rather than doom and gloom (Tapfumaneyi, 2004: 12). Another study has shown that exposure to PWAs in the media and through personal contact plays a significant role in sensitizing people to HIV/AIDS issues (Kelly, 2000:8). In terms of the news media, PWAs are primarily given a voice as sources on news stories, rather than through PWA-penned pieces or editorial or comment.

Given the important role that PWAs can potentially play in the news media, it is important to examine their use as sources in the print media. This study investigates how frequently PWAs are used as sources for news reports and explores the issues which help or hinder the use of PWAs as sources from the media workers' point of view. The content of what is said by PWAs is also of interest to this research as is how these stories are 'framed' (c.f. section 1.4). The dissertation also examines the other sources used in HIV/AIDS reports and determines which sources are used most frequently. This helps ascertain if the voices of those most affected by the epidemic, those living with HIV/AIDS, are being heard in the printed press (for more on sources see section 2.5.4).

The language that the media use to describe HIV/AIDS plays an important role in how the public views the epidemic and those living with the disease (Bird, 2002:7; MMP 2003: 94). The media therefore should exercise care in the choice of language used in HIV/AIDS reports. As “the media influence the language of HIV/AIDS, which in turn helps shape how people think about and deal with HIV/AIDS” (Beamish, 2002: 3), they also have a responsibility to try and address the stigma which is associated with the disease. Recent research has shown that two-thirds of news reports used neutral or
This suggests that South African media are becoming more sensitised to the impact of stigmatising language. This dissertation investigates if this trend of sensitized HIV/AIDS reporting is continuing in South Africa. It also explores the attitudes of journalists to the language used in such reports.

1.3 Print media

The print media are important and influential conveyors of information in South Africa and among the most accessible and open forums for opinion leaders to state their cases to a wide audience. Newspapers are more autonomous than radio or television news departments, with no equivalent legislation or body as the Independent Broadcasting authority (Hofmeyr, 2003:5). The press is self-regulating, through the office of the independent Press Ombudsman set up in 1997 by media organizations and role players. There are also high levels of trust among the public in this form of media. Recent research suggests, with the exception of ANC elites, the public including other elites do not question the press' bona fides and place substantial levels of trust in their reporting (Hofmeyr, 2003). Despite the lower levels of trust exhibited by the ANC hierarchy in general, government is strongly affected by journalists' coverage of HIV/AIDS, which, it has been argued, impacts more on policy change than individual behaviour (Berger 2004: 7).

Although the print media has a lower reach than radio or television in South Africa, it remains an important medium worthy of research. The media, including print, are the primary means through which South Africans receive the majority of their HIV/AIDS information (Tapfumaneyi, 2004). Despite the fact that 15% of South Africans are understood to be HIV positive (UNAIDS, 2004a), the stigma surrounding the disease has meant that it remains hidden in many communities across the nation. HIV/AIDS is not openly spoken about in every home, school or workplace. Therefore, as a primary means of disseminating information, it is important to examine how the print media portray or frame HIV/AIDS news. This framing in turn may have a distinct impact on how the public views HIV/AIDS and people living with HIV/AIDS.
The Sunday Times and the Daily Sun are the two newspapers selected to form the basis of the analysis of how PWAs are framed in the print media. The Sunday Times is an English language weekly paper publishing on a Sunday and has the biggest per edition circulation in South Africa, selling on average 504,657 copies weekly. This translates into approximately 3.24 million readers each week according to the All Media Products Survey (AMPS, 2004). It dominates the Sunday newspaper market and its readership is drawn from all races (although the majority are black) and mainly from upper socio-economic classes. Its editorial line is predominantly liberal. It is an up-market broadsheet, with an emphasis on politics, entertainment and, especially, business. Like many other Sunday newspapers, the Sunday Times includes elements of both sober broadsheet and populist tabloid style. In any one edition, there is usually insightful local and international journalism alongside gossip, celebrity news and photographs of semi-clad women. The result is a 'hybrid' paper which combines both hard news and 'trivia' or entertainment driven news in order to attract as wide an audience as possible.

Since 1996, Sunday Times has been controlled by a black empowerment company, Johnnic Communications, headed by ANC stalwart and businessman, Cyril Ramaphosa. The paper was previously part of the South African Associated Newspapers fold, which was later re-named Times Media Limited and was controlled during apartheid by Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI), a large mining company (Naude & Froneman, 2001). The Sunday Times is distributed nationally, with offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and the Free State. It is also available in neighbouring countries.

The Daily Sun is now the biggest selling daily newspaper in the country. It is the first South African tabloid aimed primarily at the black working class. Launched by Media 24 in August 2002, the paper’s last audited figures show sales of 301,800 per day and average daily readership of 2.29 million (AMPS, 2004). However, these figures are growing all the time and Media 24 claims sales have already breached the 400,000 mark (www.media24.co.za). Readers are predominantly black working class and English literate with some high school education. The Daily Sun sees itself as progressive in its
outlook and is eager to explore the social, political and economic opportunities South Africa in the 21st century has to offer. It can also lean towards the conservative, for example it refuses to print a “page 3” girl in its daily edition because of fear of offending its readers. It is also thought that many of the readers of the Daily Sun are new to the newspaper market, rather than previous consumers of other media products. The paper is sold in Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West Province. Plans are also afoot for a greater expansion into other parts of the country. Media 24 is wholly owned by Naspers, which was one of the main Afrikaans language media giants during apartheid (for more on newspaper ownership, see Chapter 2).

I have chosen to investigate these two newspapers primarily because they are the most widely read in the country. They reach millions of people every week. The majority of both newspapers’ readers are black. The Daily Sun appeals mainly to the working class and the Sunday Times to more affluent classes. While one is a weekly and one is a daily, a comparative study of how these two influential newspapers frame PWAs is enlightening. It is also interesting to examine how broadsheet coverage and framing of PWAs differs from the relatively new to South Africa tabloid media. Assumptions around the fabrication of stories and sensationalized nature of reporting in tabloids have been made by academics (see Berger, 2005; Harber, 2004). There seems to be, however, a lack of actual research into the content of South Africa’s tabloids. This dissertation investigates such assumptions by examining the framing of PWAs in South Africa’s most popular tabloid and then comparing this to the most popular broadsheet.

Some may argue large circulation figures, particularly in relation to tabloids, do not necessarily translate into large influence (Berger, 2005). But, it might be counter-argued that their influence lies with their readers, who have made these papers the most successful in South Africa. The Sunday Times and Daily Sun have the potential to impact on how millions of South Africans view HIV/AIDS through their framing of the disease. While this study is not meant to be representative, choosing two newspapers which are aimed at different markets means we can examine newspapers with very different editorial lines, styles and formats. However, all commercial newspapers’ focus is on the
bottom line and thus at least some of the issues the two papers face in relation to reporting on HIV/AIDS are likely to be the same. The findings are not expected to be generalized to the print media across South Africa, but rather to give a more nuanced holistic view of how PWAs are framed in the selected media.

The newspaper content analysed was from the beginning of January until the end of April 2005. This time frame was chosen in order to examine the routine representations of HIV/AIDS in the print media. It was also chosen so the dissertation would be contemporaneous. It coincides with one of the targets for anti-retroviral treatment set down by the government, that is 53,000 people on the national programme by the end of March 2005 (the original target was March 2004) (Teyise, 2004). I have deliberately steered away from investigating a time period when HIV/AIDS was high on the political agenda, such as the elections in April 2004 or the announcement of the roll-out of the national anti-retroviral programme in November 2003. This is to allow for examination of HIV/AIDS in the media during ‘ordinary’ times, when the focus of coverage is not specifically on the political arena. It is hoped that examining the coverage of HIV/AIDS for the first four months of 2005 will provide a fuller picture of the ways PWAs are framed in the print media.

1.4 Framing

Framing is a media technique used as a sort of shorthand for describing and situating events in the everyday world. “Frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980: 6). Through framing, journalists define what is important and should appear on the public agenda and how they believe these issues should be viewed.

Journalists use news frames as “interpretive structures” which aid them in situating particular events within their broader context. Limits on length of news reports mean that journalists must actively choose which elements of the information available to her to include in the report; such choices are often based on how similar stories were framed in the past, thereby reinforcing a common way of understanding developments (Norris et al,
Through the use of catchphrases, key concepts, icons, metaphors, etc, frames tend to favour a particular way of seeing a news event:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman, 1993: 52).

However, framing should not be viewed as a consciously propagandistic function in democratic societies where a free press exists. Rather, it is part of the social construction of reality and therefore draws on shared cultural understandings (Dell’Orto et al, 2003: 296). When a particular news frame is dominant, journalists tend to view it as ‘commonsense’ or natural. Such frames, nevertheless, have a marked impact on how readers of news perceive the events presented to them in a news report.

News frames frequently arise through the routine practices of journalism – how news is gathered and processed: “News is topically and thematically ‘framed’ for easier understanding, and it is reasonable to suppose that audiences employ some of the same frames in their processing of incoming news.” (McQuail, 1994: 355). Thus, both journalists and readers employ frames in interpreting the news. Elites (such as politicians, officials, businessmen) also use frames or ‘tacit theories’ in framing news events. As shall be explored in Chapter Two (Section 2.5.4), because of structural constraints governing news production, such officials usually have privileged positions with the result that news ultimately reinforces support for the stance taken by politicians and other elites (Norris et al, 2003: 3).

News frames, however, fail to provide comprehensive accounts of any news story. Instead they put forward a certain interpretation of events, usually rooted in familiar cues, while leaving other important information out. It is also unclear as to why one particular interpretation of events rather than another is adopted as the conventional interpretation – especially where conflicting meanings are offered by different political actors (Norris et al, 2003: 11).
Adapting Norris et al’s (2003) description of factors determining news frames of terrorist events, there are three factors which shape news frames in general. Firstly, the basic facts surrounding the news event itself. Secondly, the way that these events are interpreted by officials or elites, especially those in government through speeches, press releases briefings etc. And finally, communication from dissident or non-official sources, such as activists, people living with HIV/AIDS, non-governmental organisations etc. As has already been stated, the official sources usually exercise most influence in such instances.

If there are no alternative voices, particular viewpoints or stances become the conventional frames. They often become so widespread or dominant within a society that they appear natural or commonsense; contradictory interpretations of events are rejected then because they do not ‘fit’ this pre-existing news frame. Thus, conventional frames become perceived as routine journalism, or ‘journalism as usual’ — “explaining and prioritizing some dominant ways of understanding events while underplaying or neglecting others” (Norris et al, 2003: 14). In such cases, journalists often believe themselves to be just adhering to basic principles of journalism in the tradition of balanced, objective reporting as they do not see beyond the dominant frame to include broader frames which shape the narrative.

However, conventional frames are not indestructible; they may be challenged, broken down or usurped by an alternative interpretation of events. In such ‘two-sided’ contexts, “awareness of rival news frames means that the process of political communications can become extremely controversial, as both communities dispute the meaning and interpretation of similar events” (Norris et al, 2003: 14). This situation has clear parallels with the situation in South Africa regarding the HIV/AIDS epidemic, where meanings over what causes HIV and AIDS, among other critical issues, are deeply contested.

Framing also has the potential to impact on public opinion; it is not the only factor shaping public attitudes (for example, personal experience and interpersonal communication also impact on public perceptions). However, it does play a role,
especially where there is broad consensus among elites about the meaning of an event, in shaping public reactions (Norris et al., 2003: 11). In relation to HIV/AIDS, news framing has the potential to either reinforce stigma and stereotypes or to challenge them, depending on how the news story is framed (Berger, 2004: 3-4). For example, PWAs may be presented as the ones to blame for their disease, or they may be framed as being empowered to tackle the disease in their own communities through advocating testing and prevention methods.

1.6 Structure of dissertation

The next chapter of this dissertation lays out the theoretical framework of the thesis. To help understand how the media frame people living with HIV/AIDS, it is important to understand how the media is conceptualized in democratic society and the context in which journalists work. First, the two main perspectives in media theory, liberal-pluralist and traditional political economy are examined. A third approach, critical political economy, the basis of the dissertation’s conceptual framework, is then outlined. The dynamic between structure and human agency, that is, political and economic constraints in tension with independent human action, as the main influencing factors on news content is interrogated. Attention is then turned to the media situation in South Africa from the critical political economy perspective.

The methodology is discussed in Chapter Three. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used. Content analysis of the two newspapers forms the quantitative section. Descriptions and procedures used are outlined. The qualitative research takes the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews with five news reporters and editors to investigate why PWAs are framed in this way and what decisions are taken in the newsroom which impact on the framing of those most affected by HIV/AIDS. It should be added that there are elements of qualitative analysis in the interpretation of the content analysis (see section 3.2).

Chapter Four brings together the findings from the field research. It is guided by a critical political economy perspective of the media. The content analysis examines the
subject matter most prevalent in HIV/AIDS reports, the sources used in these reports, the characteristics of PWAs used as sources, or described in the text, and the dominant framing of these articles. The qualitative findings explore the impacts that HIV/AIDS stories may have on newspaper sales, conflicts between editors and journalists over HIV/AIDS reporting, the use of PWAs as sources and the newsworthiness of HIV/AIDS reports.

Chapter five brings together the findings to answer the central research question and three sub-questions which guide this study. It also briefly critiques the current state of reporting on HIV/AIDS in South Africa as well as recommending areas for further research.
Chapter 2:
Conceptual Framework

2.0 Introduction

Understanding the role of the media in democratic society is critical in understanding how the media frames PWAs. Like all elements in the social world, the media both exert pressure on the other actors in society, and in turn are influenced by them (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). It is important to examine the framework of these constraints and opportunities as they impact on the framing of PWAs. This chapter firstly examines, two conventional ways of theorizing the media, with a particular focus on the print media: liberal-pluralism and political economy. Attention is then turned to a third method of conceptualizing how the media operates in democratic societies, namely critical political economy. This approach emerged from the radical tradition, but has unique features and for this reason it is discussed separately.

2.1. Liberal-pluralism

This approach views the media as the ‘fourth estate’ which plays a vital role in the democratic process; the media is conceived as an alternative source of information outside and independent of government. In this way, the concentration of power to any one source is made much more difficult and in turn the democratic process is facilitated by competing powers keeping each other in check (Bennett, 1989). This theory is based on assumptions of equality - that power is distributed equally in society, that citizens have equal access to the media, and that the media in turn treat all citizens equally (Steenveld, 2004: 92). The liberal approach has three main democratic functions: free market watchdog, agency of information and debate and voice of the people (Curran, 2000).

In democratic societies, the watchdog role of the media is often cited as a reason for non-regulation of the media, so that governments cannot exert undue influence over them and, in turn, they can perform their role as an independent investigator of the state without fear of retribution. “The principal democratic role of the media, according to liberal theory, is to act as a check on the state. The media should monitor the full range of state activities,
and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority” (Curran, 2000: 121). However, according to Curran, this position fails to take into account the fact that private enterprise can also exert influence on the media. He believes that market freedom cannot be equated with freedom of speech because of this: “The issue is no longer simply that the media are compromised by their links to big business: the media are big business” (2000: 123; original italics).

In liberal theory, the media and audiences are believed to be heterogeneous. The media is seen as diverse, which allows for an open circulation of ideas and opinions (Bennett, 1989). This view claims that a free market is the most facilitating environment for “an agency of information and debate that facilitates the functioning of democracy” (Curran, 2000: 127). However, critics disagree and argue that the free market has restricted the democratic functioning of the media in four ways. Firstly, because of cost, the free market restricts the freedom to publish. Secondly, the free market has resulted in less public affairs information and more entertainment in circulation as the media attempts to gain the biggest audience. Thus, the public is less well informed. Thirdly, the free market restricts participation in public through the polarisation of mass newspapers – with lots of information in media aimed at elites and little for the general public. Finally, the market undermines intelligent and rational debate by reducing information to its lowest common denominator for mass consumption (Curran, 2000).

The view that the media speak for the people is pervasive in liberal theory. This approach accepts at face value media professionals’ claims of being objective and impartial (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: xi). Therefore, the control of the production process, of what stories make the news and the voices heard in them, is seen to lie in the hands of these objective professionals, despite pressures and influences being brought to bear on them (Curran et al., 1982). In relation to the interaction between journalists and their ‘sources’ in political and state institutions, the liberal-pluralist approach sees this relationship as mutually dependent and equal. Curran again, however, claims this view is flawed, and instead “most media markets have developed ways that weaken consumer influence” (2000: 129). He puts forward four factors limiting consumer influences:
Concentration of media ownership limits media choice for consumers. High market entry costs are a type of invisible censorship for those with limited financial resources. Mass media markets, because of their broad appeal, exclude minorities and those with least money; and finally, market expansion does not mean wider choice as the ideological range of the media has not expanded correspondingly – competitors often come from the same ideological background (Curran, 2000).

The liberal-pluralist theory can be viewed as the ‘first draft of history’ approach to the media. In this way, the media is conceived of as a mirror to society, reflecting the truth passively and objectively to the audience, without interference or influence from those with power in society. However, this is where this hypothesis is critiqued for its simplistic approach to the democratic process and the role of the media in this process. It seems to ignore the influences of media ownership by claiming the divergence of opinions and interests of owners, managers, editors and journalists would prevent the abuse of powerful positions (Bennett, 1989: 39-41). As Curran succinctly puts it: "this extremely simplistic theory fails to take into account the wider relations of power in which the media are situated" (2000: 125).

2.2 Political economy
The political economy approach to the media was born out of a reaction to the liberal pluralist theory and is rooted in Marxism. The expression of radical approaches, traditional political economy focuses on the structures of control and ownership in the media. According to this radical view, the media is used by the powerful classes to maintain their dominant position in society. This is done through ownership of the media, whereby the views of the elite, either in the form of owners or sources used by the media, are privileged above those who are less powerful in society (Steenveld, 2004: 92-3). The content and messages in the media are shaped by the economic base of the organization (as in the base-superstructure metaphor). Thus commercial media cater for the needs of advertisers and a mass audience, while those that are state-controlled move towards middle ground or the prevailing consensus on issues (Curran et al, 1982: 18). Overall, this theory posits that the media, rather than facilitating the democratic process,
serves to promote the status quo. The study of these forms of control is elusive. Often it is based on the ideologies implicit in the media text and those of the media owners. However, three main areas of control are identified by this perspective: ownership, advertisers and organizational control.

Media corporations are often large with interests spanning geographically and across media (newspapers, radio, TV, etc). They are usually big, profit-seeking corporations owned by wealthy people or stockholders. The deregulating of the market also means that many companies are involved in or are threatened by takeovers. They are often aligned closely with business, with the boards of such media companies frequently including lawyers and business people. Broadcasters, who need licenses to operate, too need to maintain an important relationship with government:

In sum, the dominant media firms are quite large businesses; they are controlled by very wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces; and they are closely interlocked, and have important common interests with other major corporations, banks, and government. (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: 14)

While the number of media outlets may be growing, the ownership profile is shrinking, with nine trans-national companies (all but one based in the United States) dominating the global media markets (McChesney, 1999: 86). Thus, the media corporations tend towards “one dimensional thought and behaviour” (Marcuse, 1968, cited in Bennett, 1989: 43) and rather than widening the scope of discourse, limit it by advancing the view of the world supported by the powerful in society.

Advertisers are the second controlling economic force, according to the political economy perspective. The trend globally is for media companies to derive most of their profits through advertising rather than sales; therefore what is on offer to advertisers are audiences rather than media products (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). Advertisers will choose the media most attractive to their needs and not necessarily those with the widest circulation or audience.
While the number of media owners may be dwindling, the number of media outlets is generally increasing, all of which are fighting for a slice of the advertising pie. This can result in media companies tailoring their products towards the advertising market:

...the basic form and content of newspapers, magazines and television programmes have been altered to create editorial content not primarily for the needs and interests of the audience but for the audience-collecting needs of advertisers" (Bagdikian, 2000:8).

Bagdikian further argues that advertisers have frequently been 'allowed' to influence news content in local TV and print (2000: xxv). Thus, advertisers' choices heavily "influence media prosperity and survival" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: 14).

According to the political economy of the media approach, factors within media organisations themselves also lead to the limiting of what is covered in the media or how it is covered. News media form symbiotic relationships with powerful sources of information or gatekeepers in order to feed the constant demand for news. News companies cannot afford to be everywhere and cover everything, so they depend heavily on government and corporate sources to feed them news. These sources, by virtue of their status and prestige, are usually viewed as being credible or 'experts' (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The need for objectivity in the news also adds weight to such official sources as they are perceived as accurate and unbiased. However, a closer look at this 'objectivity' reveals a distinctive ideological bias towards the powerful as these experts expound the view of the ruling classes in society (Bennett, 1982). The privileged position of such official sources also means that the powerful can use their personal relationships and threats or rewards to either directly or indirectly to influence the news (Curran et al, 1982; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Censorship, in the form of reluctance to investigate big business or in the toning down of articles which are critical of elites in society, is largely self-censorship, imposed by journalists themselves. These journalists may adjust their field of foci to coincide with those of their employers (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: xii). They may be reluctant to critically investigate large corporations from an economic point of view, as big business
are also big advertisers, not to mention the fact that socially and politically media owners move in the same circles as business tycoons (McChesney, 1999: xv).

The political economy approach sees media as adopting active roles in shaping media texts. It largely rejects the 'mirror' analogy of the media reflecting the truth, as advanced in liberal theories. Instead the media are viewed as distorting the truth, by only reflecting the ideology of the dominant classes in society, rather than a wider perspective which incorporates the views of all levels of society.

This approach to the media, however, has been criticized mainly for its overly deterministic view of how economics influences the media. There's little doubt that economic considerations do exert influence on media. But, they are just one factor and other structural and human agency constraints and opportunities should also be taken into account in any theory of the role of the media.

2.3 Critical Political Economy

A more satisfactory theory of the media is found in critical political economy. This interdisciplinary approach, like conventional political economy, acknowledges that economic elites do exert influence over media content. However, it further posits that this influence is tempered by human agency. The tension between structure and agency is central in critical political economy. Based on a sociological perspective, the approach argues that "structure suggests constraints on human action, and agency indicates independent action" (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 20). This independent action by human actors has the potential to both reproduce and challenge social structures.

The critical political economy perspective also situates the media as very much part of the social world, and to understand its role, both the micro or individual impact, as well as the macro or social context must be examined (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 13). The approach combines elements from traditional political economy, social organisation theory and social constructionism to produce a more nuanced, holistic, interdisciplinary
approach which takes into account the complexities of how the media operate in the social world. As Golding and Murdock put it:

Critical political economy is interested in the interplay between economic organisation and political, social and cultural life. In the case of the cultural industries we are particularly concerned to trace the impact of economic dynamics on the range and diversity of public cultural expression, and its availability to different social groups. (1996: 14)

Critical political economy also rejects the ‘mirror’ analogy of the media reflecting the everyday world. The media are instead conceptualised as engaged in actively creating meaning or in the process of social construction of reality. The news is not an external reality; the facts or angles have to be selected by the journalist and then interpreted by the audience. This process is socially determined and culturally encoded (Gurevitch et al (eds), 1982: 201). This approach acknowledges that while reality does exist, the audience must negotiate the meaning of that reality. To put it another way, the audience or reader plays an active role in interpreting the texts received from the media (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 7).

In this approach, structure and agency are the main influencing factors on news content. Structure refers to “any recurring pattern of social behaviour”, and not something necessarily physical, while agency is “intentional and undetermined human action” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 20-1). In the next section these constraints and opportunities for the media will be examined.

2.4 Economic Factors
The economic constraints which may influence the media from a critical political economy perspective are: ownership, the for-profit focus of the media and advertising. After discussing each constraint in general terms, they shall be examined in terms of the South African print media context.

2.4.1 Ownership
One of the clearest trends in the media is the concentration of ownership, whereby an ever decreasing pool of corporations and individuals owns the vast majority of media
companies. Media concentration largely came about through deregulation and changes to legislation which allowed media owners to increase the number of outlets they owned. For the owners, this means less risk and greater profits (McChesney, 1999: 16). The concentration of media ownership also has political consequences; the corporate view, becomes the 'public' view; that is the corporate voice becomes the norm in the media and the audience does not question this view of the world; and secondly, alternative media voices find it difficult to be heard. Only those who can afford it (either through owning their own media, or putting in place a framework that journalists can use easily) can make their point heard in the media (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). A concentration of media ownership and the ensuing lack of competition in the industry may also lead to increasingly homogenous media products that serve the interests of the ever smaller circle of media owners (Bagdikian, 2000: 7).

Alongside concentration, conglomeration is another trend in the modern media. This is where major media companies own media products spanning the range of formats – newspapers, TV and radio stations, film companies, record labels, publishing houses etc (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; McChesney, 1999; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Bagdikian, 2000). Owners perceive these conglomeration moves as good for business – they are efficient and profitable. However, conglomeration can have a direct impact on media content. Marketing and promotion play a greater role in the decision making process. This may lead to products which have the best cross promotional potential being chosen over those that are not so suitable (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 45-6). Conglomeration also makes it extremely difficult to be a small or medium sized media organisation in this climate. Firms either get larger, through mergers and acquisitions, or are eaten up by a bigger competitor (McChesney, 1999).

While the influence of owners on actual media content is often subtle or indirect, as will be explored under agency factors below, they may also exert direct pressure on their journalists and editors. In his recent book, The Insider: the private diaries of a scandalous decade, British tabloid editor Piers Morgan cites examples of direct intervention by media mogul Rupert Murdoch on the content of the News of the World.
Murdoch often directed that stories be shortened, given a different angle or dropped altogether, particularly if such a story affected his other interests. For example, in relation to actor Hugh Grant's infamous liaison with American sex worker Divine Brown in 1995, Murdoch insisted that the exclusive interview the *News of the World* obtained from her to run on only two pages, as opposed to the nine planned by *News of the World* editorial staff. Murdoch also allegedly ordered that Grant and his then partner Liz Hurley be given right to reply, because "my new friend Hugh" had just signed a three picture deal with Murdoch's film company Twentieth Century Fox (Morgan, 2005: 90-1).

Before the collapse of apartheid, the flow of information in South Africa was dominated by five media institutions: South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Argus Holdings Ltd, Times Media Ltd (TML), Perskor and Nationale Pers Beperk (NPB). The four latter particularly dominated the print media market, both in terms of titles and distribution (Louw, 1991a, 1991b). Ownership of these four companies was divided between the English and Afrikaans press, with Argus Holdings and TML falling into the first camp and largely financed by mining capital. Anglo American and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI) were the main controllers and were interconnected on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The newspapers controlled by these groups espoused a liberal ideology; they strongly supported capitalism but were critical of some aspects of apartheid policy (Davies et al, 1988: 406). With the fall of apartheid, these huge companies sought to protect their other, more lucrative mining interests by divesting themselves of their print ownership (Tomaselli, 2002: 137). The Afrikaans press emerged in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century as propaganda organs for the National Party (NP). It, along with the SABC, helped to keep the NP in power up until 1990 (Davies et al, 1988: 407).

It should be noted that alongside the commercial press, there was also a vibrant progressive press during the apartheid years. During the 1980s the development of technology like portable video cameras and personal computers meant that alternative progressive grass-roots media began to spring up to challenge the dominant ideologies of the mainstream English and Afrikaans press. Examples include: *South, Vrye Weekblad,*
*Rand Daily Mail* and *New Nation*. Liberation movement organisations, trade unions and student bodies produced a range of publications (Davies et al, 1988: 413-4). Many of these alternative forms of media were supported by funds from overseas. However, after 1990 when apartheid was being dismantled, funding for such media began to dry up resulting in many of these small media organisations becoming unsustainable and the narrowing of the public sphere (Emdon, 1998b).

The apartheid regime strictly controlled the flow of information in South Africa. Repressive laws censored the press, such as the State of Emergency regulations in 1986 which banned reporting of any matter relating to the security forces. The state also sought to control progressive publications through the 1963 Publications and Entertainments Act, which had wide powers to censor the media (Davies et al, 1988: 471). In the commercial press, the contest between English liberal capitalism and Afrikaner nationalism meant that black interests in the media were further suppressed. The public sphere fostered by the media was, until the mid 1990s, in the main restricted to white minority interests. This minority white hegemony was derived from colonialism first of all and then from 1948 onwards, apartheid. With the fall of apartheid, however, came a 'freedom' for the press in terms of abandoning its extreme political and ideological positions and allowing it to concentrate on the amalgamation of profit for both language presses (Tomaselli, 1997, 2002).

Two clear trends in South African media ownership have emerged since the transition to democracy: the growing internationalization of ownership patterns and black owned consortia buying into white owned media groups (Tomaselli, 1997; 2002). It is not the purpose of this dissertation to examine the historical ownership of the print media in South Africa from its inception in the early 1800s through to the present day. Neither is it the aim of this study to explore current newspaper ownership in depth (for more on these issues see Bold et al 1994; Berger 1999; Emdon 1998; Louw 1993; Tomaselli 1997, 2002). Instead the main trends in ownership and their consequences will be explored.
Sir Anthony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers entered the South African market in January 1994 as he began his take-over of the Argus Group and part of TML from Anglo American and JCI. Soon, the trans-national company headquartered in Ireland dominated the print markets in Cape Town, Durban and Gauteng. The deal was understood to be endorsed by the ANC on condition that it would encourage black shareholding in the business. However, that did not materialize (Tomaselli 2002; Bold et al 1994). Critics of the take-over viewed it as a shift from mining capital to foreign capital and believe this has several implications, which contribute to the narrowing of the public sphere. Firstly, Independent Newspapers is a global company and a widespread trend in globalization is the homogenization of the media product. Also, as the company is controlled by a rich, titled, Irish family, it might be argued that despite calls for a diversity of media voices, the control of these papers remains in the hands of the Eurocentric upper classes. Finally, the for-profit focus of this highly commercial company means it will be driven by cost-cutting and a centralization of resources (Warren, 1998; Bold et al, 1994). Therefore, media texts are likely to continue to sustain capitalist interests.

The second main media trend since the transition to democracy, black consortia buying into the formerly white owned media, is more widespread than foreign investment. Groups such as the National Empowerment Consortium, made up of small businesses and unions, made headway in the media ownership stakes by buying shares in Johnnic from JCI. This takeover "was the biggest cash deal in South African history" (Tomaselli, 2002: 142). New Africa Investments Limited (NAIL) was formed after the sale of The Sowetan. NAIL has now unbundled into a commercial company New Africa Capital and a media company New Africa Media (Burger, 2003: 147). Naspers (Nasionale Media Beperk) which bought out the other main Afrikaans press group, Perskor, formed new firms and sold shares to companies owned by black business such as Ukhosi Media and Dynamo (Tomaselli, 2002). At face value then, the transformation of the formerly white owned media seemed rapid. By 1996, just two years into democratic rule, ten per cent of the JSE was controlled by black capital. In stark contrast, it took Afrikaner capital more than a quarter of a century to achieve seven per cent market capitalization on the Stock exchange (Tomaselli, 2002: 143).
There is no doubt that ownership of the media changed radically in the first years post-apartheid. Media ownership moved from one of oligopolised capitalism to a far greater spectrum of ownership patterns:

There is in South Africa today foreign ownership, cross-media ownership, pyramid style ownership, broad-based shareholder ownership, development trust ownership, trade-union ownership, political party (Inkatha) ownership, community-organization ownership, public (as opposed to government) ownership. (Berger, 2000: 95).

However, it is premature to assume that such changes in ownership and control resulted automatically in changes in structural inequalities or indeed in diversity of opinion or increased access to the media. There was a paradigm shift in the press away from propping up white hegemonic interests towards accumulation of profits (Tomaselli, 1997, 2002). But the replacement of white controllers with black ones did little to change the focus on the bottom line of the press: "Capitalists – whether black or white – use media organizations to further their own class interests to secure and enhance their personal strategic positions in the socio-economic order" (Tomaselli, 1997: 50).

There were also allegations of racial tokenism in relation to the changing colour of media owners in post-apartheid South Africa. Critics claim the Johnnic deal enriched a few rather than engaging in mass empowerment (Tomaselli, 2002). They also claim the company "belonged to black South Africans on paper, but it did not in real terms" (Mashilo & Krabill, 2000: 80), in that the small groups with shareholdings had little or no say in the direction the company should take. Trade unions which became media owners in the unbundling of the press also faced difficulties. Ideological complications arise with unions being involved in big business to the detriment of their own values, but in addition union backed consortia, such as Midi, faced dire financial straits as a result of their involvement with the media (Tomaselli, 2000).

Today, Independent Newspapers, Media24 Ltd, CTP/Caxton Publishers and Printers Ltd, and Johnnic Publishing are the main print groups, with most engaged in black economic empowerment. Overall then, with political transformation came a seismic change in terms of ownership of the South African print media but, as one critic put it, in terms of
the impact on the structural system “the more things change, the more they stay the same” (Mamele, 1999:35).

2.4.2 ‘For-profit’ focus
The main concern of media giants in a capitalist system is to make profits. This for-profit orientation is central to any sociological explanation of the mass media (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; McChesney, 1999; Bagdikian, 2000). The focus on the bottom line means many news organisations are cutting costs in a number of ways, all of which impact on the content of the news.

The number of journalists in the newsroom is decreasing and a trend of ‘juniorisation’ is becoming more frequent where workers are becoming younger and less experienced. Where companies have interests in multiple company-owned news outlets or across genres, for example both radio and television, using the same journalists and production staff on both formats saves the company costly salaries. Investigative reporting is being scaled back in many news corporations as it usually involves longer research times and produces a small number of stories. The focus is often on pre-planned official events which are easy and inexpensive to cover, instead of less routine happenings. Journalists tend to then rely on a small number of elites who are easy and inexpensive to reach as their regular news sources. These sources are often based in a limited number of institutions, such as the courts, parliament and police. Another method of cutting costs widely seen in newsrooms worldwide is the downscaling of foreign bureaus. There is now a tendency to situate foreign correspondents only in cities seen to be of major importance, such as London and Washington, and media organizations tend to depend on wire service reports for other foreign news, which are vastly cheaper than maintaining a bureau abroad. Finally, in terms of cost-cutting there has been a trend towards the ‘trivialization’ of the news with increased entertainment and celebrity stories which adopt a light style, are inexpensive to produce and are attractive to advertisers. (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 62; McChesney, 1999; Bagdikian, 2000; Goga, 2000; Burger, 2003: 147).
These cost-cutting measures result in the falling standards of journalism worldwide, with less critical investigative journalism and foreign news in particular. It may also mean that social movements and dissident political voices are marginalized as elite sources become even more privileged as they are easy and inexpensive to access (McChesney, 1999: 114). In turn, this may lead to news coverage which is directed at elites and those in government, with “little focus on events or perspectives outside the official world” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 62). As all media are subject to these profit pressures and engage in similar cost cutting activities, these changes often lead to the media ‘looking the same’ (Bagdikian, 2000:7).

In South Africa, diversification in terms of ownership of the newspapers media has occurred. However, this media competition is not a guarantee of a variety of media choices, particularly quality choices. It might be argued that instead the competition between the various presses is broadly aimed at the same audiences who control the same sources of income of interest to advertisers, and this in turn “encourages a uniformity that narrows choices” (Raubenheimer, 1990: 137).

The for-profit focus of the media also leads to an extremely competitive environment where it is difficult for the alternative press to survive. Many of the prominent anti-apartheid media of the 1980s, such as South, Vrye Weekblad and New Nation, were forced to close down, rather than reinvent themselves in the post-apartheid era, as their overseas funding dried up. In much the same vein, the main barrier to entry into the free market press today is prohibitive costs for new media (Emdon, 1998b: 206).

In the new dispensation, there is a tension between the struggle for identity and capital. That is, while new black owners may advocate an Africanisation of media values, the bottom line will determine the company’s success in terms of number of readers and attracting and maintaining advertisers (Tomaselli, 1997: 60). There are contradictions inherent in the call for the Africanisation of the press too, as it assumes that there is homogeneity about all Africans.
It might be concluded then, that in South Africa the English press in particular, and the Afrikaans press to a lesser extent, has not shifted its focus on the bottom line. That is, during apartheid the English press ideologically protected “English” capital, in particular mining capital, and the Afrikaans press supported the National party and its interests. In the post-apartheid era, the new print media owners concentrate on profits in a global capital market (Tomaselli, 1997: 64).

2.4.3 Advertising

Another global trend in the media industry of concern to critical political economy is the emphasis on advertising, rather than sales or audience figures, as the main profit generator. As in the conventional political economy approach, what are on offer to advertisers now are audiences, rather than media products. Therefore, advertisers can exert a considerable influence over news media. However, this is often in an indirect way with advertising providing incentives and constraints to news. McChesney points to the reluctance of commercial media, most notably daily newspapers and television, to critically investigate big business. He talks of an eleventh commandment: “Thou shalt not cover big local companies and billionaires critically” and claims that for these commercial outfits such a stance makes sense economically, because they are major advertisers, as well as politically and socially, as the media owners move in the same circles as those in big business (1999: p. xv). The media may blame the threat of libel for their lack of reporting in this area, but that is only part of the truth (McChesney, 1999: 58).

This reluctance to investigate big businesses, which are also advertisers, is often a sort of self-imposed censorship by media workers, and often unconscious. Journalists will tone down their work, or fail to follow up on a story due to perceived pressures or perceptions of bias in their work. They also “tend to avoid content that is too critical of the system of consumer capitalism since this system is at the core of the interests of advertisers as a collective” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 71).
Advertising may also be held responsible for a significant shift in the focus of the news, from politics to business and entertainment. Newspapers are no longer partisan along political lines; they consider their readers as consumers rather than citizens (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003). In South Africa, the fall of apartheid meant that commercial newspapers no longer had to maintain ideological allegiances with white interests. It also heralded a search for a common national identity to bring South Africans from different racial and economic backgrounds together. In the run-up to the first free and fair elections in 1994 there was a flurry of media activity aimed at educating citizens about their right to vote; for the first time a national public sphere was created (Tomaselli, 1997: 27). However, alongside the collapse of apartheid, ironically, came the de-politicisation of much of the citizenry as more traditional forms of political organization like mass political parties were disbanded (Jacobs, 2003). It might be argued that this de-politicisation helped pave the way for a significant shift in the focus of the news away from politics to business, as readers were considered consumers rather than citizens and attractive to all important advertisers.

As a result of mass market pressures, the media also tailor their products to meet the interests of those who are attractive to advertisers, the middle classes, and those with large disposable incomes (Bagdikian, 2000; Steenveld 2004: 106; Louw 1990: 101). Falling foul of the advertisers can even lead to the shutting down of otherwise popular newspapers. Publications such as The Rand Daily Mail and The Sunday Star were both closed down despite large circulation, at least partly because their readers were not attractive to advertisers (Louw, 1990; Bold et al 1994: 6). The emphasis on the middle-classes can also result in a dearth of news about issues relating to the poor and working class – except when they affect middle and upper class people through issues like crime, deviancy or charity. When issues relating to the marginalized are covered by the media, it is often in a stereotypical or racialised way (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; McChesney, 1999: xviii). Another shift in news emphasis is towards ‘lifestyle’ or celebrity news. This is encouraged by advertisers as it is seen to promote a “buying mood”. Therefore, while advertising does not directly determine the news, the news is not entirely independent of advertising.
2.5. Political Factors

Political constraints also form part of the influencing factors on the media, although the critical political economy approach seems to place more emphasis on the economic rather than the political. It might even be argued that the political realm as an area of influence is largely being ignored as a result of the fact that in a predominantly de-regulated media world, big business is perceived as the main threat to media democracy. The role of the state, particularly in relation to state owned broadcasters, is often neglected in this approach. None the less, political factors can and do influence media content.

Such constraints involve mainly those imposed by the government in the form of regulations and legislation. However, enforcing these media laws is not always easy. In democratic societies, the media are not always passively compliant in the face of these constraints; they tend to “ignore, reinterpret, challenge or pre-empt regulations”. Therefore, regulations are “at best, only a partial constraint” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 123).

The media environment in South Africa prior to the collapse of apartheid was in general strictly regulated by the government. However, in the first years post-apartheid, the African National Congress (ANC)-led government looked set to herald a freer media environment by decreasing the power the state had over media, such as liberalizing the publishing and broadcasting regulations, scrapping censorship laws and advocating transparency in the operations of state and business. While improvements did indeed ensue, they were not quite as widespread as many hoped or predicted, as shall be seen below (Berger, 1999: 89-90).

The constitution was probably the most important legal change in terms of media in the post apartheid South Africa as it enshrined for the first time a right to freedom of expression and freedom of information (Berger, 1999). The Bill of Rights stated that everyone has the right to freedom of expression which includes freedom of the press and other media, freedom to receive or give information and ideas, artistic freedom and freedom to conduct academic and scientific research (Burger, 2003; Zegeye & Harris,
2003). The Press Freedom Index conducted by Reporters Without Borders now ranks South Africa as the 26th freest country in the world in terms of press freedom and the most free country in Africa, with Namibia performing next best ranked 42nd (Reporters Without Borders, 2004).

The right of access to information was the other major change introduced by the constitution. South African citizens now had rights to information held by the state and non-state bodies, if the latter held information needed to protect the citizen’s other rights. However, this access could be limited due to financial and administrative burdens on the state. Overall though, the final constitution “represented a gigantic advance in the media environment compared to that prevailing prior to 1994” (Berger, 1999: 94).

These changes to the constitution in turn meant that much legislation restricting media freedom already on the statute books had to scrapped as it was not constitutional. New laws had to be passed to give effect to the constitutional provisions (Berger, 1999: 91). However, not all of the old laws were scrapped, nor was all the new envisaged legislation enacted. While this may be blamed partly on the painstakingly slow parliamentary processes for legislation, the finger is also pointed at government for not speeding up the process. In fact, Berger claims that many of the old restrictive laws were wheeled out by the authorities during the post-apartheid years when it was convenient to their ends. He cites the government’s attempt to halt the publication of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an example which flies in the face of the right to information (1999: 91-92). Thus, political factors with regard to legislation both helped and hindered the freedom of expression and information.

The media are subject to the same equity legislation as all other companies working in the South African jurisdiction. Laws including affirmative action, the Employment Equity Act and measures to promote black economic empowerment have contributed significantly to the changing make-up of newsrooms nationwide. For example, the Employment Equity Act (1998) regulates how businesses with more than 50 employees have to transform the make-up of such staff to reflect the colour and gender
demographics of the country (Steenveld, 2004: 109). This government intervention is the main factor facilitating changes in terms of gender and racial representation (rather than self-imposed changes by media groups themselves). In fact some critics question if media houses would have ‘transformed’ to any real degree without equity legislation (Mashilo & Krabill 2000: 87).

Political factors also play a large part in the growth of media giants, as political systems removed regulations preventing media companies from cross ownership or becoming conglomerates (McChesney, 1999: 63). Conglomeration in turn can have a subtle, but implicit political bias on media content where “consumerism, the market, class inequality, and individualism tend to be taken as natural and often benevolent, whereas political activity, civic values, and anti-market activities tend to be marginalized or denounced” (McChesney, 1999: 110).

As elsewhere across the globe, the South African government is involved in setting the parameters for cross-media ownership. As is frequently the case, it exerts little direct authority over the print media, which is of central concern to this dissertation. Due to the fact that broadcast media require licenses to conduct their business, they are more heavily regulated. The Broadcasting Act of 1999 permits a 20% level of foreign ownership of TV or radio stations. However, government has argued this should be raised to increase investment (Burger, 2003: 143).

Politicians or political actors themselves may also try and influence the content of the news more directly. As already mentioned, ‘elites’ in society are often afforded ‘expert’ status as sources for journalists. They are viewed as credible and reliable informants who are easy to access and often use journalist-friendly practices, such as press conferences and photo shoots. Thus, powerful people and institutions receive the greatest coverage in the news media (this point will be further discussed in Section 2.6.4) (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 223). In turn this also means that “the reporter-official connection makes news an important tool of government and other established authorities” (Schudson, 1996: 148).
In South Africa, the first free and fair elections in 1994 heralded a shift in political power from white elites to the black majority. Those who were once marginalized by the mainstream press, such as black activists and anti-apartheid campaigners and politicians, were now considered elite sources in their new political roles. These new elite sources still attempt to use their political influence on the print media.

Both President Nelson Mandela and his successor, President Thabo Mbeki, have been involved in very public spats with journalists (Ogbondah, 2002). President Mandela held a meeting with black journalists and editors in November 1996 following a well publicized outburst where he accused black journalists of betrayal for criticizing the government’s reconciliation policy (Tomaselli 1997: 62). President Mbeki has also been involved in high profile rows with journalists including Charlene Smith, whom he accused of being a racist following an article she wrote on rape in the country (BBC News, 2004). There was also the well-publicized example of Health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang refusing to open a leprosy conference in Johannesburg until a camera crew from the SABC arrived. The minister allegedly phoned the head of news to demand a crew be sent to cover the event and then made delegates wait an hour and a half for the team to arrive (SAPA, 2-02-2005).

Overall then, South Africa’s constitution, recognized globally as one of the most progressive in the world, seems to suggest that the government commitment to freedom of speech is high and it certainly stands head and shoulders above other SADC countries (Duncan & Seleoane, 1998:30). The rights of the individual are emphasized above the state and, unlike other African countries, South Africa has not endorsed repressive laws which make it a crime to insult the leader of state or members of the legislature (Ogbondah, 2002). However, such commitment to freedoms of speech and information does not mean that the political elite are immune to media criticism and there have been instances of attempted political interference in media work since the beginning of the transition. But, overall it might be concluded that the role of the market, rather than the state is more important in restricting information flows in South Africa (Duncan & Seleoane, 1998).
As has been laid out above, economic and political factors play their part in influencing the media. However, it would be incorrect to take a deterministic view of these structural constraints. It should be remembered they operate in a dynamic with another set of factors, described below, human agency: “Owners, advertisers and key political personnel cannot always do as they would wish. They operate within structures which constrain as well as facilitate, imposing limits as well as offering opportunities” (Golding & Murdock, 1996: 15).

2.6 Human Agency
Government, political parties, large corporations and advertisers may all exert pressure on the content of media messages. However, media workers have numerous strategies to counteract these threats to press freedom; they can use their ‘agency’ in order to ensure that structural constraints on the media product do not go unchallenged (Warren, 1998). To better understand the decisions taken by journalists, editors, sub-editors in their work, it is therefore important to “understand the context in which they labour” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 23). This means looking at both the internal workings of the media organisation and at the processes of professional socialization; in this way the interests, values, norms and practices of media workers are scrutinized, rather than the individuals themselves (Schudson, 1996: 149). According to Croteau and Hoynes, “Within the media industry, the tension between structure and agency is related primarily to how much autonomy media personnel have in doing their work” (2003: 23).

2.6.1 The organisation of media work
Journalists make decisions on what is newsworthy every day. Of the millions of potential news stories only a few will ever be investigated and fewer still will make it to a newspaper or news programme. These decisions are made through routine practices of journalism. These routines allow news organizations often to decide in advance what news will be covered by reporters; and these routines are often the same in different news outlets. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the news often looks the ‘same’ in different organisations (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).
Media also define what places, for example London and Washington, are important news wise, and also what ‘beats’ are important, such as politics, crime and business. Reporters build up relationships with people situated in these beats so as to have access to a ready supply of information from them. Such routines, however, can cause the exclusion of some potential news stories: “The routine practices associated with news gathering virtually ensure that certain happenings will be excluded from the news” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 128). Frequently, the stories which are omitted from the news are those which do not reflect the dominant view of society, or which do not concern the middle and upper classes at whom the news is targeted.

The reliance of journalists on official sources is another routine of media work which privileges the view of the elite in society over others (this will be explored further in Section 2.6.4). The time and deadline constraints of journalism mean that journalists often rely on sources that are deemed credible in the eyes of the public and, from the journalists’ point of view, are easily and quickly available for comment. If a story emanates from one of these official sources, it also lends weight to arguments of newsworthiness (McChesney, 1999: 49).

The media also demands ‘news hooks’ on which to pin the news stories of the day: This often translates into a photo opportunity or press conference which situates the events into a contemporary setting and thus makes it more newsworthy. This, however, can mean that long-term issues, like poverty or racism, tend to get neglected as such stories may not contain a news hook (McChesney, 1999: 50).

Such news routines often allow journalists to believe they are being objective and neutral and disguise the privileged position afforded the powerful. However, media work does not lend itself to rigid control from the outside due to tight deadlines and quick turnarounds and therefore journalists often rely on their own professional judgment. Journalism is also a highly skilled profession and cannot be done under strict supervision which ensures at least some level of freedom for a media worker; journalists are also
driven by their occupation and are usually strict adherents to the principles underpinning the job such as objectivity, balance and freedom of expression (Warren, 1998: 59-60). Therefore, the way media work is organized can also be said to lend itself towards autonomy for journalists.

2.6.2 Staff make-up
Newspapers are hierarchically run, with final decisions on content lying in the hands of editors. Those closer to the top in management positions often internalize the constraints imposed by economic and political factors in the production of the news (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: xii). However, the control these editors may exert on journalists and other staff is not crude or direct; it is more informal and is exerted through occupational reward or punishment. If reports do not reflect the editorial line of the newspaper they can be spiked by editors; if journalists adhere to demands for newsworthiness, and reflect the editorial line they may be rewarded with front page placement. Staff in lower positions in the company usually accept the legitimacy of the power of the editor as a routine of newsrooms (Curran et al. 1982: 18).

The media, like all sectors of business, has had to comply with new laws introduced by the South African government aimed at addressing the racial and gender imbalances caused by apartheid. The make-up of newsrooms in terms of race and gender has certainly changed dramatically since the National Party was in power. However, an in-depth study shows that both black and female South Africans are still under-represented, especially in the top levels of the media industry. White men still hold 76% of the top and senior management positions and 49% of middle-management posts in the media industry with only 22 and 24% of these positions respectively held by people of colour. Also, black and female managers are paid between 2 and 12% less than their white male counterparts (Goga, 2000). Therefore, while staff composition is changing it might be argued that this change is gradual and there is still some way to go before newsrooms reflect the demographics of wider South African society.
It should also be noted that increased black and female representation in the workforce does not automatically mean a greater diversity of opinion or increased access of formerly marginalized voices in the press. Organizational theorists of the media suggest that it does not matter what an individual reporter’s own views on a subject matter are; once a journalist joins a news organisation they are socialized to adapt their own views to suit those they perceive to be consistent with the media group for which they now work (Schudson, 1996: 149). Thus, black and female staff in South African newsrooms are ‘educated’ in the house style of the newspaper and to succeed they must adapt.

### 2.6.3 News Values

News values are often cited by journalists as the reason why some issues are covered, or indeed promoted, and others are neglected in the media:

‘News values’ are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society. All ‘true journalists’ are supposed to possess it: few can or are willing to identify and define it ... We appear to be dealing, then, with a ‘deep structure’ whose function as a selective device is un-transparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it.”


While journalists may not be able to articulate how news values are decided upon, it might be deduced that the ‘deep structure’ Hall discusses relates to the organisation of media work in tension with economic and political factors. The journalists tend to internalize these news values or dominant views if they wish to be successful in the industry (McChesney, 1999: 53).

While news values tend to favour the elite, it is possible for marginalized or dissident groups to have their voices heard – although it does mean an adoption of the rules of news-making by the marginalised group. Those who conform to the demands of journalism for news hooks and newsworthiness can access the media. They adapt themselves to the framework utilized by the powerful to have their own voices heard in the media. However, Gitlin warns that the result of such conformity is often that the image of the group portrayed by the media becomes the face of the marginalized
movement for publics who receive the majority of their information from the media (1980: 3).

With the transition to democracy in South Africa there was evidence in the media of news values widening and shifting. The move towards a national agenda, as politicians and public figures like Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for ‘nation-building’ did result in a move towards multiculturalism and non-racism:

Editorials, opinion columns, letters to the editors and feature articles all began to vigorously explore issues relating to transformation. These papers also developed a much wider range of news values. For the first time black people and stories about blacks began to appear with regularity and with much greater representivity than had previously occurred in mainly white-read news media. (Tomaselli, 2002: 148)

More black faces and black voices appeared in the media. Nowhere was this evidenced as much as in the political realm, where the media did reflect the enormous shift from white to black power. This would suggest that South African readers did indeed receive more news and more diverse content from the media. But, even with the widening of news values and the greater inclusion of black people in the media, it is argued that there was no real paradigm shift in terms of news:

Journalism – with some exceptions – continued to be event-oriented, elite-oriented, middle-aged and male-oriented and to emulate Western idiom, even if black newsmakers were featured in increasing numbers. News values were slow to change. (Berger, 1999: 110)

2.6.4 Sources

News companies cannot afford to be everywhere and to cover everything, so they depend heavily on government and corporate sources to feed them news. The need for objectivity also adds weight to such official sources as they are perceived as accurate and unbiased. Government and the corporate sector often channel vast sums of money into the manufacture of news through publicity and information departments. The job of the many personnel employed in these sections is essentially to make a journalist’s job as easy as possible – to present them with easily digestible ‘facts’ and to provide them with ‘expert’ interviewees to back up these points. This method also reduces the cost of the news to the corporation. This privileged position also means that the powerful can use
their personal relationships, threats or rewards, either directly or indirectly to influence the news (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Schudson, 1996; Croteau & Hoynes, 2003).

This symbiotic relationship between journalists and official sources means “there is little doubt... that the centre of news generation is the link between reporter and official, the interaction of the representatives of the news bureaucracies and the government bureaucracies” (Schudson, 1996: 148). Again, this bias is tipped in favour of the dominant classes and makes it difficult for less powerful or marginalized groups to gain news attention. This means they must adjust their organizational modes to reflect those of established organisations if they want to gain news coverage. That is, such marginalized groups must adapt to the routines of journalism, like press conferences and photo-calls, in order to garner the attention of the media and they must have ‘newsworthy’ stories to tell (Gitlin, 1980).

2.6.5 Self-organisation of journalists

Another method for journalists to create and protect an autonomous space for themselves is through self-organization, that is the creation of bodies to protect journalistic integrity, freedom of expression and ethics. The South African National Editors’ Forum (Sanef) was established in 1996 as a voluntary forum of editors, senior journalists and trainers from all sections of the media industry in the country. The purpose of its formation was to bring media workers together in a group which acknowledged the media injustices of the past and committed to a programme of action to overcome such imbalances and strive to promote media freedom and independence (www.sanef.org.za). Specifically in relation to HIV/AIDS, Sanef is involved in holding workshops on the ethical reporting of the pandemic; it also joined the government’s “Partnership Against AIDS” initiative in 2001, which forms part of the multi-faceted approach to tackling the disease (PanAfrican News agency, 2001)

Other organizations, like the Forum of Black Journalists and the South African Union of Journalists are engaged in similar work. Codes of ethics often form part of the work of such bodies and generally centre on two premises: journalistic principles (such as
freedom of expression) and acknowledgment of the primacy of the judgements of one’s peers rather than powerful elites in society (Warren, 1998: 60-62). In terms of HIV/AIDS, networks such as journ-AIDS have been developed specifically with the aim of improving the reporting of issues relating to the disease (www.journ-aids.org). The Freedom of Expression Institute, formed in 1994, is another body which lobbies for the provisions in the constitution on media freedoms to be upheld (Burger, 2003: 152-3).

These organisations allow media workers to develop their ‘agency’ with the overall aim of improving the standards and freedoms of the press: “Editorial staff can be challenged to develop a culture of activism… and not simply to accept the hierarchical practices that are so inimical to the development of solid, critical journalism” (Duncan & Seleoane 1998:30).

2.7 Concluding remarks

A critical political economy of the media framework, as set out above, argues that media content is influenced by both structural constraints and human agency. The constraints and opportunities impact on what is considered newsworthy and how these issues are framed in the news media. Often these influences are subtle and indirect, rather than overt and direct. However, they can and do affect the content of the media by narrowing the public sphere or promulgating the dominance of a particular world-view, usually that of the middle-classes. HIV/AIDS, like any other issue in the media, is subject to these constraints and opportunities as will be examined in Chapter 4.

In conclusion, it is important to note that media audiences or readers actively participate in the creation of meaning, or the social construction of reality, and they do not necessarily accept the ‘preferred’ reading of the texts. This reading or interpretation of the text depends on the social structures such as education, class and personal experience of the reader (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003; Shisana & Simbayi, 2002). This important caveat reminds us: “the structure and agency framework suggest that we have to explore the dynamic tension between the power of social structure and the (always partial) autonomy of human activity” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 24).
Chapter 3:
Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology to be used in this dissertation. It is a two-pronged approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods of enquiry. The following section forms the guide for the data collection and analysis and is linked to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two.

The central research question to be investigated in this dissertation is:
How do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?

Three sub-questions flow from this question which will be tested during the quantitative and qualitative research process:

1. How frequently are PWAs used as sources in news reports?
2. What type of language is used in HIV/AIDS news reports?
3. From print media reports, what picture is painted of PWAs?

These questions were researched using both content analysis and semi-structured in-depth interviews (SSDI). The use of two forms of research is termed triangulation or "the use of one method to validate conclusions drawn from another method" (Jupp, no date: 110). They are also complementary research methods (Jensen, 2002a: 258). The content analysis in this study dealt mainly with the manifest content of media texts as they relate to HIV/AIDS, and in particular, PWAs. The in-depth interviews with key respondents were an opportunity to explore some of the more interesting elements of the content analysis and to probe media workers on the decisions made in newsrooms relating to HIV/AIDS reporting.

3.1. Quantitative methodology

Content analysis is a quantitative research methodology and is mainly concerned with demonstrating cause-effect relationships (Gunter, 2002: 211). This type of analysis assumes the commonsense notion that media content must have some effect. It usually takes the form of measuring or counting specified features of media content (Harvey &
MacDonald, 1993: 36-9). One of the most widely used definitions of this method was devised by Stone & Holsti: “Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (1966: 5). Content analysis has been widely used to examine stereotypes, especially sexist stereotypes, in the media (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993: 37). Authors agree that content analysis should be systematic and replicable and in this sense is a ‘scientific’ mode of research.

There are five main features of content analysis. Firstly, the procedures should be objective, that is, each step in the research process should be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules. In this way, different researchers following the same procedures should achieve the same results. Secondly, the procedures must be systematic, that is applied with consistency to all the data. Content analysis should have generality; the findings should have theoretical relevance. It is typically quantitative and often includes counting of themes, words and metaphors. And finally, content analysis is typically concerned with manifest content, that is, the surface layer of meaning rather than latent or subtle meanings (Holsti, 1969: 3-5).

The last point is somewhat controversial among content analysts, with disagreement over whether this method should only be concerned with manifest meaning. Historically, content analysis was concerned with manifest content only – that is those which everybody (senders and receivers) will agree on (Schroder, 2002: 103-4). However, it is increasingly recognized that there are at least some elements of interpretation required on behalf of the content analyst to conduct such media research rigorously: “in the establishment of analytical categories, the ascription of textual units to these categories, as well as the correlation of findings with theoretical conceptions of society and culture, the content analyst is inevitably an interpreter” (Schroder, 2002: 104). Other analysts claim that conclusions or inferences may be made about the results of content analysis. Therefore, the “interpretation of ‘latent’ as well as ‘manifest’ meanings is a valid exercise within the model” (Stone et al, 1966: 17). It is this position that this dissertation adopts.
One drawback of content analysis is that the levels of complexity are somewhat obscured by the de-contextualisation of the media text to numerical formats at the analysis stage. However, through triangulation some of this complexity may be regained in the qualitative analysis. Content analysis is also an iterative process. It is advised that the researcher immerses herself in the data to be studied as this can aid in the setting up of content categories, to be discussed below (Stone et al, 1966: 28-9).

Content analysis must have a ‘program’ or procedure – that is a set of rules or regulations for organizing the data, applying categories, determining contingencies and arranging results (Stone et al, 1966: 39). This allows for the systematic classification of the data under examination and also means that the steps the researcher takes should be replicable by any other researcher, thus the scientific nature of this form of research.

The first step in any content analysis is to decide on the sample of materials to be included in the analysis. In this case, the two newspapers chosen for analysis were the Sunday Times and Daily Sun. The period of time under review was from the beginning of January 2005 until the end of April. Each newspaper was scanned to determine which stories were to be collected for analysis. The criterion for inclusion was that HIV/AIDS must be the main focus of the report; hence, not all stories which mention HIV/AIDS were included. News reports, feature articles and editorials were all included. In terms of the Sunday Times, the main news section and the “Insight & Opinion” sections were focused upon, leaving out supplements like the Business sections, Sports and Lifestyle. This was in order to concentrate on news reports, features and editorials. As a tabloid, and relatively short in length, the Daily Sun was sampled in its entirety.

The categories of content that are to be measured must be defined. This step is one of the most important: “Category construction is a crucial, often most crucial, stage of content analysis. Here data is tied to theory, and it is the basis for drawing inferences” (Stone et al, 1966: 9). Most importantly, categories should reflect the researcher’s central question, in this case “How do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?” In this research, I wanted to examine the sources, the language and the
framing of PWAs in the selected print media. In order to do so comprehensively, I decided to classify the subject matters or themes of the HIV/AIDS reports to also investigate which stories are most prevalent during the analysis period. This was aimed at revealing on what type of stories PWAs were used as sources. These four categories: subject matter, sources used in reports, characteristics of PWAS in stories and the dominant framing of article, were used in the content analysis.

The unit of analysis for this study was the story. Each HIV/AIDS report had to be examined and classified under the four categories. In relation to subject matter, I began the content analysis with a list of potential themes including political, human interest, science/epidemiology, treatment, prevention, celebrity, opinion/editorial (see Table 4a). Each story was labeled by its main theme. If that theme did not appear on the initial list, the list was expanded to include it. After categorizing each story by theme or subject matter, I listed the sources used in the articles (see Table 4b). Again, an initial list was drawn up of potential sources, such as officials, politicians, family members, PWAs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and celebrities. Other sources which appeared were added as the analysis took place. In order to examine how PWAs are represented in the print media, I examined the characteristics of the people living with HIV/AIDS who were either quoted as sources or described passively (they were not given a direct voice) in the texts. The race, gender, socio-economic status and whether that person was described as living or deceased were noted (see Tables 4c and 4d). Finally, I examined each article in order to label its dominant framing as positive or negative (see Table 4e). Drawing on Entman’s framing paradigm, this approach was adopted to avoid “treating all negative or positive items of utterances as equally salient and influential” (1993: 57) and rather to concentrate upon measuring the salience or importance of the elements of the text. This approach does not simply count messages deemed positive or negative and decide on an article’s dominant meaning. Instead, it examines which pieces of information are “more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences” (Entman, 1993: 53). This may be done by placement, repetition or associating the prominent information with culturally familiar symbols. Thus, this process requires an element of judgement and is not strictly quantitative.
3.2 Qualitative methodology

While quantitative research is mainly concerned with numbers and statistics, qualitative research is centered on words - language based on observation, interviews or documents (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is associated with rich and nuanced data which may help the researcher develop an understanding of the perspectives and meanings of research subjects, often in their natural settings. Therefore, context is also important in qualitative research (Wickham et al, 1997: 11). It is an in-depth form of inquiry rather than the more broad form of quantitative methods such as content analysis. Qualitative research is a continuous, iterative process, with the researcher moving from theory to collection to data analysis and back again continuously. The qualitative research method used in this section of field work is semi-structured in-depth interviews.

This is one of the most widely used data collection methods and should be regarded by the interviewer as “a professional conversation” (Kvale, 1996: 5). It is not the same as an ‘everyday’ conversation, in that it is more one-sided, with the interviewer asking most questions, and the interviewee doing most of the talking. The respondent should be able to comment freely and the researcher in turn is able to probe the respondent in areas of interest (van Vuuren et al, 1998). This form of research is also distinctly suited to media studies:

...in-depth interviewing, with its affinities to conversation, may be well suited to tap social agents’ perspective on the media, since spoken language remains a primary and familiar mode of social interaction, and one that people habitually relate to the technological media. The difficulty, of course, is that people do not always say what they think, or mean what they say.” (Jensen, 200b: 240)

It should also be remembered that statements from respondents should not be treated necessarily as true representations of social reality. Rather, the interviews should be treated as data and subjected to analysis and interpretation. Qualitative research such as SSDI is often criticized for being a ‘weak’ form of research, however it is possible to conduct systematic, rigorous and valid studies if procedures are clearly outlined and followed during the process (de Wet & Erasmus, 2003: 1).
Drawing on Miles & Huberman (1994: 10) and Wengraf (2001:3), the features of SSDI will now be examined briefly. Its focus is on everyday, routine occurrences in their natural settings and is interested in exploring real life and lived experiences. Context is taken into account and therefore, the possibility of examining latent or subtle issues is strong. Qualitative data is rich and holistic and has the potential to reveal complexity, which is often not available through more quantitative research methods. It allows the researcher to examine causality, by asking questions as to why and how things happen as they do. While the interview itself must be planned for and designed in advance, there is also room for improvisation during the actual research conversation, hence the semi-structured nature of the interview. It is a special type of conversation and is usually conducted face-to-face, although the flow of information is mainly one way.

SSDI gives researchers the opportunity to examine the meanings people place on events, processes and structures in their lives. It is an important research tool when one wants to "supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data gathered from the same setting" (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10).

There are no strict common procedures for conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews; however, each study can document clearly its own procedures and if these are explicit they can lend more 'weight' to the research (Kvale, 1996: 13). As with quantitative research, the first step in the program is sampling. For the purposes of this study, theoretical sampling was used. This form is aimed at sampling structures, often hierarchies:

Theoretical sampling can rely on what is sometimes called '(proto-) typical' and 'critical cases'. In order to explore a theoretical category... a project may focus on core members of an established organization or it may examine borderline instances as limiting or test cases. (Jensen, 2002b: 239)

Five semi-structured in-depth interviews formed the basis of this sample. The interviewees included both newspaper journalists and more senior editors in an effort to explore the views of media workers in different positions of influence in the newsroom. They are Claire Keeton, health reporter with the Sunday Times, Heather Robertson, managing editor news from the same paper, Phumelele Kaunda, reporter with the Daily
Sun, Chris Whitfield, the editor of the Cape Times and deputy editor of the Cape Argus
Dave Chambers. Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, no senior editorial staff from
the Daily Sun agreed to take part in these interviews. It was then decided to include
editorial representatives from newspapers other than the two scrutinized in the content
analysis section to get a more rounded picture of the issues faced by senior editors in
framing PWAs. It is also assumed that most commercial newspapers will face similar
challenges when reporting on HIV/AIDS.

After deciding on the sample group, the interview schedule was designed (see Appendix 1).
Initial, open questions were formulated which allowed for descriptive and usually
lengthy answers from the respondent. No ‘leading’ questions were included to avoid
biasing the data. As the questions designed are initial questions, an “active follow-up
strategy” (Wengraf, 2001: 159) was employed during the interviews which allowed me to
probe interviewees for more information in areas of interest. I wanted to ‘test’ the
findings of the content analysis and thus included questions relating to the main focus or
theme of news reports, range of sources used, factors influencing the use of PWAs as
sources and the language use in HIV/AIDS reports. To investigate structure and agency
issues in newsrooms questions around the newsworthiness of HIV/AIDS as a topic, the
impact of such stories on sales and advertising and the resources dedicated to HIV/AIDS
reporting were included.

The interviews themselves were conducted in July and were done either face-to-face or
over the phone, depending on the location of the interviewees. Interviews with Claire
Keeton, Heather Robertson and Phumelele Kaunda, who are all Johannesburg based,
were conducted by phone and recorded at a Cape Town radio station. The face-to-face
interviews with Chris Whitfield and Dave Chambers were recorded with a mini-disc in
Cape Town. They were between 30 and 45 minutes in length.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim to prepare for analysis, although this stage is
also considered analysis as the researcher immerses herself in the raw data as spoken.
Because of the relatively small number of interviews, it was decided to conduct the
analysis manually. After a thorough reading of all transcripts, coding began. Codes are like tags or labels for assigning meaning to the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) which help to organize the massive amounts of data generated from the SSDI. Miles and Huberman (1994) also advocate two levels of coding: first level coding where the main themes of interest to the study are tagged and second level coding where these themes are grouped together into categories or patterns.

Patterns or propositions emerged as the process of data analysis continued, such as conflicts between journalists and editors on HIV/AIDS stories, but it was not until the data collection period was over that final conclusions could be made – even if they were 'prefigured' from the beginning. I tried to test any conclusions for validity and credibility in order to improve the rigor of the study. This was done by using a constant comparative method, where I checked previously coded segments of text before beginning coding new sections to ensure the same codes were used throughout (de Wet & Erasmus, 2003: 6-7). Issues of potential bias or contamination of the data were kept at the forefront of my mind during this process. I was also aware that I should not pay too much attention to dramatic findings at the expense of the more routine. In other words, conclusions had to be representative of the entire process.

Like all forms of research, there are some limits to semi-structured in-depth interviews. It is a very labour intensive process and time-consuming, especially if transcriptions are also conducted by the researcher. There is the distinct possibility of researcher bias, either in the data collection process through leading questions or during analysis. Questions often arise over the adequacy of sampling if, as in this study, only a few respondents are included. This also impacts on the generalisability of the findings to the wider population from these few cases and it is not always clear how the conclusions should be utilized (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 2). However, as explained above, if procedures are explicit and followed rigorously, the possibility of bias is reduced significantly. Triangulation with content analysis also means that difficulties, such as generalizing the findings or indeed the credibility of the study, should be diminished as the two approaches should support each other.
In Chapter 4 the findings of both the content analysis and the semi-structured in-depth interviews will be outlined.
Chapter 4:
Findings

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented. The first part examines the data collected in the content analysis of the two selected newspapers, Sunday Times and Daily Sun, from the beginning of January until the end of April 2005 (full content analysis tables for the Sunday Times and Daily Sun are contained in Appendix 2 & 3 respectively). The second part of the analysis contains the findings from the qualitative analysis. Together, these findings shed light on the central research question: how do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?

4.1 Quantitative analysis

A total of 103 articles were examined in depth during the quantitative analysis. 17 copies of the Sunday Times and 85 copies of the Daily Sun formed the basis of the content analysis. In the case of the Sunday Times, the main section and the “Insight & Opinion” sections of the newspaper were scanned manually at the National Library of South African in Cape Town for articles relating to HIV/AIDS. As outlined in Chapter 3, only articles that had HIV/AIDS as their main theme were collected. It is acknowledged that there is an element of qualitative judgment in this selection process, but this was necessary to limit the articles collected to HIV/AIDS-related stories only. From the 17 editions of the Sunday Times scanned, 22 stories in total had HIV/AIDS as their main focus.

In relation to the Daily Sun, it was also hoped to use the archives of the National Library to source material. However, the archives were far from complete with just 13 of the 85 copies needed available. Media24, the publishers of the Daily Sun, were contacted and they provided access to their web archive via http://152.111.1.251. A search engine, using a combination of the words “HIV and/or AIDS”, “HIV”, “AIDS” was used to find all articles which made reference to HIV/AIDS. These were then scanned manually to confirm if the disease was the main theme of the article. A drawback of using the web archives was that it was not possible to see where on a page a story was placed, nor was it possible to view pictures attached to stories. However, page numbers and details and
captions of photographs were included on the web archive in text form. Also, the length of a story gives an indication of the prominence it was given on the page.

Many of the pieces sourced through the search engine were letters written by Daily Sun readers. As has already been outlined, letters to the editor do not form part of this study. However, one of the Daily Sun's regular features is a page dedicated to HIV/AIDS entitled: "Aids: fighting back". It appears most Wednesdays, complete with its own logo. As well as articles written on the epidemic by staff writers, it also includes letters from readers asking questions or commenting on the disease. The newspaper actively encourages its readers to become involved in the coverage claiming: "Most of all, we want this to be a people's column, for the people, by the people" and they are asked to send their letters specifically to "Fighting Back". These letters form part of the Daily Sun's dedicated HIV/AIDS coverage and are important in examining how the newspaper frames PWAs. Therefore, it was decided to include letters appearing on this page in the content analysis, while excluding those sent to the editor, which usually appear on the "Speak Up" page. In total then, 81 articles (letters and news stories) from 85 copies of the Daily Sun were included in the content analysis.

4.1.1 Subject/theme of articles
The first area examined in the content analysis is the main subject or theme of the article. Table 4a outlines the main themes and frequency of those themes in the stories analysed. One of the most significant findings here is the prominence of human interest stories in the two newspapers. Both newspapers featured more human interest stories than any others. Five stories in the Sunday Times and 13 stories in the Daily Sun focused on human interest themes. Such stories tend to personalize the epidemic by outlining its effects on individuals or families. However, the stories often focus on the hardships posed by the epidemic such as "Under the cover of darkness" (Sunday Times, Jan 30th 2005) or "Poor Gogo's Aids hell" (Daily Sun, Jan 19th 2005) (see Appendix 4 for these stories and a sample of others). As discussed above, because of length and time constraints, news often centres on individual lives or stories, rather than attempting to
portray the societal wide impact of an issue such as HIV/AIDS and is thus de-contextualised.

Table 4a: Subject/themes of articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/theme</th>
<th>Sunday Times</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human interest</td>
<td>5 (23%)</td>
<td>13 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Initiative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion/editorial</td>
<td>4 (18%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/epidemiology</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>10 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters¹</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal/charity</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>2 (9%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>9 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obituary</td>
<td>1 (4.5%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS-related deaths</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political stories are the second most popular theme in the *Daily Sun* with ten stories. However, in relation to the *Sunday Times* political themes seem to be declining. This is in stark contrast to many previous studies which pointed out the politicized nature of HIV/AIDS coverage (see Stein 2001, 2002; Shepperson, 2000; Cullinane, 2001;)

¹ It was decided to group all readers letters together, rather than analyse them by theme, as the subject matter of the letters was dictated by readers rather than the editorial line of the newspaper
Galloway, 2001; Bird, 2002; Finlay, 2004; Delate, 2003; Siyam'kela, 2003; Tapfumanyi, 2004; Jones, 2001; Media Monitoring Project, 2001; de Wet, 2004). Many of these previous studies concentrated on examining HIV/AIDS coverage during periods where political controversy dominated the debates on the epidemic, for example the debate over whether HIV causes AIDS which was sparked by President Thabo Mbeki during 2000. This study purposely chose to analyse news coverage over a period when political controversies were not high on the news agenda and this may be a reason why the Sunday Times has fewer politically themed stories. The Daily Sun, on the other hand, continues to focus on the political. It might be suggested as a daily newspaper it is under more pressure to fill copy and therefore tends to rely more on political stories. As was described in chapter two, political organisations often put in place structures which cater to the pressures of newsrooms by providing press releases, press conferences and photo opportunities to generate publicity for their own interests. In turn, political stories can be ‘cheaply’ generated by newspapers and are thus attractive to media organisations which focus is on the bottom line.

Science/epidemiology themed stories continue to receive coverage, but more so in the Sunday Times. Such stories are often linked to the release of new academic reports on the incidence or prevalence of the disease. Celebrity and entertainment stories are also popular, although more popular in the Daily Sun. This is to be expected in a populist tabloid newspaper. A critical political economy perspective of the media leads one to expect the ‘trivialisation’ of the news as newspapers often try to appeal to the widest audience also. These types of stories might also be said to be attractive to advertisers as they promote a buying ‘mood’ (c.f. section 2.4).

Editorial and opinion pieces feature second most commonly in the Sunday Times. It could be argued that this is a method of keeping a long running story in the news and is a way to avoid the news imperative of having a ‘hook’ to make it newsworthy. It is also a way for the newspaper to advocate a particular stance in relation to a topic; in opinion/editorial articles the necessity for objectivity is also done away with as it is expected that such pieces will deliver a particular viewpoint rather than a balanced
picture on an issue. The *Daily Sun* only contained one editorial on HIV/AIDS during the four months under analysis and this related to former president Nelson Mandela ("Brave Madiba shines a light", Jan 10\textsuperscript{th} 2005). This may suggest that HIV/AIDS stories are not as important to the *Daily Sun* from an editorial point of view; however, it is acknowledged that the *Sunday Times* contains far more opinion/editorial pieces in general than the *Daily Sun*.

Prevention and treatment stories received little attention. The *Sunday Times* featured no stories on these topics, while the *Daily Sun* had one prevention and one treatment story only. It is accepted that it is not a primary role of the media to educate its audience in relation to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, but the time period under discussion coincided with a treatment target for the government. By March 2005, the government aimed to have 53,000 receiving anti-retroviral drugs free of charge through the national roll-out (Teyise, 17-9-2004). However, neither paper covered this deadline nor even examined how many people were receiving the treatment. It may be argued that this relates to the downgrading of investigative journalism, which needs more resources and time than reactive reporting. Critical political economy of the media again suggests that the for-profit focus of many commercial media companies has meant that longer-term projects, such as investigating treatment targets, are often neglected by organisations whose focus is on profits. It may be further suggested that newspapers do not view PWAs as part of their target market and therefore are less inclined to report on issues pertinent to them.

Finally in this section, letters make up the main form of HIV/AIDS coverage for the *Daily Sun*. This may reflect the call of the newspaper to make its dedicated HIV/AIDS coverage ("Aids: fighting back") "by the people, for the people". However, a critical political economy of the media approach might also suggest that this is a cheap and easy way for the newspaper to fill its pages, and also is attractive to readers who feel they have a 'voice' in newspaper.
4.1.2 Sources

By examining the sources used in HIV/AIDS related stories, it can be determined which people journalists call upon most regularly to comment on the epidemic. It is also aimed at examining in particular if people living with HIV/AIDS are used as direct sources in news articles. This corresponds with the sub-question in this study: “How frequently are PWAs used as sources in news reports?” As already outlined in section 1.4, sources play

Table 4b: Sources used in HIV/AIDS articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Sunday Times</th>
<th>Daily Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/TAC</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher/scientist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (3)²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional healer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 (5)³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO recipient</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² A total of four medical sources were used here, three of which were in response to readers’ letters
³ A total of eight other professional sources were used, of which five were social worker responses to readers letters
an important role in shaping the framing of a story. Official sources tend to put forward the elite or conventional line and usually have more power to dictate the frame of an article (Shudson, 1996). The findings are outlined in Table 4b. 'Official' sources in the form of officials, scientist/researchers, medical personnel and politicians remain the most frequently quoted in both newspapers. However, as shall be explored below, the gap between official and 'unofficial' sources is closing. A total of 19 official sources were used in the Sunday Times coverage and 25 in the Daily Sun. This finding comes as no real surprise from a critical political economy perspective of the media. As explained in section 2.6, journalists often form symbiotic relationships with powerful sources of information or gatekeepers, who are deemed experts or credible. These sources in turn are often backed up by information or publicity departments who help in the process of generating news through press releases and conferences. Unofficial sources, however, seem to be gaining a foothold in South African newspapers. Family members of those infected or affected directly by HIV/AIDS and non-governmental organisations were used twelve times as sources in the Sunday Times. The Daily Sun saw family and NGOs used 19 times. This would suggest that NGOs are increasingly seen as 'credible' sources.

In relation to people living with HIV/AIDS, they featured as sources in the Daily Sun eight times, and three times in the Sunday Times. As those most affected by the epidemic, this may seem like a relatively low number. However, PWAs are at least gaining a voice in the media. Of the three PWA sources used in the Sunday Times coverage, two of these did not reveal their full names or have their picture taken facing the camera. This would reflect the continuing stigma surrounding the disease. Judge Edwin Cameron, widely recognized as the only person in public office to have publicly disclosed his status is the third and only white PWA. In relation to the Daily Sun, six out of the eight PWAs were identified by name and only two remained anonymous. As pictures could not be accessed through the web archive, no comment can be made about photographic coverage.

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4 Unofficial sources include PWAs, NGOs and family members
It is interesting to note that as a percentage of total sources the *Sunday Times* had more PWA representation, with 13.6% of total sources, while the *Daily Sun* had 9.4%. As the latter newspaper is aimed at lower socio-economic classes, which are widely accepted to be those hardest hit by HIV/AIDS, it might have been expected that it would feature more PWAs. Stigma and difficulties in sourcing PWA spokespersons may influence their use, and this shall be explored further in the qualitative section below (4.2.2). However, it is also acknowledged that as a weekly newspaper, the *Sunday Times*’ journalists may have more time to identify non-official sources such as PWAs.

4.1.3 PWA characteristics\(^5\)

This section of the content analysis deals with the characteristics of people living with HIV/AIDS who are either quoted or described in the news articles. It is *not* confined just to those PWAs who were used as sources, but rather includes those who were also portrayed in these stories, some of whom were deceased. Such an approach sheds light on the framing of all PWAs in the articles, not just those who were given a direct voice. A total of eleven people infected with HIV/AIDS are included in the *Sunday Times* articles, while the *Daily Sun* had 17. The gender, race and socio-economic status of the PWAs for the *Sunday Times* and *Daily Sun* are outlined in Tables 4c and 4d respectively; also included is whether that person is living or dead. This part of the analysis is aimed at answering the third sub-question of this dissertation: “From print media reports, what picture is painted of PWAs?”

As can be seen in Table 4c, the PWAs quoted or described in the *Sunday Times* articles are overwhelmingly black, with just one white person included. The gender breakdown is more evenly divided with six women and five men included. However, no white women were included in these stories and only one white man was used. Black women made up the majority of those referred to in the articles (six), while there were four black male PWAs. Working classes make up the majority of those used in the articles, with

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\(^5\) this section includes PWAs who were described or depicted as well as quoted in the news articles
eight people coming from lower socio-economic classes and three coming from more affluent classes.

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this section is that the majority of the PWAs referred to in the *Sunday Times* articles were deceased. Only three out of the eleven people were still alive (these three were also used as direct sources). The framing of most of those with the disease as deceased may feed into stereotypes that everyone with HIV/AIDS faces a speedy death. However, it is now widely accepted that with access to anti-retroviral treatment HIV should be considered like any other chronic disease. It might be concluded that in relation to the *Sunday Times* at least, that the ‘face’ of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is black, usually female and deceased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PWA</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Socio-economic</th>
<th>Living/deceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PWA 1</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Middle-class</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 3,4,5,6 (same story)</td>
<td>Black x 4</td>
<td>Female x 4</td>
<td>Working-class x 4 (assumed)</td>
<td>Deceased x 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 7</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working-class assumed</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 8</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Middle-class (assumed)</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 9</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 10</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 11</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Middle-class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics of PWAs as described by the *Daily Sun* are contained in Table 4d above. All of the 17 people with HIV/AIDS included in the tabloid’s coverage were black. While this may be reflective of the fact that the vast majority of the paper’s readers are black and working class, it may also play into stereotypes that HIV/AIDS is a
‘black’ disease (Kitzinger & Miller, 1992: 41). Again, it is acknowledged that the majority of those infected in South Africa are black, but HIV/AIDS knows no racial boundaries and people from all races are affected (Shisana & Simbayi, 2002: 62-3). That fact is not reflected in the framing of PWAs in the Daily Sun.

Table 4d: Daily Sun PWA characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PWA</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Socio-economic</th>
<th>Living/deceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PWA 1</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Middle-class</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 2</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 3</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male - child</td>
<td>Middle-class</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 4</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 5</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working-class (assumed)</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 6</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(no info given)</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 7</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 8</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Middle-class (assumed)</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 9</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female - child</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 10</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 11</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Child (no sex given)</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 12</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working-class (assumed)</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 13</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Middle-class (assumed)</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 14</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 15</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 16</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWA 17</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 17 PWAs described, eleven were women, three men and three children. Women, therefore, formed the overwhelming majority of those portrayed. While it is also acknowledged that women, young women in particular, are increasingly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, the emphasis on women may be construed as misleading. It may also feed into stereotypes that women are the source and vectors of the disease; this in turn may further stigmatize women in an already patriarchal society.

The majority of the PWAs described are working class (13 out of the 17) this would reflect both the readership of the newspaper and the spread of the disease among socio-economic classes. In stark contrast to the Sunday Times, the majority of the PWAs cited by the Daily Sun are living, with only two of those described deceased. While many of the stories focus on the hardships faced by those living with the disease ("HIV woman needs help", April 21st, 2005, "My family kicked me out just because I'm HIV!" April 14th, 2005), the fact that these PWAs are at least described as living with HIV/AIDS is a step towards legitimizing HIV/AIDS as a chronic, but manageable disease. From the point of view of the Daily Sun then, the picture emerging of HIV positive people is black, female, working class and alive.

### 4.1.4 Dominant framing of articles

Each article was analysed manually to determine the most salient elements of the information put forward in the article. Headlines, stereotypes, key words, stock phrases and metaphors were noted, particularly if they were repeated in the article. Each article was then labeled positive or negative depending on if the overall framing was empowering and destigmatising or disempowering and stigmatising. The findings are outlined in Table 4e below.

The results from the analysis of the two newspapers are remarkably similar. Both the Sunday Times and Daily Sun have more positively framed stories than negatively framed ones. This would suggest that journalists are becoming more sensitized to the disease and the importance of how it is framed in newspaper articles. It may also be indicative of
the ‘normalisation’ of HIV/AIDS now that treatment is available, in theory, to anyone who needs it free of charge, through the government’s national roll-out of anti-retroviral drugs. In the Sunday Times, positive framing includes the article “Makgatho Mandela: lawyer with father’s humility” (Barron, Jan 9th 2005). Here, the Mandela family’s decision to disclose that Makgatho Mandela died from an AIDS-related illness is framed as a courageous step towards freedom from AIDS denialism. The word “freedom” is used repeatedly in the article and the disclosure is likened to Mandela’s long walk to freedom, a metaphor which is known worldwide, but is particularly resonant in South Africa. An example of positive framing in the Daily Sun is the article “Know your status – for life!” (Kaunda, 3rd February 2005). The headline encourages readers to have themselves tested for HIV and in the body of the text the confidentiality and privacy of a new testing service are stressed. Celebrities Ashley Judd, an American actress, and Dini Nondumo from the television series “Generations” were also quoted encouraging testing, thus repeating the main message of the text (see Appendix 4 for full-text articles).

Table 4e: Framing of HIV/AIDS articles positively or negatively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Times</td>
<td>13 (59%)</td>
<td>9 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Sun&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>47 (60%)</td>
<td>31 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, negative framing in news articles still occurs regularly. Around 40% of all articles in both newspapers were found to be framed negatively. For example, the Sunday Times article “Under the cover of darkness” (Ntshingila, Jan 30th 2005) frames HIV as an illness of which people are deeply ashamed. The word “ashamed” is used repeatedly throughout the text and this is reinforced with references to PWAs only arriving at hospital at night and families refusing to claim the bodies of those who die of AIDS-related illnesses. Loaded or stereotypical language like “Aids sufferers”, “scourge” and “dying of HIV/Aids” is used throughout the article, leading to the conclusion that this article is framed negatively. In the Daily Sun, “Poor Gogo’s Aids

<sup>6</sup> Three pictures from the Daily Sun could not be analysed as they were not available for viewing through website
hell" (Sun reporter, Jan 19th 2005) is an example of a negatively framed story. Here, a grandmother who was caring for her HIV positive adult children became infected with the disease. The headline sensationalises the grandmother’s predicament by labeling it “hell”. The article places the blame on the grandmother for contracting the disease as “she did not use the necessary precautions”. It also refers to her as “confused”.

Overall, it would appear that positive framing of HIV/AIDS is increasing with around three out of every five articles printed in the Sunday Times and Daily Sun determined positive. It may seem surprising that a ‘quality’ broadsheet and a tabloid newspaper have the same percentages of positively framed articles, as it is often assumed that tabloids are more sensational in their reporting and tend to use more stereotypes. However, it might be argued that as the Daily Sun’s target market is mainly lower-class blacks, who are also the hardest hit by the epidemic, the paper is proactive about framing HIV/AIDS stories positively.

More remains to be done, however, with around 40% of all articles negatively framed through negative, stereotypical or disempowering language and imagery. Thus, framing of HIV/AIDS and PWAs is becoming more positive, but is still quite regularly stereotypical or disempowering.

4.2 Qualitative analysis
This section presents the findings from the qualitative research. In total, five people from the print media formed the theoretical sample. They were: Claire Keeton, senior health reporter, Sunday Times, Heather Robertson, deputy managing editor news, Sunday Times, Phumelele Kaunda, reporter, Daily Sun, Dave Chambers, deputy editor Cape Argus and Chris Whitfield, editor, Cape Times. Despite numerous requests via phone and email over a sustained period, no senior editorial person from the Daily Sun agreed to be interviewed.
4.2.1 Human interest as new focus of HIV/AIDS reporting

The qualitative data analysis confirmed the findings of the content analysis on subject matter/themes of HIV/AIDS reports. All interviewees referred to the growing popularity of HIV/AIDS human interest stories above all others:

I think that’s (AIDS orphans) an example of the kind of story related to HIV/AIDS which we could probably do more with and would probably do more with than we would on a purely statistical story for example. Because, those are the kind of stories where you can put faces, names and tell really human stories. (Dave Chambers, Cape Argus)

Heather Robertson of the Sunday Times remarked that HIV/AIDS reporting in South Africa has been characterized by various ‘phases’ during the epidemic including alarmist, dissident and treatment. According to her, this new found interest in human interest stories is the latest ‘phase’ of HIV/AIDS reporting:

I think once the government decided to roll out anti-retrovirals, it’s moved into looking at the individuals who are affected ... stories of people as individuals and communities dealing with the epidemic and then also focusing on orphans who are the ultimate victims of the epidemic.

The editor of the Cape Times, Chris Whitfield, claims that there is AIDS fatigue among readers and he believes that human interest stories are a way for newspapers to keep HIV/AIDS stories interesting:

What we tried to do with Jo-Anne (Smetherham, former health reporter at the Cape Times), and what I’d like to do again when we get our new health reporter, is ... to try and kind of put a human face to the whole issue ... It’s a very important issue and you have to highlight it and make people aware of it, and I think the way to do it is to fall back on the old journalistic ploy of using people to tell the story.

While the subject matter of HIV/AIDS reports is not a central concern of this dissertation, this finding is noteworthy in that it marks a departure from the politicized nature of reporting which has characterized HIV/AIDS news in South Africa to date (see Stein 2001, 2002; Shepperson, 2000; Cullinane, 2001; Galloway, 2001; Bird, 2002). The subject matter of news reports may also shed some light on the framing of HIV/AIDS reports. It could be suggested that this move towards human interest is also indicative of the lowering of stigma surrounding the disease. This may be due to the availability of free anti-retroviral drugs as part of the government’s national roll out of treatment and
greater sensitivity of the public towards those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The focus on human interest stories would also partly explain the growth in the use of PWAs and other non-officials as sources in stories (see section 4.1.2). Such reports normally focus on individual lives and stories and thus journalists are more likely to seek out those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS to be direct sources.

4.2.2 PWAs as sources

Interviewees were asked to comment on both the range of sources used currently in HIV/AIDS reporting and also on the use of people living with HIV/AIDS (PWAs) as sources on news stories. While reporters spoke about trying to "use as wide a range as I can and to give a voice particularly to people living with HIV/AIDS" (Claire Keeton), at least one editor believes journalists are using too few sources:

I think a lot of the journalists are swimming in the same pool. It's sort of a few particular people. I don't think they've got strong enough sources in the health department, within the hospitals. I think they are dealing with the same old academics, who are the most vociferous – the Coovadies, the Karims, those people, the TAC. I think a lot more can be done to get more sources. (Heather Robertson)

When asked specifically about what helps or hinders the use of PWAs as sources in news stories, all respondents were quick to cite stigma as an issue which still prevents PWAs from disclosing their status in the media.

Obviously the big issue in South Africa is stigma, prejudice, and stereotyping I think. So a lot of people are understandably reluctant to go on the record, and have their names, and/or photographs or any kind of identifying features, so that can make it difficult. (Claire Keeton)

Dave Chambers from the Cape Argus expressed similar sentiments:

I think one of the other difficulties in Cape Town would be the fact that the disease is still largely a disease of the black townships, and because we don't circulate there, we also don't have a newsgathering structure of any kind there, apart from our own reporters who actually come from those areas and come in with stories. (Dave Chambers)

However, all respondents also spoke about the benefits of using PWAs in HIV/AIDS related stories. This may relate to the new focus on human interest stories, where newspapers are trying to personalize the story.
Those that I’ve used, most of the time you know is people who have accepted their status. They are just willing to talk about it, to share their stories with others, to help other people, you know to accept. (Phumelele Kaunda)

According to the respondents, the use of PWAs as sources can also have a positive impact on the readers who are moved by their stories. One example given by Claire Keeton was around the slow roll out of the national HIV/AIDS treatment plan. She described how she spent a lot of time in public clinics and hospitals in 2004 searching for a HIV positive person who was awaiting treatment and wanted to take action publicly through the Sunday Times:

And so I looked in a whole load of different clinics and spent ages talking to people and mostly they just laughed off the concept, because it was very high profile and there was no way they wanted to be in the limelight.

However, perseverance paid off and in the end she found a woman who was willing to take part:

But then actually we did find someone who wanted to do that and I felt very strongly that she wanted to, so she wrote this letter to the President and it was used on the front page and for me that was the really exciting part about the Sunday Times, is that sometimes they will step beyond straight news reporting and go into campaigning mode for something that they think is a major issue, and in that case it was access to treatment... and in the end this woman got employed working in the field of AIDS, got treatment, other people got sponsors, so it had a really good ending.

The positive impact that stories featuring PWAs has on readers was also highlighted by Chris Whitfield:

One thing that she (Jo-Anne Smetherham) did, she went to Mpumalanga and she did a feature on a community there and a consequence of that was vast amounts of money were given to an organisation that was trying to help that particular community. So, you know you can make a difference by doing it that way.

Heather Robertson from the Sunday Times also pointed out that the reaction from the public to reports featuring PWAs can result in follow-up stories. She cited an example of an article highlighting the difficulties AIDS orphans had in accessing social grants:

We had an amazing response from readers, to the extent that story led to a lead story the following week where a school of very poor kids in Soweto managed to hire a bus full of food and clothes. The teacher organized it – these kids and the teacher drove all the way to very rural KwaZuluNatal and handed over this food and this (sic) clothes to these orphan kids.
Therefore, while difficulties still exist in terms of sourcing PWAs who are willing to disclose their status in media reports, respondents highlight the positive impact of PWAs as sources in news stories.

4.2.3 ‘Important’ versus newsworthy stories

An interesting finding uncovered during the qualitative analysis is the tension between HIV/AIDS-related stories as being ‘important’ as a social issue and their relatively low status as news stories. Editors and journalists recognized that HIV/AIDS is a critical issue in South Africa and thus worthy of column inches. However, when it came to the newsworthiness of such stories, they fared poorly. When asked to rate the newsworthiness of HIV/AIDS-related stories on their respective newspapers, all respondents classified them as medium to low:

“I would say maybe out of five I will give it two. So, it’s not one of those top priorities…” (Phumelele Kaunda, Daily Sun).

“Sadly, very very poorly” (Chris Whitfield, Cape Times).

“I would say it’s a low priority. The politics of it is a high priority, but the actual implementation of the anti-retroviral treatment programme, or what’s happening around prevention or care, are not high priorities” (Claire Keeton, Sunday Times).

Despite being labeled as not very newsworthy, there is broad consensus among respondents that HIV/AIDS stories are important. This contradiction may reflect the tension between structure and agency which is implicit in a critical political economy of the media perspective. The editors in particular explained their difficulties in trying to strike the balance between doing their duty in relation to a major public health issue, and serving their readers:

So, it’s quite a difficult line for editors to tread, I think, to sort of do their social duty and to carry the kind of material that really ought to be publicized and carried, but without wanting to bore readers to death, who don’t see HIV/AIDS as a priority in their lives. (Dave Chambers)
But as a newspaper, we have decided that it is an important story, it’s a story that we’ve got to cover and we’ve got to find ways of covering. So yeah – despite the difficulty of it, we’ve got to keep on thinking on our toes. (Heather Robertson)

Interestingly, Chris Whitfield revealed that Independent Newspapers has been mandated by its owner Sir Anthony O’Reilly to make HIV/AIDS reporting a priority on the titles he controls in South Africa: “... the proprietor felt it’s an issue, a very important issue, in this country and that we should be concentrating on covering it” (Chris Whitfield). This is an example of the owner exercising his influence over his newspaper titles, as discussed in section 2.4 on critical political economy of the media. However, as shall be discussed further below (4.2.5), unlike examples given earlier, this intervention may actually impact on the profits of the newspaper adversely. But, human agency exercised by editors also plays a factor in resisting mandates from above.

4.2.4 Conflicts between editors and journalists on HIV/AIDS stories

Another related finding from the qualitative analysis is the conflicts between journalists and editors when it comes to allocating space to HIV/AIDS stories. As already mentioned, respondents recognize the ‘importance’ of HIV/AIDS as a social problem affecting the country. However, according to the reporters interviewed, it is often difficult for them to get the go ahead to write HIV/AIDS related stories. It should also be mentioned that while both Claire Keeton and Phumelele Kaunda are the main writers on HIV/AIDS at their respective papers, it is not their sole field of focus.

I would say, yes (it is difficult to get HIV/AIDS stories published in the Daily Sun), it just depends, but most of the time it is. As I say, it’s not something that they are interested in anymore. It’s like “so what, it’s happening, it’s happened”, so yeah, we have to motivate. Serious motivation. (Phumelele Kaunda)

Claire Keeton finds similar difficulties in having stories approved but also admits that as HIV/AIDS is high on her own agenda as a reporter, she sometimes finds it difficult to remain objective about its merits as a news story:

There’s always different ways you can pick up on a story, but they don’t sound new to your editors and, so that’s the difficulty. You get really absorbed in it and it’s hard to keep a perspective on what is interesting and what isn’t and what you think is important and what they think is important. (Claire Keeton)
However, the editors questioned in this research take a different approach. The Cape Argus’ Dave Chambers believes that his newspaper devotes too much space to HIV/AIDS which, in the long run, does not serve his target market:

I certainly have the feeling that sometimes we just do too much on HIV/AIDS … and that while we might be serving a particular very very small part of our readership, we’re actually not serving the majority of our readers by doing as much as we do.

The Sunday Times’ Heather Robertson voiced her concerns over reporters becoming like struggle activists in their coverage of the epidemic. Again, she believes this does not serve the paper’s readership:

... it’s almost like the anti-apartheid struggle, there’s almost like a missionary zeal, and I’m saying our search is for the human story, we need to always find a way not to bore our readers, but to keep it ... newsy and informative and also very good storytelling that is going to engage you.

Thus, there is a tension between senior editorial staff and journalists on the merits of HIV/AIDS as a news story. Editors acknowledge that HIV/AIDS is an important issue, but do not place high news value on it. Journalists, who are more closely involved with the story, place higher news value on the topic and believe they often have to struggle to have these stories published. A critical political economy perspective of the media argues that those closer to the top in terms of the hierarchy of news organisations are likely to internalize constraints imposed by economic and political factors; it also suggests that power lies at the top of the hierarchy (see section 2.6). This would ultimately suggest that editors have the power to decide whether a story should be published, and as shall be seen in the next section, economic constraints seem to play a part in these decisions on HIV/AIDS stories.

4.2.5 Effects on sales and advertising

One of the most interesting findings of the qualitative section of this research is the effect of putting a HIV/AIDS story as the front page lead in a newspaper. The editor of the Cape Times, Chris Whitfield says categorically that it adversely affects newspaper sales:

...if you put a front page lead with a HIV/AIDS headline on it, your sale will dip, it’s our experience. So, in terms of newsworthiness, it doesn’t sell, that’s why you have to find other ways of covering it.
He went further, claiming that research conducted by the paper suggests that HIV/AIDS front page leads result in losses in sales of between one and two thousand:

...if you put certain politicians on page one, Gerald Morkel, I will lose 1,500 sales – around about that. You just know there's a kind of turn-off factor. With AIDS, I would put it between 1,000 and 2,000 sales (lost). You know we're averaging about 50,000 at the moment, so it's that buying off the street factor that's obviously an influence. (Chris Whitfield)

Such an impact on sales means that the Cape Times is reluctant to lead with HIV/AIDS related stories, despite acknowledging their importance. This reflects the 'for-profit' focus of newspapers with the bottom-line as their priority. Similar sentiments, although not quantified in the same way, are evidenced at the Cape Times sister newspaper, the Cape Argus:

...generally speaking, it's not something that we would put on the front page. And what I mean by that is that what we put on page one are designed to attract people into buying the newspaper. And HIV/AIDS in our judgement wouldn't be one of those things normally. (Dave Chambers)

However, the reluctance on the part of the Cape Town editors to splash on HIV/AIDS stories is not an actual policy at the papers. Rather, it is something that has been internalized by the senior staff and is considered to be, as Dave Chambers puts it, "professional judgement". Heather Robertson of the Sunday Times could not say if HIV/AIDS stories had an effect on sales of the paper, but she did admit that the paper rarely leads with such reports:

I wouldn't go as far as saying that (HIV/AIDS stories have an effect on sales), because ... we haven't had a story good enough to be a lead so I can't say that.... Essentially, it is the lead story that sells the paper, and we haven't had an AIDS lead in a very long time (Heather Robertson).

Claire Keeton was unsure about impacts on sales, but sided with her superiors: "I don't know if they have any effects, I would certainly think they don't sell papers. I do think that my editors are right about that." This may indicate that through socialization at the newspaper, this reporter has internalized the strategies of her superiors. This is also evidenced through the self-censorship she employs when pitching story ideas to the news desk:
...I’ve stopped pitching ideas that I know won’t make it... it’s that process where I can look at stuff and say “yeah, this is really important, but it’s not going to make it”, so half the time... I don’t put those stories in my diary anymore.

This journalist, despite her own convictions about what is important in the HIV/AIDS field, has in a sense, adopted the views of those at the top of the hierarchy in the news organisation. However, she has also developed strategies in order to overcome these barriers to reporting on what she believes are critical issues:

Like this week, the results of the antenatal survey amongst pregnant women which showed like a really alarming increase in HIV rates, I would say, and there’s a release by Khomanani, the government HIV prevention campaign ... and I know that neither of those things would make it as a news story. So, I’ve pitched it as a feature, where I ... take something that has a news basis but turn it into a feature and hope that it will make it. (Claire Keeton)

This is an example of journalists using human agency to try and overcome the structural constraints imposed upon them from above in reporting on HIV/AIDS. The reporter from the Daily Sun could not say if HIV/AIDS reports had any impact on sales.

In relation to possible impacts that carrying HIV/AIDS related reports may have on advertising, respondents claimed they had little or no effect. There were no claims that advertisers put pressure on newspapers not to cover the epidemic. However, Chris Whitfield did suggest there is a slight connection between sales and advertising:

...there’s probably a very faint link in that if your newspaper sales does not go well you’ll lose advertising ... I’ve certainly never heard of anyone saying “jeez, you guys, if you’re going to put HIV/AIDS on page one don’t use my ad tomorrow” that sort of thing. I’ve never heard of any link at all.

This would suggest that while advertisers are not exerting direct influence over newspaper content, newspapers are not entirely independent of advertising (c.f. section 2.4). As newspapers are dependent on advertising for a substantial portion of their profits, they focus on attracting and maintaining audiences who are appealing to advertisers.
4.2.6 Policies, resources and beats

In an effort to discern the level of importance afforded HIV/AIDS as a news story, respondents were asked if their news organisations had any specific policies on HIV/AIDS reporting, if they had dedicated resources to such reporting and if there was a separate HIV/AIDS beat at their papers. None of the newspapers included in this study had a HIV/AIDS beat; for the Sunday Times, Cape Times and Cape Argus HIV/AIDS stories were mainly covered by the health reporter. In relation to the Daily Sun, no reporters are assigned to any specific beats, including health. Phumelele Kaunda described how she ended up covering HIV/AIDS-related stories:

Actually, there was a friend of mine who worked here. So she was doing it (HIV/AIDS reporting) when she started the column (Aids: fighting back), she was a reporter when it started and then she left. When she left, there was nobody else dedicated to it, so she had the contacts and everything, so she just passed them onto me.

This rather ad-hoc approach to reporting on the epidemic may signal the lack of importance the Daily Sun places on the issue and/or the juniorisation of the newsroom with no senior correspondents. Ms Kaunda also claimed that no specific resources were dedicated to HIV/AIDS reporting, there were no guidelines or policies at the paper for such stories and that she did not undergo any training in HIV/AIDS. However, she did say that the newspaper always respected the wishes of HIV positive people who do not want to disclose their status. This protection of the identity of sources was reflected by all respondents.

Neither of the Cape-based newspapers have specific policies or resources dedicated to HIV/AIDS reporting; however, the health reporters on both papers would have access to funds to attend HIV conferences at home and internationally. Of the four papers included in this research, the Sunday Times seems to dedicate most resources to covering the epidemic. As part of a fellowship won by health reporter Claire Keeton, she is allowed significant time off from her usual workload to investigate how people living with HIV are coping:

The Sunday Times has been very generous to me in the past year, because they’ve given me a week a month to work on a project around covering how people living with HIV are coping with it etc… And that’s really a lot for a newspaper.
Again, however, the clashes between editors and journalists are apparent with Ms Keeton claiming that “…when it comes to publishing the stories, there’s not that much interest”. Although the paper allows her this time off to investigate stories, the newsworthiness of these reports is still questioned and there is no guarantee they will be published.

Overall, with the exception of the Sunday Times, it seems few resources are dedicated to HIV/AIDS reporting and few actual policies are in place in newsrooms with regard to sensitive reporting on the epidemic. Therefore, it may be concluded that, with the exception of the Sunday Times, little importance is placed on HIV/AIDS reporting in the newspapers researched here. Further, the increased importance placed on HIV/AIDS at the Sunday Times may be partly attributed to its’ weekly publication frequency, as there is less pressure on a daily basis to file copy. Also, as the biggest selling newspaper in the country and one aimed at higher income brackets, the Sunday Times may also have more resources at its disposal to dedicate to specialized reporting.

4.2.7 Language

Following on from the findings of the quantitative section on dominant framing in news reports on HIV/AIDS, all respondents were asked about the language used in their own newspapers. In relation to the Sunday Times, reporter Claire Keeton feels strongly about using sensitive, appropriate language in her stories. However, she believes not everyone on the paper shares her sentiments:

I try to be really careful about what I write, but... copy gets subbed, expressions and things I wouldn’t use do end up in my stories or in headlines, especially if I’m not vigilant about those kind of changes. I mean they are just terms that I wouldn’t use, like AIDS sufferers and stuff and every now and again to my horror, that’s actually ended up in one of my stories. Umm, so I think there’s not a similar sensitivity at all levels of the paper about how you portray things.

This opinion would seem to be supported by the comments of Heather Robertson, her superior on the Sunday Times, who is more concerned with making sure reports are attractive to the audience:

I just hope, as an editor, to make it as accessible, and reader-friendly and interesting as possible. If it is a tragic, negative story then yes the language has got to be negative, if
it's a story of hope then the language would be positive. It's dictated by the subject. Preferably not boring, I think that's the battle.

At the *Daily Sun*, according to Phumelele Kaunda, the emphasis is on language which is accessible to readers who come from lower socio-economic classes. But she believes this approach is appropriate for the paper's target audience:

Ours is very simple, it's a language that anybody who understands English can read. You can have your standard 8, you would understand our articles. We write for the lower class of people, so our language is very simple – even a primary school child can understand.

Chris Whitfield was candid about admitting while the *Cape Times* is aware of language issues, it does not always get it right on HIV/AIDS:

I'm very aware of the debates around the way, you know, not to make people seem like victims and all that sort of stuff ... and I know that the various people like Jo-Anne and Jennifer (Crocker) here who writes most of our leaders' on AIDS and is quite up to speed on the debate would be very conscious of it. But ... if I was to take a guess I'd imagine we're not very good at it, I imagine ... some stuff slips through that shouldn't.

It should be acknowledged that without analyzing the contents of *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* HIV/AIDS reports, it is impossible to state if the language used in these stories is positive, negative or neutral. However, what seems to be emerging from the qualitative research is that most newspapers are aware of the importance of language in such reports and its effects on framing the epidemic and those affected by it. In reality though, this knowledge is not always translated into using appropriate or sensitive language by all levels of media workers. Therefore, while language use in HIV/AIDS reports is improving and journalists seem sensitized to the issue, there is still some way to go before negative, disempowering or stigmatizing language is removed completely from newspaper reports.

In the next chapter, a summary of the research findings above is presented before the conclusions of this dissertation are explored. Answers to the central research question and three sub-questions will be described on foot of the theoretical and field research outlined in previous chapters. Chapter five will also contain a brief critique of
HIV/AIDS reporting in general in South Africa and recommendations for further research on HIV/AIDS and the media.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

This dissertation set out to investigate how the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS. The research was guided by the central research question and three related sub-questions. Because prior research on HIV/AIDS and the media in South Africa concentrated on the politicized nature of reporting, this dissertation deliberately chose a period of time to examine when HIV/AIDS was not high on the political agenda. This was aimed at examining how HIV/AIDS and, in particular PWAs, are framed during 'ordinary' times. As outlined in the introduction, one of the most significant ways that the media influence their audience is through "routine representations of reality" (Curran, 2002: 165). This dissertation’s main objective was to examine the routine ways PWAs are represented in the printed press and to attempt to explain the coverage in terms of the tensions between structural constraints and human agency in newsrooms.

5.1 Summary of research findings

The content analysis of the Sunday Times and Daily Sun from the beginning of January until the end of April 2005 found that human interest stories were the most popular subject matter. This could signal a departure from previous reporting trends which showed that reporting on HIV/AIDS in South Africa was highly politicized (MMP, 2002). In relation to sources used in these stories, officials (politicians, official spokespersons, scientist/researchers or medical experts) remain the most frequently quoted in both newspapers. However, ‘unofficial’ sources (family members and NGOs) are gaining popularity and people living with HIV/AIDS are also gaining a voice. This is probably connected to the growing prevalence of human interest stories which concentrate on individualizing and personalizing the epidemic and therefore rely more heavily on people’s direct experience of the disease, be they infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

In relation to the PWAs quoted or described in the two newspapers, the picture which emerges is a gendered and racialised view of those infected by the virus. Both papers usually paint PWAs as black, working class and female. This is more evident in the Daily Sun where all PWAs were black and the overwhelming majority were women. In
the Sunday Times, the gender breakdown was more evenly split, although women outweighed men. There was also only one white male PWA used as a source in either paper (Sunday Times). No white female PWAs were cited in either paper. Therefore, the main representation of PWAs in South Africa is of black females who are usually working class. This also plays into stereotypes of women as the cause and vectors of the disease; it may also fuel misconceptions that HIV/AIDS is a ‘black’ disease which does not affect the white community.

An examination of the framing of articles shows that positive framing outweighs negative in both papers by about 3:2. This could suggest that journalists are becoming more sensitized to the disease and may be actively framing stories more positively. However, negative, loaded and stereotypical framing still occurs regularly and thus more needs to be done here.

The qualitative section of the dissertation was an opportunity to explore some of the more salient issues uncovered during the quantitative analysis and the context in which journalists work with newspaper reporters and editors. All respondents spoke about the importance of using PWAs as sources in their news stories. They highlighted the impact that such stories have on readers, who often respond with donations to reports featuring PWAs. They all also agreed that human interest stories were the current preferred focus of news reports. It might be concluded that these findings are related as PWA sources are essential to human interest stories in order to personalize the epidemic. However, all respondents also agreed that stigma associated with HIV/AIDS was an obstacle to sourcing PWA voices.

Two major tensions in HIV/AIDS reporting were uncovered in the qualitative analysis. The first is the tension between ‘important’ and ‘newsworthy’ stories. All interviewees acknowledged that HIV/AIDS is a pressing social issue facing South Africa today. However, they also all rated it as low to medium in terms of news value. Editors in particular spoke about how they struggled with covering HIV/AIDS as part of their social duty without “boring” their readers. The second major tension was the conflict between
editors and journalists on HIV/AIDS stories. Reporters explained their difficulties in having HIV/AIDS stories approved by their editors, while editors claimed that they often devoted too much space to the topic and were not serving their readers by doing so.

One of the main findings of the qualitative analysis is the effect HIV/AIDS stories have on sales. The editor of the Cape Times stated categorically that the paper loses between one and two thousand copy sales if it leads with a HIV/AIDS story. While not quantifying the numbers, the deputy editor of the Cape Argus said HIV/AIDS was not a story they would usually put on the front page as it did not attract readers.

In relation to the type of language used in newspaper reports on HIV/AIDS, most respondents acknowledged the importance of using non-judgemental, non-stigmatising language. However, most also admitted that their respective newspapers often get it wrong as other media workers do not share their sentiments on appropriate language use.

5.2 Answering the Central Research Question
In this section, the three sub-questions pivotal to this research will be examined in light of the findings of the field research and the conceptual framework. After answering the three questions, attention is turned to the central research question: How do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?

5.2.1 How frequently are PWAs used as sources in news reports?
The findings of this dissertation reveal that PWAs are gaining a voice in newspaper reports on the epidemic. During the first four months of 2005, PWA sources made up 13.6% of total sources in the Sunday Times and 9.4% of sources in the Daily Sun. It should be added that PWA sources were used mainly on human interest stories which often tell individual or personalized stories. The increased number of human interest stories in both papers may be part of the explanation for increased use of PWA sources. All respondents in the qualitative section believed that PWAs are an important source for HIV/AIDS stories. However, all interviewees also cited stigma as an issue which
prevented PWAs from being used frequently as sources in news stories due to fears stemming from openly disclosing their status in the media.

Alongside the rise in the use of PWAs as direct sources, is the growing use of 'non-official' sources, such as non-governmental organisations and family members of PWAs, in HIV/AIDS reports. Non-official sources made up 26% of total sources at the Sunday Times, while the Daily Sun had 22%. This may reflect the transformation of alternative sources into credible or expert voices through strategies employed by the non-official sources themselves (Manning 2001; Epstein 1996; Gitlin 1980). It might also be argued that with the trend in newspaper reporting towards human interest stories, 'expert' status is conferred upon PWAs and non-official sources as those who know most about living with the disease. The divide between official and unofficial sources and their status is dynamic and 'alternative' sources, in this case PWAs, family members and NGOs, may transform over time into official sources through the strategies they employ to become primary definers of the news agenda (Manning, 2001: 152).

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that while PWAs and non-official sources are gaining a louder voice in press reports, official sources continue to dominate. Such sources accounted for 41% of the total in the Sunday Times and 29% in the Daily Sun. This finding is similar to other recent research which shows official sources are used most frequently in the South African print media (Muchenhu, 2005; Siyam’kela, 2003). From a critical political economy of the media perspective, the power of official sources lies in their ability to exploit the organizational routines of the news media; they have the resources and the infrastructure to promote their version of events and are viewed as 'credible' in the eyes of journalists. Official sources still represent the most powerful institutions of the state and their views remain, at least in the minds of journalists, important to the nation and society.

Therefore, while the increase in the use of PWAs as sources is to be welcomed, there is still a long way to go before they achieve the same status afforded 'official' sources. A 2003 study showed that 8% of sources used in print media were PWAs (Siyam’kela,
2003: 7); this dissertation shows that level has increased, albeit only slightly. Therefore, despite the value of their lived experience, PWAs are not used regularly as sources of information about the epidemic. Given that both reporters and editors in the qualitative findings stressed the importance of PWAs as direct sources and also pointed out the difficulty in finding PWAs who are willing to disclose their status, it would appear that stigma impacts on the use of PWAs as sources.

5.2.2 What type of language is used in HIV/AIDS news reports?
This dissertation has found that the dominant framing of HIV/AIDS reports is more positive than negative. This approach examined the language and the salience of the elements in the text. The type of language used in news reports is important as “the media influence the language of HIV/AIDS, which in turn helps shape how people think about and deal with HIV/AIDS” (Beamish, 2002: 3). Positive framing of articles outweighed negative framing in the two chosen papers by approximately 3:2, according to the content analysis. However, the fact that 40% of articles remain negatively framed means there is room for improvement, an element acknowledged by most of the respondents in the qualitative interviews. Almost all interviewees confirmed that they realize the importance of using non-stigmatising, non-judgemental language in their stories. However, they did concede that not everyone in their newsrooms shares their concerns over language use and that frequently stereotypical or discriminatory language is contained in news reports. This would suggest that not all members of news organisations have been sensitized to the importance of language use in HIV/AIDS stories.

The findings in relation to dominant framing and language reflect another recent study in southern Africa (Tapfumaneyi, 2004) which shows that there has been a marked improvement in terms of the quality of reports and language used by journalists in this region when covering HIV/AIDS. It might be suggested again that this reflects the normalization of the epidemic as it changes in people’s (and journalists’) perceptions from a fatal disease to a chronic, but manageable disease which can be treated by anti-retrovirals.
5.2.3 From print media reports, what picture is painted of PWAs?

Drawing mainly on the content analysis of the sources used in HIV/AIDS stories and the characteristics of the PWAs quoted or described in these reports, it can be concluded that the ‘face’ of HIV/AIDS in South Africa is black, female and working class. This finding is similar to other recent media research which concludes that the most frequent depiction of HIV positive people is that of black working class females (Muchendu, 2005; Siyam’kela, 2003; Searle, 2001). Media coverage tends to group PWAs into recognizable categories or groupings, which in turn reinforces the incorrect notion that HIV/AIDS affects ‘risk groups’ (in this case black working class females) rather than people who engage in risky behaviour (Wellings, 1988:90). This may lead to stigmatization as PWAs are seen as to ‘blame’ for their status (Searle, 2001: 5).

Further, the conflation of race and class in South Africa has resulted in most poor people being labeled as belonging to a particular ‘racial’ group. This also impacts on stereotypical assumptions around race and sexuality that are reflected in reporting on HIV/AIDS and particularly those living with the disease. Racist assumptions are made about black people’s sexual behaviour and African sexuality. These stereotypes play into pre-existing notions that black people are to blame for the disease and further stigmatises those infected. They may also impact on prevention initiatives by implying only high risk groups, such as black women, are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. It may also lead to myths that they are the vectors of the disease. The lack of PWA representation from other races (only one white PWA was used as a source in the Sunday Times) and the concentration on female PWAs in the printed press results in a skewed picture of who is affected by and/or vulnerable to the disease.

With the concentration on human interest stories revealed by the content analysis and the qualitative interviews, the focus on black, female working class PWAs may also be a device used by media workers to personalize and dramatise news reports. While it is acknowledged that women are the most affected by HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2004a), giving PWAs a black female working class face in the media may
perpetuate the already pervasive stereotype that women are the cause and are to ‘blame’ for the spread of the disease.

5.2.4 How do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?
Having answered the three sub-questions which guided this dissertation, attention is now turned to the central research question: how do the South African print media frame people living with HIV/AIDS?

The findings of this dissertation suggest that the HIV/AIDS epidemic as covered in the print media is racially driven. News reports, while not explicitly racist, tend to present HIV/AIDS as a disease which almost exclusively affects black people, especially poor black females. The content analysis showed that only one non-black PWA was included as a source in both newspapers examined; it also revealed that working class black women were most frequently depicted in print news reports. While it is accepted that the feminization of the epidemic is a phenomenon which has emerged in sub-Saharan Africa over recent years (UNAIDS, 2004a), it is not accurate to portray HIV/AIDS as a disease which virtually exclusively affects poor black women. HIV/AIDS knows no racial, age or socio-economic boundaries and all parts of South African society are affected by the epidemic (Shisana & Simbayi 2002: 62-3). Therefore, the concentration on PWAs who are poor, black and female in news reports examined in this dissertation is not an accurate reflection of the reality of those living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. This concentration on ‘risk groups’, in this case black, working class females, may result in perceptions among the public that those who do not belong to this risk group are not vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. It may also feed into stereotypes that women are to blame for the spread of HIV/AIDS and in a sense remove responsibility from men for both the spread and prevention of the disease.

Official sources still dominate news reports, despite the advances made by non-official sources. In the two newspapers under examination here, official sources were used three times as often as PWAs. The routines of journalism with its tight deadlines, focus on the bottom-line and constant demand for news hooks still favour the official source, who
caters his/her publicity machine towards the needs of journalists. However, PWAs are gaining a voice in print media reports on the epidemic. As the focus of news reports seems to be swinging towards human interest, those living with the disease seem to be achieving 'expert' or at least credible status as sources among journalists. This may also be related to the lessening of stigma around HIV/AIDS as treatment is now theoretically available to all who need it and the perception of the disease is changing from a fatal one to a chronic illness which can be treated with ARVs. However, progress seems to be slow with only a slight improvement in the percentage of PWAs used as sources in this study (Sunday Times had 13.6% of PWA sources and the Daily Sun had 9.4%) compared to one two years before which found PWAs sources stood at 8% (Siyam’kela, 2003:7). Therefore, in terms of the power that sources may wield in relation to the news agenda, official sources remain most powerful and most often called upon to comment on news stories.

The quality of HIV/AIDS reports would seem to be improving, particularly in relation to the positive framing of news reports. Language is becoming less stigmatising and more positive, with three out of every five news reports examined in this study framed positively. This may reflect the greater sensitization of journalists in particular, and the rest of society in general, to the effects language can have on representations of HIV/AIDS. There also seems to be a realization among the media workers interviewed for this study that there is a need to be careful about language use in HIV/AIDS reports, to prevent stereotypes or stigmatization. However, with 40% of articles framed negatively there is still some way to go before all stereotypical, stigmatizing or disempowering language is eliminated from print news reports on HIV/AIDS.

Overall then, it might be concluded that while the reporting on PWAs is improving in both quantity and quality, the composite picture painted of people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa today remains that of the ‘other’. The news reports examined in this study seem to suggest that HIV/AIDS is a disease which mainly affects people who are not the readers of the newspapers scrutinized, despite the fact that HIV/AIDS affects all facets of South African society, from the highest income earners to the lowest. The
qualitative interviews reflected this perception, with all senior editorial staff arguing that HIV/AIDS was not an issue which greatly engaged or affected their readers. These respondents did not perceive PWAs as part of their own target audiences. However, with 15% of South Africans infected with HIV (AFP, 11th July 2005), it would seem highly unlikely that newspaper readers do not form part of the PWA population.

The print media’s framing of HIV/AIDS tends towards a division between ‘us’, the uninfected newspaper reading population and ‘them’, the infected, poor, black and mainly female. In creating this dichotomy, there is a risk that those who are not included in the high risk groups will deny that they are vulnerable to HIV. This has knock-on effects for prevention and testing, as if one does not think one is vulnerable to infection, one may practice risky behaviour and also be less inclined to find out one’s HIV status. There is also the danger that those who are categorized as high risk groups will be scapegoated or blamed for the disease. It must be added, however, that the media is not the only responsible agent in this process of ‘othering’. Rather, the media reflect pre-existing prejudices related to race and sex which are inherent in South African society (Siyam’kela 2003: 3)

5.3 Brief critique of South African print media reportage of HIV/AIDS
In this section, a brief critique of the South African print media’s coverage of HIV/AIDS is presented, following the issues raised by this dissertation and previous literature on the subject. One of the most frequently cited criticisms of press reporting on HIV/AIDS is its reactive nature, that is news stories tend to concentrate on event based rather than issue based reporting (Finlay, 2004; MMP, 2001; Cullinane, 2001; Stein, 2002). While there is plenty of coverage of speeches, conferences and protests, these tend to be simply reportage without analysis or explanation. There is not enough proactive reporting, that is new ideas and stories generated within newsrooms looking at other aspects of the disease. It is acknowledged that proactive reporting usually requires more time and resources than reactive reporting, which is usually centred on events and press releases. This may make such reporting less attractive to profit orientated newspapers where their
focus is on the bottom-line. However, it would give a more nuanced, rounded approach to reporting on HIV/AIDS.

A related criticism is the lack of critical analysis of HIV/AIDS issues. While the media has been quick to adopt oppositional stances to government and others, including pharmaceutical companies, on HIV/AIDS issues, there has been little in the way of incisive analysis of the issues at stake (Finlay, 2004; Tengrove Jones, 2001). Reporting without analysis often creates a "context that is both reductionist (good versus bad; wrong versus right) and ad hominem: the person is attacked rather than his or her actions or ideas properly addressed" (Finlay, 2004: 20). Again, however, the commercial nature of the press is at least partly to blame for this lack of critical analysis. Such reporting is usually more costly and time-consuming, and conducted by more senior members of the newsroom or by outside 'experts'. Thus, the focus on the bottom-line may be partly responsible for the lack of analysis.

The imperatives of news values versus social responsibility are another area where the South African print media can be criticized for its HIV/AIDS coverage (Stein, 2002). With at least five million people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa, there is no doubt that the disease is a pressing social issue. However, when it comes to its news value, HIV/AIDS scores poorly, at least among media workers themselves. The journalists who largely drive the HIV/AIDS news agenda are health correspondents or specialist HIV/AIDS writers (although these seem few and far between); however, while they stress the importance of covering the epidemic "the occupational culture of journalism provides a countervailing pull" (Miller & Williams, 1993: 136). Thus, editors and often the journalists themselves, who internalize the organisation of news work, see little news value in HIV/AIDS stories.

As this study and others have shown, there is a tendency to use official sources most regularly on HIV/AIDS stories, often without interrogating the stance being put forward. A critical political economy perspective of the media argues official sources are afforded 'expert' status on HIV/AIDS issues; they are usually easy to locate and they have the
support of well-oiled publicity machines. However, the press rarely interrogates the facts given by these officials and does not take into account their motives. The increase in the number of PWA sources used in press reports is to be welcomed. However, the male and the non-black PWA experience in South Africa are often neglected and need to be further explored in newspapers.

There also appears to be a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS within newsrooms. Health reporters in general have taken on the burden of covering the epidemic, along with the rest of their workload; in many cases these reporters have attended training or researched the topic thoroughly so that they become ‘experts’ in HIV/AIDS. However, other journalists, such as political reporters or crime correspondents, who are also called upon to report on the epidemic may be lacking in scientific and public health knowledge (Dean, 1992: 1286). This in turn feeds into the tendency to accept what official sources say at face value and to rarely critically analyse what is said.

The gendered and racialised view of the epidemic in South African print media reports is not new. This has been the case since HIV/AIDS was first covered in the commercial press in the 1980s, when white gay men were the face of the epidemic. As Stein (2002: 21) points out, the white male homosexual man remained the face of AIDS long after the extent of the heterosexual epidemic became apparent. While, this is clearly no longer the case, the media may be accused of now predominantly representing PWAs as black, working class women to the exclusion of many other sections of the population.

Lack of resources and the daily pressures of meeting deadlines often mean that the media refers to past reports through its own archives when researching and writing new stories. In this way, the media constantly refers back to itself (Finlay, 2004: 19) and what has already been written often sets the tone for future reporting on HIV/AIDS. Difficulties arise here when the media tend to perpetuate the stereotypes around HIV/AIDS, such as using the ‘plague’ metaphor to refer to the disease, or labeling those with the disease as ‘AIDS sufferers’ or ‘victims’ or indeed to the main portrayal of PWAs as black, female and poor.
The majority of news stories relating to HIV/AIDS in this study are framed positively. However, two out of every five stories under examination were negatively framed, which suggests that more needs to be done proactively to discourage stigmatizing portrayals of the disease. It is also important to move away from notions of innocence or guilt in terms of infection; media frequently represent some people as to blame for their HIV status, such as sex workers or promiscuous people, and others as innocent, such as babies infected through mother-to-child-transmission or rape survivors.

The print media also tends to treat its readers like consumers who are buying a product, rather than citizens. From a critical political economy perspective of the media, with its focus on the bottom-line and for profit nature of its business, this is no surprise. However, in terms of the media’s role in democratic societies, there is also a responsibility to educate and inform readers about critical issues facing society. “As far as the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS are concerned, the media would seem to have forgotten this educative role” (MMP, 2001: 30). Media workers may argue that their principal role is to sell newspapers, but this is not necessarily at the expense of all other duties. Therefore, the media should reflect its responsibility for education and information in its coverage of HIV/AIDS but without assuming a didactic approach to it.

Media reporting on HIV/AIDS has tended to follow ‘phases’. As a particular element becomes newsworthy, such as the debate over whether HIV causes AIDS, there is a propensity among journalists to concentrate on this topic to the exclusion of almost all else. In South Africa, these phases have included the gay plague, the Sarafina II controversy, Virodene, the dissident debate and calls for treatment. As a result of the phased nature of reporting, other elements such as prevention or human rights tend to be neglected in newspapers, despite them remaining important social issues.

Overall, then, the media need to be more proactive about how they report on HIV/AIDS. Media workers recognize the importance of HIV/AIDS as a social issue; this recognition needs to be translated into a commitment to covering the epidemic comprehensively and
in a way that engages their readers. A wide range of sources should be used in these reports and, while accepting the importance of the official line, reporters should also try to widen their contacts in the HIV/AIDS field. The power of language in influencing how readers view the epidemic should be acknowledged by journalists, and they should try harder to eliminate stereotypes or discriminatory language from their reports; training and sensitization to HIV/AIDS issues may benefit media workers. Journalists should constantly brainstorm for new angles to counter accusations that HIV/AIDS is boring for readers. Senior staff at editorial level should also make a bigger commitment to covering the epidemic and lend support to their journalists. Crucially, more critical analysis is needed in the South African press; while some journalists who are not ‘experts’ in the field of HIV/AIDS may not feel qualified to engage in such analysis, editors should also look outside the newsroom to academics, activists and scientists, among others, to provide in-depth views of important issues.

5.4 Recommendations for further research
A study such as this one is limited in scope due to time and length constraints. However, the research journey has thrown up other potential areas which may be worthy of further inquiry. Also, additional investigation into the areas examined in this dissertation may be worthy in order to ‘test’ the findings contained here.

It would be interesting to study the strategies that non-official organisations, in particular PWA organisations, have employed in order to have their voices heard in the media. As discussed, non-official organisations often adopt the strategies of official groups such as political parties or business in order to be seen as credible sources in the eyes of the media (Gitlin, 1980; Epstein, 1996). An in-depth study or indeed a case study of how particular PWA group(s) attempt to engage the media and how successful they are would be worthy.

This dissertation concentrated on how PWAs are framed in the print media; it would be most interesting to examine other forms of the mass media, such as television and radio news coverage of PWAs, to examine if the same sort of framing techniques and devices
are used. It is acknowledged that it would be more difficult to source the news reports of broadcast media, as they are not deposited in libraries and frequently are not archived permanently by broadcast media themselves. However it is not impossible and as these forms of media have a higher consumption amongst the South African population than print, they therefore have the potential to impact on greater numbers of people.

A related area of research may be audience perceptions of people living with HIV/AIDS from their reading of news reports on PWAs. Media effects are a controversial area of study in the mass media and it is often difficult to successfully link the audience’s perception of issues specifically with the media’s interpretation of the same issues (Sparks, 2002). However, while the media may not be capable of telling us what to think, they have a strong influence over what we think about and this may be studied in such research.

One of the most interesting findings of this research was the impact that HIV/AIDS stories have on the sales of newspapers. A critical political economy perspective of the media argues that the for-profit focus of media organisations is one of the driving forces which impact on media content. In this study representatives from the Cape Times and Cape Argus stated that leading with HIV/AIDS stories affected their sales and thus they shied away from such page one leads. It would be valuable to try and explore this further with other newspapers to see if the same occurs there.

The current study focused on examining how PWAs are framed during ‘ordinary’ times and deliberately focused on a time period when HIV/AIDS was not high on the political agenda. However, the content analysis only looked at two newspapers and it would be most interesting to expand this study to include other newspapers from different parts of South Africa to investigate if the findings here are replicated in other printed press.

5.5 Conclusion
This study has shown that there is reason for cautious optimism with regard to the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting in South Africa, particularly news stories which focus on people
living with HIV/AIDS. It has been almost a quarter of a century since the first local cases of AIDS-related deaths were reported in South African newspapers (Grundlingh 1997: 1) and HIV/AIDS has remained a pressing social issue with no signs of abating.

The mass media, for all their shortcomings, remain the major source of information about HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (Tapfumaneyi, 2004: 48) and therefore have an extremely important role to play. The media should take responsibility for ensuring HIV/AIDS remains on the news agenda and for making it as interesting as possible for readers. If HIV/AIDS stories are perceived as ‘boring’ as was suggested by editorial level interviewees in this study, then the blame lies with journalists and their editors for failing to engage the audience. It is lack of creativity and the tendency to label HIV as a health story rather than taking a multi-faceted approach to it which turns off readers, not HIV/AIDS itself. Therefore, media workers need to be more imaginative and proactive when it comes to HIV/AIDS reporting. This may translate to greater support from senior staff to journalists working in the field, perhaps more resources channeled towards specialized HIV/AIDS reporting and a concentrated effort to include many voices in articles and debates.

Journalists should also be aware of the effect that their choices in relation to salience, language, placement and metaphors have on the framing of an issue such as HIV/AIDS. While framing is often perceived by media workers as merely a routine of journalism, it may have a distinct impact on how an issue is presented and in turn viewed by the audience. As this dissertation has shown, through framing the printed press presents a picture of HIV positive people as black, female and poor when it is known that all races, genders, ages and classes are affected by the disease.

HIV/AIDS reporting in South Africa may be improving with the inclusion of the PWA perspective, less stigmatising language and the move away from the formerly highly politicized nature of reporting, but there is no room for complacency. There needs to be more voices from other races and social classes affected by the epidemic included in newspapers, more investigative reporting, more critical analysis of the situation and more
sensitized journalism. In short, to borrow from a political slogan, there’s a lot done, but more to do.
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*Political Communication.* 14: 433-443


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Zegeye A. & Harris, R.L. (editors) (2003). Media, Identity and the Public Sphere in Post-Apartheid South Africa; Brill, Leiden and Boston

Electronic resources

http://152.111.1.251 Media24 archives

www.awmc.com African Women’s Media Centre

www.cadre.org Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation

www.health-e.org.za Health-e news service

www.journalism.co.za a resource website for South African journalists hosted by Wits University

www.journ-aids.org Journ-AIDS

www.media24.ie Media24 website

www.sanef.org.za South African National Editors’ forum website

www.saarf.co.za South African Advertising Research Foundation (All Media Products Survey (AMPS))

www.health-e.org.za Health-e news service
APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule for Journalists and Editors

1. How would you rate the South African print media coverage of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in general?

2. What do you believe are the main foci of the HIV/AIDS related news reports?

3. Could you describe to me your opinions on how your newspaper has covered the HIV/AIDS epidemic to date?

4. How does HIV/AIDS rate in terms of newsworthiness at your newspaper?

5. How is it decided what HIV/AIDS related stories are covered in your paper?

6. Who are the sources used in these stories?

7. What helps and hinders the use of people living with HIV/AIDS as sources?

8. What level of interest is expressed by your readers in HIV/AIDS stories?

9. What effect, if any, do HIV/AIDS stories have on sales and advertising?

10. How would you describe the language used in your paper’s HIV/AIDS reports?

11. Does your newsroom have any guidelines or policies regarding the reporting of HIV/AIDS stories?

12. What impressions do you think someone who had no knowledge of the situation in South Africa in relation to HIV/AIDS would have about the disease and the people it affects after reading your newspaper reports?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>PWA characteristics</th>
<th>Dominant framing</th>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Jan 9th:  
"Son's HIV kept from Madiba" | Celebrity | Family Tradional healer | None | Negative: Son's HIV status kept from Madiba | p.8 Main section | Staff: Charles Molele & Simphiwe Piliso |
| "Mandela has set a brave example" | Opinion/editorial | None | None | Negative: HIV/AIDS framed as "war" "struggle", "fight" | p.14 Insight & Opinion – editorial | Staff: |
| "Makgatho Mandela: Lawyer with his father's humility" | Obituary | None | Black, male, 54, middle-class, deceased | Positive: Notions of freedom associated with HIV disclosure | p. 17 – with picture Insight & Opinion | Staff: Chris Barr |
| Jan 23rd:  
"Consent for condoms retracted after Vatican reprimand" | Foreign | Religious Media Political | None | Negative: Church frames sex as sin, and thus PWAs as sinners | p.7 Main section | Wires – Te London |
| "Ashley Judd to visit SA on Aids mission" | Celebrity | Celebrity NGO | None | Positive: Celebrity associated with HIV testing | p. 11 – with picture Main section | Staff: Charles Molele & Claire Kee |
| Jan 30th:  
"New row over Aids statistics" | Epidemiology | NGO/TAC Official | None | Positive: Frames MRC report as more salient than stats SA | p. 1 Main Section | Staff: Bonny Schoonakk |
<p>| &quot;Under the cover of darkness&quot; | Human interest (feature) | Family, Employer, Medical x2 NGO/TAC, Funeral director, Official | Black, male, 36, working class, deceased | Negative: Frames HIV as shameful and those who contract it as 'sufferers' | p. 15 – with picture Front page Insight &amp; Opinion | Staff: Futhi Ntsingila |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Title/Quote</th>
<th>Interest 1</th>
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<td>&quot;The elderly shall provide&quot;</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Family x 2,</td>
<td>Four young, black,</td>
<td>Positive:</td>
<td>p. 8 – with picture</td>
<td>Staff: Futhi</td>
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<td>female mothers,</td>
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<td>class. All deceased</td>
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<td>&quot;He'll need you when granny goes&quot;</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Family,</td>
<td>One young, black, female</td>
<td>Negative:</td>
<td>p.8 – with picture</td>
<td>Staff: Futhi</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>working class. Deceased.</td>
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<td>&quot;The wish list&quot;</td>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>NGO</td>
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<td>Positive: readers can</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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<td>&quot;So many questions: Cardinal Wilfrid Napier&quot;</td>
<td>Question &amp;</td>
<td>Religious</td>
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<td>Negative: Condoms</td>
<td>p. 19 – with picture,</td>
<td>Staff: Chris</td>
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<td>&quot;Readers open hearts&quot;</td>
<td>answer</td>
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<td>Barron</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>Positive: Generous</td>
<td>p. 11</td>
<td>Staff: Futhi</td>
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<td>readers help AIDS</td>
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<td>Feb 20th:</td>
<td>&quot;Stats SA treads carefully on Aids&quot;</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>Researcher/</td>
<td>Negative: Deaths rise but</td>
<td>Negative:</td>
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Guest writ
- David Bot & Nathan Geffen
- Staff: Columnist Fred Khur
- Staff: Taschica Pillay
- Staff: Claire Keeton
- Guest writ Dr Elly Katabira & Hank McKinnell
- Staff: Claire Kee
| April 17th: “So many questions: Edwin Cameroon | Question & answer | PWA | White, male, 40s, upper middle-class. Alive | Positive: PWA living positively | p. 19 – with picture Insight & Opinion | Staff: Chris Barron | for AIDS work |
## APPENDIX 3

### Daily Sun Content Analysis

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<td>Advocates compulsory HIV testing</td>
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<td>&quot;Sexual health is in your hands&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Nkosilives on in spirit&quot;</td>
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<td>Inspirational story of PWA</td>
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Under the cover of darkness

Ashamed of their HIV status, some desperately ill Aids sufferers check into hospitals late at night but often too late for help — writes Futhi Ntshingila

AIDS patients, armed with a letter from their doctors, queue outside the emergency ward of St Mary's Hospital late at night. Photo: JACO LAUBER

For how long are we going to carry this stigma when everybody is dying from Aids?

The prevalence of Aids and the stigma attached to it are causing many patients to be afraid to seek medical help. People who are sick often disguise their symptoms and it is not uncommon to see someone walking with a bag of groceries with a white towel over their right hand. This is part of the stigma that is attached to Aids. There is a need for society to accept and support those who are HIV-positive. The treatment, which is expensive, is available but many patients are afraid to seek help. This is a sad state of affairs. Treatment is available but many patients are afraid to seek help.

The stigma attached to Aids is a major barrier to accessing treatment. Many patients are afraid to seek help because of the stigma attached to Aids. The treatment is expensive but it is available. Many patients are afraid to seek help because of the stigma attached to Aids.

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lakatho Mandela: lawyer with his father's inability

Here is the most revered public figure in the world saying, 'My son has died of AIDS.'

Obituaries

Will Eisn gave com

Will Flonzky, an American diplomat, was a frequent visitor to South Africa during the apartheid era. He is said to have been a prominent figure in the anti-apartheid movement. Eisn is remembered for his efforts to bring attention to the human rights abuses inflicted on the black population by the South African government.

Eisn was a vocal critic of the South African government's policies and was known for his support of the African National Congress (ANC) and its precursor, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). He was actively involved in the efforts to end apartheid and promote democracy in South Africa.

Eisn passed away peacefully in his sleep at the age of 85. He is survived by his wife and three children. His legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.
There's a clear message going out that South Africa is not just a cheap, well-equipped place to produce movies, a low-cost facility house with great scenery and weather.
Wedding cake trouble for Mandoza and Mpho

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BY LIZZIE BRAND

A upset Mandoza and his bride, Mpho, arrived at the wedding ceremony late.

Mandoza, 27, was only able to arrive at his wedding to his bride, Mpho, on time after several delays. The couple was scheduled to have their wedding at 11am, but due to traffic and other delays, they arrived at the venue around 3pm.

Mandoza said that the traffic was to blame for the delay.

"I was supposed to be here at 11am, but due to traffic, we were late," Mandoza said.

The wedding was a big event, attended by family and friends. Mandoza and Mpho were all smiles as they exchanged vows.

Evicted PE taxi rank hawkers vow to protest

BY MANDLA MAKU

Hawkers at the Coney Park shopping centre in Port Elizabeth are threatening to protest after they were evicted from their stalls.

The hawkers said that they had been operating from the stalls for years and were taken aback when they were told that they had to vacate the premises.

"We have been operating here for years and we were not given any notice," said one of the hawkers.

The local authority said that the hawkers were told about the eviction several weeks ago.

"We have been giving the hawkers notice for some time," said a spokesperson for the local authority.

Circumcision house: Man stabbed dead

BY NTHOMAZA NKOSANE

A man was stabbed to death at a circumcision house in Mntamvuna.

The victim, a 27-year-old man, was attacked by his friends after he refused to be circumcised.

"He was attacked by his friends because he was refusing to be circumcised," said a relative.

Teenager drowns

A 15-year-old teenager drowned in a river in Bisho.

He had been swimming with his friends when he became trapped in a strong current and was swept away.

Thick Team, the Department of Local Government and Housing and the Buffalo District, said that they had launched an investigation into the incident.

"We are investigating the incident to determine the cause," said a spokesperson for Thick Team.

The teenager's family said that they were shocked by the news.

"We lost our son in a matter of minutes," said the teenager's mother.

Mandela & Aids: Sun readers speak

BRAVE MADIBA SHINES A LIGHT

ONCE again Nelson Mandela leads the way for all.

Late last week he admitted that his son, Makgatho, had died of Aids.

The former President has broken the barrier of silence which so many of us have felt too much around the entire world.

But now that families have been let with some light shine through it, the other people will find the courage to go out there.

This will be a huge step in the world against the deadly disease. Only when we admit there is a problem can we hope to deal with the real meaning in Nelson Mandela's brave action.

He is a man who holds more than politics and we will be great full for it.

Nelson Mandela today is a huge force for good in the life situation which led to freedom.
Know your status -- for life!

By PHUMELELE KAUNDA

THE IMPORTANCE of knowing one's HIV status was once again highlighted at the launch of a network of New Start Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres in Joburg yesterday.

The centres situated at Sanlam Centre, Joburg, Picbel Parkade in Cape Town and Commercial City in Durban offer pre-counselling, testing and post-counselling.

They aim to give South Africans an inexpensive, accessible way to learn about their status and an opportunity to work with a trained counsellor to come up with a plan to live longer.

The service is confidential and no names are taken. The counselling and testing are one-on-one sessions conducted in private rooms.

The people also receive referrals for post-test care and support services.

At the launch, Youth Aids Global Ambassador Ashley Judd and local TV stars Dini Nondumo, Camilla Waldman, Connie Ferguson, Sonia Mbele and Tumisho Masha were counselled and tested.

Judd also encouraged prominent people in society to come forward and test.

"If people see their role models testing, they may feel that it is something that they should do too," she said.

Generations' Dini said HIV/Aids awareness campaigns should now focus on people who are infected.

"Although prevention is important, people who are already infected should be taught how to live their lives positively," he said.

"The more we talk about the disease the more people will realise that Aids is like any other disease," he added.

The centres open from 8am to 6pm weekdays and from 8am to 2pm on Saturdays.

A fee of R25 is payable for the service but those who really cannot afford it will still be accommodated.

For more information call 021 425 5843 or 031 305 6942 or 011 333 6868.

Picture: colour

Caption: Sonia Mbele and Dini Nondumo of Generations fame were among celebrities who stressed the importance of knowing one's HIV status yesterday. Photo by Jabu Kumalo
AIDS: FIGHTING BACK

Poor gogo's Aids hell

By SUN REPORTER

AGNES MAZIBUKO (60) from Zakheni township, Ladysmith, was infected with HIV while taking care of her three HIV-positive children.

The poor grandmother, who began by nursing her son and daughter-in-law in 2003, did not use the necessary precautions and ended up being infected.

"I bathed, washed and bandaged their open wounds every day until they both died," said Agnes.

"Immediately after that, I took care of my niece, who died early last year.

"She also suffered from the disease," she added.

While helping her family members, Agnes started to get sick.

"I developed itchy and irritating rashes on my face and neck and went to the clinic for treatment. I became better, but it came back.

"Health workers then advised me to have an HIV test," she said.

"I was surprised when it came back positive, because my husband died in 1977 and I did not have any relationships after that," added the confused Agnes.

She is now ill and has to take care of her other child, who is also HIV-positive.

Everyone is at risk of getting HIV. Anti-retroviral medicines are now available to prolong life, but there is still no cure for HIV. Preventing infection is essential. Below are tips to help you protect yourselves and others from getting HIV:

How does one get HIV?

Direct contact with the blood of a person living with HIV. Although rare, this can happen if you have a freshly open wound which comes into contact with the blood of a person with HIV.

• From unprotected sexual intercourse with a person who already has HIV. Unprotected sex means sex without a condom.

• From mother to child.

A pregnant mother who is HIV-positive can pass the virus to her unborn child. This happens in the
womb, but the greatest risk of infection to the child is during childbirth or through breastfeeding. By sharing needles or syringes for injecting drugs with a person who is HIV positive.

- By sharing toothbrushes and razor blades with a person who is HIV-positive.

**How to prevent HIV?**

- Abstain.

This is the safest way to prevent infection.

- Have one partner -- where both partners are HIV-negative.

The only way to find out one's HIV status is by having a blood test. If you decide to have sex in a new relationship, it is important to use condoms until you and your partner have been tested. If the test says you are both HIV-negative and have been practising safe sex and choose to remain faithful to each other, only then can you stop using condoms.

- Take precautions when handling blood. When helping someone who has been injured, always use latex gloves.