

**EXPLORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' INTERFERENCE ON THE
EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING
CORPORATION**

by

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DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I declare that “EXPLORATION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS’ INTERFERENCE ON THE EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (SABC)” hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for a degree in Masters of Arts in Media Studies and has never been submitted to any institution including the University of Limpopo. Furthermore, I declare that this is my dissertation in blueprint and achievement and that all ideas, views, and sources of others stated have been purely stipulated and accepted through complete reference.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a series of horizontal and diagonal strokes.

DEDICATION

First, I would like to thank God for allowing me to complete my dissertation. I would like to thank my mother (Morongwa Johanna Ramogale), who was there for me in good and bad times, giving me the courage and strength to take my studies seriously; you showed me motherly love unconditionally. To my supervisor (Dr NC Baloyi), I do not know where to begin because if it were not for you, I would not have managed to conquer my study alone; thank you so much for your time, energy, advice, and dedication you have provided throughout my dissertation period.

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#Hasta la Victoria El Siempre

#One Love, One Heart, One Destination

#Salute

ABSTRACT

Public media broadcasting exists in the world as an advocate of society in all aspects of life globally. Public media broadcasting is provided in many ways, such as television, radio, online, and social media platforms. Public media broadcasting accommodates all types of audiences regardless of their conditions and disability status. The research explored the government officials' interference in the editorial independence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Audiences use public media broadcasting entities to be informed and educated about social, economic, and political issues, as well as the ability to deliver critical information freely to citizens and protect people's human rights at an affordable cost. Public broadcasting entities such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) greatly impact how citizens view and analyse societal activities and incidents in day-to-day operations.

The research objectives are to assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy, to examine the alleged editorial interference of the SABC on the public and to establish the effects of editorial interference of the SABC on the public. The research utilised agenda-setting theory and Authoritarian theory, which show an interlinked relationship between media, authorities, and media agenda. The study analysed various literature, which aligns with the study's aim and objectives.

The qualitative approach method was utilised in the study, and it yielded outcomes retrieved through textual analysis and focus group discussion. Textual analysis and reflexive thematic analysis were used to analyse the collected data. The population utilised as a sample were online news articles that reported on the alleged editorial interference at the SABC and audiences that are utilising SABC platforms to receive and access news and information. Textual analysis of the online news articles' findings reveals that the SABC has experienced activities of editorial interference by government officials, primarily politicians who abused their power to pass their agenda to society via SABC platforms. Furthermore, focus group findings show that participants have strong beliefs supported by incidents/events that they provided as examples of SABC experiencing editorial interference by government officials.

Keywords: SABC, Audience, Government, Editorial, Entities, Officials, Broadcasting, Public.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
BEMAWU	Broadcasting, Electronic, Media, and Allied Workers Union
eNCA	eNews Channel Africa
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COO	Chief Operations Officer
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EWN	Eyewitness News
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICASA	Independent Communication Authority of South Africa
IOL	Independent Online
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SANEF	South African National Editor's Forum
SOE	State-owned enterprise
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VBS	Venda Building Society

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the investigation of government interference in the editorial independence of SABC. Media exist to fulfil human rights to access information and communication in various media channels that suit everyone despite their human conditions. Broadcasting media is one of the media channels used to disseminate news and information. According to Bhasin (2023), broadcasting media is a medium or media channel used for communicating, transmitting, and broadcasting to the public, such as television, radio, the Internet, and others. Broadcast media is one of people's most preferred sources of information, with clear and detailed news content descriptions.

Media refers to any form of communication that can disseminate information through common media types such as print media, broadcasting, online publications, and internet sources (Paul & Rai, 2021). The media is perceived as political and moral agents, choosing which story should dominate by taking precise editorial positions and alluding to something to be done. The power of media as an entity is that it can be used as a constructive mediator in resolving and changing dreaded ethnic conflicts and assisting in finding peace in a conflict-ridden society.

Society relies on the media to learn about societal issues, including politics, entertainment, world events, and local and global news. Paul and Rai (2021) argue that media poses a power to select matters and events in the entire world that we are aware of; they decide what becomes news, they choose and manipulate issues, they contextualise the problem, they set political agendas, and they create both consciousness and matters that include human rights. Media has the power to build up public opinion on different topical issues; it can make or break societies, and that is the power media has. For years and years, the media has remained an essential pistil of government, a nation, and the rest of the world (Abraham, 2011).

Moreover, to be a reliable source of information, the content you feed the public should be verified before it gets published. One of the crucial broadcasting media features is timeliness since broadcasting focuses on current affairs and assists the public in being fully aware of everything happening in their surroundings, locally and globally. One of the advantages of broadcast media mentioned in Marketing91 (2023) is that it reaches many people when new content is published. The information can be archived and kept for future reference. In the broadcasting media industry, news is one of the most critical aspects (news) in our daily lives, and a day without news is completely unimaginable (Tabassum, 2018).

Broadcast media is volatile; every class of people can see and hear the news from various broadcasting media channels despite any human conditions. Broadcasting media has a significant impact on combating unconstitutional wrongdoing in government by making society aware of what is happening in the country through broadcast media (Olawale, 2023). Broadcasting media has six main functions it performs, as outlined in the National Open University of Nigeria (2006) and as follows:

- News Function

Broadcasting media channels inspect an environment and disseminate information about things occurring in that environment, primarily things impacting society and that are of human interest.

- Opinion function

Broadcast media provide a path for the various apparitions of opinions to be expressed in society. Broadcast media allows us to know what a portion of society is thinking.

- Education function

Through broadcast media, people retrieve new knowledge, skills, and views, which help them cope with life.

- Propaganda function

The state often uses broadcast media channels as an amplifier to overestimate or make something out of nothing.

- Commercial function

Television and radio stations transfer advertisements, which assist in informing audiences about the existence of specific goods and services.

➤ Entertainment function

Drama, music, and comic programmes are transmitted to ease boredom and help audiences of broadcast media channels relax.

Public broadcasting media is one of the sectors that were yielded by broadcasting media, and the same goes for South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as one of the public broadcasting entities. The focus now is on the SABC, which is at the centre of this study. According to the Public Media Service (2022), public broadcasting media is broadcasting constructed, financed, and administered by the public for society and is neither commercial nor state-owned, free from political intrusion and coercion from commercial forces. The South African Broadcasting Corporation was founded in 1936 through the Act of the South African Parliament after it acquired the African Broadcasting Company (Mpherwane, April, and Barnardo, 2019).

Public broadcasting media was established during the era of colonialism in South Africa, like most African countries that were colonised; by then, it was under the control of white supremacy. The purpose of public broadcasting media is to provide a variety of quality news content and information globally accessible to a diverse audience on a national level. Therefore, SABC exists to fulfil those purposes and be a reliable information provider to the public, allowing citizens to participate meaningfully in society.

Impartiality of domestic and international news coverage is at the centre of public broadcasting media to inform the public of an understanding of a multiplex and global world (Public Media Service, 2022). The evolution of media paved the way for broadcasting media to grow extensively and be exposed to many people who had never preferred it (public broadcasting media) as a medium of news and information. South African media entered a new phase of media evolution where broadcasting media became a competitor to print media and was a substitute for media platforms; that is how public broadcasting came into existence and gained momentum. The birth of public broadcasting media in South Africa came after the broadcasting media utility was moved from the ownership of the government to being a fully operational public broadcasting medium. Unlike print media, public broadcasting media does not require

much literate knowledge since those who cannot read utilise it. Public media broadcasting should represent the voiceless, dejected masses who have no alternative but to submit their dissatisfaction whenever a serious matter needs attention.

Public Media Service (2002) reiterates that public broadcasting media, such as the SABC, require diligent and unambiguous legal, governance, and regulatory shelter to maintain their independence from all sorts of interference, such as political and commercial. Wasserman (2020) shows that as much as SABC has a mandate to serve the public interest, it has also been affected by problems of corruption, mismanagement, and political interference in its editorial agendas. SABC serves a complex multicultural society with different beliefs, values, norms, race, gender, status, etc., which always comes across challenges, and it will always come across challenges of complaints from audiences according to how they cover and disseminate information.

As a public broadcaster, the SABC intends to inform, entertain, and educate citizens and allow them access to and engage with free, independent, and relevant news content regardless of their geographic location, status, or technological advancement. As a public broadcaster, SABC is one of the most influential and pivotal public entities that safeguards and serves the will and interests of the people. The SABC carries a mandate to disseminate news content that is credible, honest, and truthful to its audiences. SABC is an independent, impartial entity under the government's inspection, together with relevant broadcasting and communication regulatory bodies (SABC Annual Report, 2021). Thus, no one has the right to meddle in the day-to-day operation of the entity. According to Mano and Milton (2020), the government of the Republic of South Africa is the sole shareholder of the SABC. Before it became a public broadcasting entity, SABC was once a state media entity. The government wholly owned it, and when it became a public entity, it became the majority funder as there was a deep connection between the two apparatuses.

The SABC Annual Report (2021) further shows that the view of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is to uphold the integrity of the functioning of the entity in line with the code of conduct, acts, and policies amended by the public broadcaster's statutory framework. SABC, as a public broadcasting corporation, is

governed by a board of directors called the SABC Board, appointed by His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Africa with the assistance of the National Assembly. This board consists of twelve (12) non-executive directors and three (3) executive directors who oversee the work of the SABC executives, which is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operations Officer (COO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and a certain number of board committees (Corporate Plan, 2020–2023). SABC ensures that the rights of the people to have access to information and communication are fulfilled as amended in the South African Constitution. The Viljoen Task Group Report (2001: 131) states that the “SABC should ensure that broadcasting in South Africa serves the public in such a way that the ideals of a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous society are pursued and advanced.”

The SABC functions under the supervision of how information and news should be presented concerning its core values, code of conduct and broadcasting laws. As a public broadcaster, the SABC has a massive impact on society by disseminating news. As a public broadcaster, SABC fulfils the duties and responsibilities of being chosen to disseminate information to the public on behalf of the government. The notion that public media broadcasters can provide transparent and impartial news and information is growing in line with future events (Fourie, 2003). Public media assist the government in playing a role in the given duty of building a nation through a constructive and democratic display in advancing the country's identity, equality, and dignity for necessary rights for South Africans as stipulated in the constitution (the Department of Communications, 1998).

The duties and public mandate of the SABC, as outlined in the Broadcasting Act of 2002, are to prioritise public interest, offer plural news and information, educate, entertain, and be open to opinions and criticism. Besides the duties and responsibilities of the entity, the SABC enjoys freedom of expression and journalistic freedom in preserving editorial independence (SABC Editorial Policies, 2004).

However, there are reports of allegations of editorial interference with the SABC news, which threatens its public mandate and democracy. The duties and public mandate of the SABC, as outlined in the Broadcasting Act of 2002, are to prioritise the public interest, offer news and information that is plural in terms of views, educate, entertain, and be open to opinions and criticism. Besides the duties and responsibilities of her

country, Mpofu (1996) shows that public broadcasting institutions have attracted interference because broadcasting channels such as television are perceived as agenda setters for political debate and as influencing the public profile of political parties and commercial interests. These allegations have been brought to the attention of everyone who is not aware of such activities to then seek clarity and ask challenging questions to relevant officials who have to answer. According to the SABC (2018), in line with the editorial principles of the corporation, an investigation of a breach of editorial code was done in the coverage of the VBS Mutual Bank story. This is in line with the independence, impartiality, and safeguarding of the integrity and credibility of news products by ensuring that the content of factual stories is delivered.

Moreover, the entity has encountered incidences or allegations of editorial interference, which have raised questions regarding the transparency of news and information. To give a brief detail regarding the allegation stories, the following are the headlines of the allegation stories regarding editorial interference at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC): Former Communications Minister Faith Muthambi's name came up with other senior members of the SABC concerning editorial interference in several cases in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and several other incidences elsewhere. The report released by veteran journalist Joe Thloloe reveals evidence from 2012 to 2017.

As stated by Enca (2019), the SABC executives took instructions from people with no authority in the newsroom; another incident involved the SABC News editor-in-chief, Phathiswa Magopeni, who accused the SABC board chairperson, Bongumusa Makhathini, and Group CEO, Madoda Mxakwe, of interfering with the editorial policy. These concerns include harassment and intimidation of the SABC journalists by senior ANC members during the elections (McCain, 2022); another incident is the VBS Mutual Bank story, which is one of the stories that were brought forward and which is confirmed by SABC (2018). The VBS Mutual Bank story became a trending and big story in 2018 after the bank experienced the biggest fraud ever seen in the South African banking sector. Another incident involved senior political anchor Vuyo Mvoko; this comes after the anchor refused to retract his public criticism of the lack of editorial independence at the public broadcaster SABC. Detailed information relating to allegations of editorial interference at the SABC will be outlined in Chapter 2 (Literature Review).

SABC is viewed as a powerful and influential public broadcaster, and its news content impacts the ordinary lives of the public. The public entity has millions of followers, both locally and internationally, who have chosen it as their preferred source of information. Interference from the editorial section of SABC News has a massive impact on audiences who rely on the entity for news and information. This impact provides significant information to show how long the issue of editorial interference has existed. Hachten and Giffard (1984) observed that no history of the SABC, even briefly, can be complete without referencing the influence of the Afrikaner elites who ruled South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The impact of editorial interference creates a vacuum of journalists who do not operate freely in being transparent with news affairs that viewers look up to. Secondly, it lessens the credibility and integrity of the SABC as a source of information in the public domain. Thirdly, society reflects events and social impacts through information received; it is that information that will portray how society reacts and acts. False information can lead to dire events. Fourie (2013) states that government interference and intimidation through political means threaten the independence of the SABC and its future existence.

Most importantly, this study aims to investigate government interference in the editorial independence of the SABC news. Editorial independence gives public broadcasting employees in all ranks the right to make decisions based on their professional ethics, such as worthy news relevant to the public interest (Barker, 2000). Abuse of power, self-interest, and propaganda by the government are other parts that the study will address. According to the House of Freedom report (2019), those that have highly influenced democracies in the world, a large population no longer receives unbiased news and information. This is due to the interference of editorial independence in media content production (Oztunc & Pierre, 2021). This study focuses on government interference in the editorial independence of the SABC. It intends to reveal SABC policies which can be used to find solutions regarding the editorial independence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The key findings will be guided based on the recommendations of this study. The researcher will assist the SABC on what to implement and improve to avoid editorial interference by external forces.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Media is one of the mediums of information and communication that have brought the world a global village (Paul & Rai, 2021). Humans now depend on the media to know what is happening around them and the world. This section details the problem that initiated this study. Public broadcasting media is one of the bases of media; it has the powers to select issues and events, decide what must be news, headline issues, set political agendas, and create consciousness on matters that involve human rights (International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2002, cited in Paul and Rai, 2021). As a public broadcaster, since its existence dating from the current, SABC has been utilised as a resourceful tool by the state to disseminate propaganda news content in opposition to serving the interests of the people (Wasserman, 2020).

SABC, under apartheid, served as a state broadcaster with the intention of upholding the ideology of the apartheid regime, entering a new democratic dispensation. It was believed the entity now had the public mandate, and since it was under parliament monitoring, it would be secured of public accountability. However, that was not the case because the entity continued to experience external interference, even from politicians who interfered with the editorial matters of the SABC (Wasserman, 2020). That normality has made public broadcasting corporations lose their purpose and relevancy to the public.

Public broadcasters such as the SABC are under the control of the government; they highly uphold and promote the opinions and values of those in power and account to parliament (Tleane & Duncan, 2003). It is expected to be accountable and responsible for any of the decisions or actions taken in the editorial section and meet expectations to give explanations when questions are asked. As a public broadcaster, the role of the SABC is to protect the interests of the public and report actions committed by anyone in government who abuses power for self-benefit or hides essential information. Motsaathebe (2022) shows that government funding for the SABC makes it difficult to differentiate whether the entity is government-controlled or a genuine public broadcaster because this reiterates the notion that the entity will become a government mouthpiece instead of a public watchdog. Serious concerns arise because the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), its main stakeholder, is the state when it comes to funding.

Public broadcasting entities strive to remain independent from their funders, who are more likely to interfere with conditions that may clash with their operation. Price and Marc (2011:8), cited in Motsaathebe (2022), reiterate that funding is a critical component of media functionality. Most times, the government has control over public broadcasting entities through the influence of financing the entity to use it for political agendas to favour their desires. A broadcasting entity such as the SABC, according to its mission, conflicts with such practices because its role is to reach out to all citizens to serve a broader developmental agenda through a characterised principle of universality, diversity, and independence. Qobosheane (2018) points out that political interference is one of the contributing factors to state-owned enterprise (SOE) problems and reaffirms that politicians have the power to use SOEs as a tool in carrying out their agenda. The above seems to show that most times, editorial interference in the SABC is dominated by politics more than any other external forces. Interference hampers the SABC from being professional because members or staff of the entity are compromised in making decisions because they are influenced by external apparatus.

An example is seen in the case of SABC vs. Democratic Alliance (DA), when the Public Protector's findings advised that disciplinary actions against Hlaudi Motsoeneng be investigated for his dishonesty, abuse of power, and improper conduct. This arose after the Public Protector received numerous complaints from former SABC staff about how the affairs of the SABC were handled, and the findings revealed that Mr. Motsoeneng had been allowed to operate above the law at SABC and paved the way for political interference to find expression and desire. As Qoboshoane (2018) highlights, state-owned enterprises such as the SABC are not productive because instead of focusing on the productivity of the entity, it then concentrates on appeasing politicians by fulfilling their interests. SABC, as a public broadcaster, has a huge influence on ordinary people locally and internationally, which is why politicians see it as the most powerful tool they can use to push their own agenda since it can reach a large number of people. This shows that political interference as part of external forces is used mostly by the ruling party or politicians as a tool to drive their political desires (Qoboshoane, 2018). SABC has experienced interference by board members in the day-to-day operation of the entity by making decisions where it is supposed to be SABC staff that makes those decisions. This shows that SABC, despite being free

from government control and interference, does not stipulate how the entity should be accountable to the public regarding the activities of the public broadcaster.

An Eyewitness News (2022) article indicates that South African media watchdogs such as Media Monitoring Africa and others are calling for allegations of political interference at the SABC to be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. This comes after the firing of the head of news, Phathiswa Magopeni. Phathiswa Magopeni, who claims she was fired because she refused to take instructions from the SABC CEO to cover African National Congress (ANC) rallies during elections, says immediate intervention is required to save the entity from losing its integrity and being captured by the government. Therefore, the public should be aware of this operation, which endangers the transparency of news and information. The SABC ensures that the principle of being honest, truthful, and transparent governs all the editorial decisions and everything that has to do with the public broadcasting relationship with all the stakeholders (SABC Editorial Policies, 2020). The identified problem has caught the attention of scholars whose studies need to be extended further to educate people about activities occurring at the broadcasting entity they should know about. The researcher intends to explore the issue of the government interfering with the editorial independence of SABC News.

1.3. ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

This study focuses on two mass media theories, agenda-setting theory and authoritarian theory.

1.3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

The researcher chose agenda-setting theory as it expands the concern regarding what the public thinks about being set and influenced by the news media (Nowak-Teter, 2018). The theory also entails that it is not the media that can set up an agenda. Even the public can. The theory shows that the public can decide or influence a particularly important story through how the media respond to their audiences to provide news coverage on that issue. The theory can exhibit how the media has the means to influence the thoughts and opinions of society. This theory was chosen because it's relevant to the study and informs the researcher on what influences government interference on the SABC news items that could impact the public's thoughts and opinions. Mass media is responsible for influencing and shaping public opinion and

agenda and also plays a role in how people view certain issues. Thus, to link this study with what Fourie (2007:244) postulates, "the basic assumption of the agenda-setting theory is that, consciously or unconsciously, the media create a particular image of reality."

Nowak (2018) further illustrates that what is seen as most important as a news report will get more attention than other news, and audiences at large will perceive the news at that moment as most important. This theory describes the media as an entity that selects news content to report to the public and prioritises it based on what they think the public is interested in. Agenda-setting theory describes how media dissolve and mould what society sees and has an impact on how they view political and cultural news stories. The media is one of the most powerful organs that can shape one's opinion on an issue. When you hear about it in the news, you are more likely to perceive it as important (Zulu, 2021). The principle of agenda-setting theory is what influence the media have on society—the agenda they set. How does it impact the views and opinions of the public when it comes to important issues? This theory is suitable because it is about the media's agenda, and the researcher in the study used it to understand how news and information content tampered with by external forces through editorial interference affects the entity and society.

1.3.2 Authoritarian Theory

It is a normative theory of mass communication. In contrast, mass media is influenced and overruled by authority and power, and the media is censored and cannot work independently (Kyliemallari, 2019). The authoritarian theory stems from the government's authority to control all the communication platforms between media and audiences. According to the theory, mass media is influenced and regulated by the state authority, whereby media fulfils the wishes and commands of the authorities; this is equal to dictatorship (Bajracharya, 2018). Furthermore, Wojcieszak, Nisbert, and Kremer (2019) show that national media under authoritarian control mostly serve as the government's mouthpiece to disseminate the regime's information. According to Omola (2020), the media existed to be the mouthpiece and weapon of the government. This theory links with the study, as Bajracharya (2018) states that the SABC is an independent public broadcaster. However, it should respect the wishes of the government authority and not allow direct control by government officials. The theory relates to the study as it shows the government's relationship with the SABC as a

public broadcaster and how the government should respect the entity's independence despite being the majority stakeholder.

1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on the relevant literature regarding the investigation of government interference in the editorial independence of SABC news. The review of the literature that is being selected is relevant to the current study. The literature focuses on the SABC's editorial independence and interference as a public broadcaster.

1.4.1 South African Broadcasting Corporation and its policies

Public broadcasting media has been one of the most significant communication tools. Its mandate is to inform, educate, and entertain the public, mould public consciousness, and act as a public forum (Sabir, 2013). Public broadcasting services are a great asset to citizens willing to engage in political discussions and process-making in a democratic society and feel free to voice their opinions. During the first years of the new century, there were significant changes in the media fraternity. One of those is the intensifying competition between print media and broadcast media. Public media in South Africa consists of the South African Broadcasting Corporation and the SABC. The public media has been transformed from a state broadcaster under apartheid to a public broadcaster under democratic dispensation (Wasserman, 2020).

This public broadcaster operates independently, even though its sole partner is the government, but it manages its affairs. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2018 report on trends in media independence and freedom of expression, first, indicates that public media should have editorial independence from regulatory authorities—secondly, resistance to political and commercial pressure. Accessing information and news from private media companies might come at a heavy price because these entities are giving information in return for commercial benefits and generating income. Most South African citizens, due to being poverty-stricken, could not afford to access such information. Therefore, the government saw it fit to have a public broadcasting entity, which would make it less expensive for everyone to receive news and information in a way to be updated about occurring events around them and the world.

As a public broadcaster, the SABC is mandated to provide information, allow society to exercise its rights, and be part of a national building of equality, editorial independence, transparency, and upholding the ethical code in operating the entity (SABC Editorial Policies, 2020). The SABC functions under the supervision of how information and news should be presented with its core values, code of conduct, and broadcasting laws. The government of the Republic of South Africa is the sole shareholder of the SABC, but that does not mean the government should interfere with the organisation's legal principles (SABC Annual Report, 2021–2022). As a public broadcaster, SABC should remain consistent and relevant when disseminating news and information. SABC editorial staff must understand that as a legislated and constitutionally protected entity. SABC should be responsible for being independent to serve the public with the highest standards of excellence and integrity (SABC Corporate Plan, 2020/21-2022/23).

1.4.2 The impact of editorial interference at the SABC news

As explained by Hanretty (2011), interference refers to threats and involvement that result in causing media professionals to act inappropriately. As a public broadcaster, the SABC has a significant impact on society through the news it disseminates. How people react to news information that is interfered with can have detrimental outcomes. The interference of the SABC leads to misinformation campaigns to divert society's attention away from corruption (Wasserman, 2020). Editorial independence is the opposite of editorial interference. SABC is governed by the Charter of the Corporation, which entails that journalists work and their programs should be independent from the staff and the constitution protected. SABC is governed by the Charter of the Corporation, which entails that journalists work and their programs should be independent from the staff, and the constitution protects freedom of expression. Public media's intention to be independent of the government is to decentralise news and information that give facts to the people about government activities and officials without any external interference. The editorial interference bridges editorial policy meant to serve society's demands; it also affects workers who refuse to take part in the editorial interference process, leading to their jobs and careers being on the line (Urbanikova, 2021). Public broadcasting media have some powers to a certain degree, and there are disputes over the independence of public broadcasting.

Editorial interference has greatly impacted the development of the news media in many ways. SABC has been influenced to use news content for purposes other than focusing on the provisions of news stories. In the new dawn of post-apartheid, the then Chair of the Board and later Minister of Communications, the late Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, gave assurance that the Board would not allow anyone, including the government, to interfere with or have influence on SABC management or staff in editorial decision-making. Fourie (2013) shows that the opposite of what the late Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri said is occurring when, in 2013, Monare (ibid.) wrote that “the SABC has known no peace, with the Board trying to please politicians or factions within the same party (the ANC), the party in government.

Monare is further astonished that when the SABC Board is supposed to report and answer to parliament, this is not the case because the executive tries to interfere instead of focusing on serving the public interest. Unsurprisingly, a party such as the African National Congress (ANC) is mentioned multiple times because it is the one in power and governing, which means the officials it deploys in government have power and proximity to influence most things. SABC has been experiencing interference activities since 1994. The issue of editorial interference is not only a South African problem but a global pandemic matter regarding public broadcasting entities. As stipulated by Louw and Milton (2012), government interference with the appointment of members of the SABC Board and executive officers’ analysis of how politics as interferers have impacted the governance and management of the SABC. Therefore, SABC has lost its credibility due to editorial interference, mostly by the government, as shown in this section, which has then raised questions about the value of the broadcaster in carrying out a mandate to be impartial and transparent to the public.

1.4.3. Role of the SABC in society in terms of transparency and accountability

SABC is one of the critical institutional pillars of our hard-earned democracy, providing essential content to millions of South Africans on multiple platforms ranging from broadcasting to the internet and social media. SABC has remained a primary source of news and information for millions of South Africans (Annual Report, 2018). The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is solely responsible for public service broadcasting and is the only public broadcaster. It is the only South African public broadcaster responsible for public service broadcasting. This is mandated through the South African Broadcasting Act. SABC's public accountability purposes consist of two

dimensions controlled by the SABC board. As a public broadcaster, SABC's mandate is to provide entertaining, educational, and informative content to all South African citizens honestly and truthfully (SABC Annual Report, 2021). As a public broadcaster, SABC fulfils the duties and responsibilities of being chosen to disseminate information to the public on behalf of the government. The notion that public media broadcasters can provide transparent and impartial news and information is growing in line with future events (Fourie, 2003). Audiences trust public broadcasting in terms of providing factual and substantial news.

The value and integrity the public media hold is an assurance to the public that what it disseminates to the people does not influence any outsider (SowetanLive, 2018). Public media assist the government in playing a role in the given duty of building a nation through thorough constructive and democratic display in advancing the identity of the country, equality, and dignity for important rights for South Africans as stipulated in the constitution (the Department of Communications, 1998). Through its mandate, SABC ensures that the principles of honesty, openness, truthfulness, impartiality, and transparency govern every aspect of its relationship with shareholders, stakeholders, funders, sponsors, and the public (SABC Annual Report, 2021–2022). It should be acknowledged that SABC, through its mandate and core editorial values, strives to serve the public with the utmost satisfaction by providing exclusive news content that is factual, truthful, and validated.

1.5 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This unit provides a detailed discussion and relevance of the methodology used for data collection and analysis for the study. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), qualitative research is an approach that allows the researcher to survey individuals' experiences in detail by using a particular set of research methods, such as in-depth interviews, content analysis, visual methods, observation, and life histories. A qualitative research approach was used because the researcher will explore the meaning people give to events they experience.

The study adopted an exploratory research design under qualitative research methodology to establish the impact of social media for marketing purposes. A research design is a research plan, indicating who or what is involved and where and when the study occurs (Cresswell & Poth, 2016). The exploratory research design is

used to help the researcher gather in-depth, qualitative information on the participant's attitudes and perceptions relating to concepts, products, services, or programs through interviews. This includes exploring areas with limited or no prior information or describing behaviours, themes, trends, attitudes, needs, or relations that apply to the units being analysed. The detailed methodology employed in the study will be discussed in Chapter 3 of the methodology chapter.

1.6. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Aim of the study

This study aims to investigate government interference in the editorial independence of the SABC news.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were namely:

- (a) To assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy.
- (b) To examine the alleged editorial interference at the SABC; and
- (c) To establish the effects of editorial interference of the SABC on the public.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Society utilises public media as a means to receive news and information daily. Moreover, there is existing literature on public broadcasting services, although the studies conducted in the academic field do not provide enough literature for the study. Hence, the researcher saw it fit for this study to be conducted to add to the existing literature. The researcher has observed that government interference in the editorial independence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) news significantly impacts the SABC and the public.

The study intends to find a conclusion on whether there is editorial interference in SABC news by the government. This study educates and informs media and communication experts in the media sector about the editorial interference of SABC news by the government, what it does to the public as SABC audiences, and what can be done to deal with such a matter to ensure it does not continue. The study aims to investigate government interference in the editorial independence of SABC news. According to Tatar, Sahin, and Dogan (2022), media literacy is the ability to select and

explain, ask questions, know what is happening, and be active and invulnerable. This study educates and informs public audiences about media information and news transparency in relation to the SABC editorial section. SABC radio remains the leading hub of entertainment, news, and information for millions of South Africans and audiences across transnational borders (SABC Annual Report, 2021).

This study outlines the benefits of having an independent public broadcasting entity in the public domain. Furthermore, it outlines the benefits that the SABC gains when society relies on and uses it as a means of news and information by adhering to its policies rather than external influences. One of the most fundamental outcomes of this study is to add value and contribute to the existing knowledge as far as public broadcasting services are concerned in disseminating news and information.

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The present study evaluates the investigation of government interference in the editorial independence of South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) news. The researcher chose SABC as it is the most popular public media broadcaster among South African audiences and an international media entity. The public takes advantage of SABC platforms, such as TV, radio, social media, etc., to retrieve news and information about events of social importance locally and internationally.

1.9 CHAPTERS OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

This chapter covers the background and objectivity of the study. Furthermore, it deals with the problem statement and discussion on the role of the theory, namely Agenda Setting theory and Authoritarian theory. The researcher also articulates the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provided a broader view of the literature both locally and globally. In this section, a detailed introduction of the most used events in the study is marked out. A historical overview of public media broadcasting is outlined. Moreover, the discussion on the rise of public media broadcasting in South Africa and the role of public media broadcasting in South Africa were explained in detail, looking at the SABC policies on

how a public media broadcaster such as the SABC should operate. The chapter emphasises SABC as a public media broadcaster, viewing the role and mandate it should fulfil in society. However, a broad outlook of the impact of SABC in society and the impact of interference in the editorial independence of SABC news was given in detail, together with the significance of editorial independence of SABC news. Moreover, the public media broadcaster SABC was explored as a source of news and information. SABC policies, Acts, Code of conduct and regulatory bodies of the SABC were also covered in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section outlined the methodology and research design of the study, which adopted a detailed description of a qualitative research method. The research also discussed data collection, focus groups, and content analysis. Detailed information on the data analysis is also discussed in the chapter. Population and sampling were outlined. Moreover, quality criteria were observed and utilised in the study to measure the quality of the data collected. The chapter also highlighted the ethical considerations used in the study to protect participants taking part in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter focuses on data interpretation and analysis. This chapter uses reflexive thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. Literature and theory were used to support the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a summary of the findings together with relevant recommendations. Moreover, it offered limitations and suggestions for future research. The study's conclusion was provided to give the final view of the research.

1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Public- According to the Oxford Dictionary, the public is defined as connected with ordinary people in society in general.

Broadcasting – The business and operation of producing and sending out radio and television content.

Media- According to the Oxford dictionary, media is defined as “the different methods that mass people receive information and entertainment, that is either broadcasted, printed or the internet.

Editorial- related to is preparing a book, newspaper, radio, or television that is to be published or broadcasted.

Interference- the action of interfering with something or something that causes disturbance.

Independence- the freedom to be dependent, to organise your things, and to make your own decisions without needing anyone meddling in your affairs.

Government- The Oxford Dictionary defines government as a group controlling a country or state through a particular system.

News- new information or reports of recent events about something appearing in a newspaper, television, or internet.

SABC- South African Broadcasting Corporation.

Audience- of several people or groups of people gathered or scattered to watch, read, or listen to the same thing.

1.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

In conclusion, as a public broadcaster, SABC is used as a source of news and information by the public, using the simplest forms and methods to accommodate everyone despite their conditions. The entity is not about serving certain individuals in society but the whole by providing impartial and transparent news free from biases, harm, and factionalism. As a public broadcaster, it has a constitutional duty to uphold the freedom of expression and act in the best interest of South African citizens. Even though the entity (SABC) has been criticised by civil society for being a mouthpiece for the political party that is in power, which is the African National Congress (ANC), the same way the National Party was accused of playing the same role during the apartheid era, it cannot be written off. South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) should be seen as an entity that represents the voiceless and dejected masses, who have no alternative but to be informed about local and international news that directly or indirectly impacts their lives.

Editorial policies of the SABC are the core principles that maintain how the entity should operate and strive to achieve its mandate, which is why SABC's editorial policies are crucial in this study. Thus, SABC, as an independent organisation, should be free from any interference of external forces, be it the government, stakeholders, public figures, etc., or anyone who is not an internal staff member. With that said, SABC, as a public broadcasting entity, should consider their audience's comments, opinions, criticism, and recommendations positively for the public to feel welcomed and recognised by the entity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter gives a cursory look at studies on the status of SABC concerning government interference in its editorial independence. The researcher reviews the literature to gain awareness of the discoveries made by other researchers about the role and influence of government officials as they interfere with SABC editorials and the significance of this study, with the intent of adding to the blossoming of literature. Public broadcasting entities require proper management channels, codes of conduct, and policies to be implemented since they serve the public. Consequently, SABC Editorial Policies (2020) indicate that public broadcasting entities must provide compatible, functional, pertinent, and high-quality content with information and analysis. Public broadcasting goes beyond being an information and communication provider.

Otero, Diez, Lopez, and Lopez-Lopez (2021) postulate that public media broadcasters produce communicative descriptions based on their impact on society, adjusting to their demands amid the immediate need for news. Therefore, public broadcasting entities should have knowledge and understanding of the content they disseminate and the impact it will have on their audiences. There are various types of communication channels utilised by public broadcasters to share and engage with audiences on news content disseminated.

In addition, Tunez-Lopez, Miguel, Toural, and Valdiviezo-Abad, cited in Otero, Diez, Lopez and Lopez-Lopez (2021), found that the development of information and knowledge technology advancement regarding opening more effective communication channels creates new challenges for public broadcasters to operate more conveniently. Taecharungroj (2017) shows that institutions, shareholders, suppliers, and the public are now active participants on media platforms and can share and receive news and information instantly. Public broadcasting entities no longer rely on traditional ways of sharing news items; instead, they adjust to modern communication channels.

Transparency is at the core of public media broadcasters to ensure valid, credible, open and honest govern all editorial decisions in the selection of news items.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC MEDIA BROADCASTING

Sabir (2013) indicates that public media broadcasting has been a vital communication tool dating back to the early decades of the 20th century. When initiated, public media broadcasting's core value is to be accountable to society, not state or market statutes. The originality of public media broadcasting involves spectrum scarcity, formed as an institution to assist societies in being well-informed about political and social cohesions. The limitation of the range of frequencies within the electromagnetic spectrum, which were suitable for broadcasting services, was justified in countries with state intervention in spectrum management (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2022). Public broadcasting was created due to the finite radio frequency spectrum.

To understand the historical background of public media broadcasting, it is paramount to go through the founding and history of the British Broadcasting Corporation. The British Broadcasting Corporation was the first public broadcaster to be established in the mid-1920s, along with other European broadcasters (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjos, & Moe, 2022). Moreover, broadcasting was believed to serve the public interest when it was formed since, during that time, the public had lost faith in the government and media, which were poorly shaken by World War I. Decades later, other nations around the world started to set up their own public broadcasters with the same objective, bearing in mind that each country defines the role of public media broadcasting in a different way. Syvertsen et al. (2022:3) elaborate that "public media broadcasting in its initial stage was used to describe a variety of institutions, regulatory arrangements, social obligations, and types of programming." In addition, Tomaselli, Tomaselli, and Muller (1990) mention that broadcasting existed in the context of technology availability and existing interests.

As an existing industry, public broadcasting developed its methods and ways of interacting with society at large. Towards the twentieth century, the presence of public broadcasting began to decline; this was due to the widespread use of newly invented TV cables. This technology of television was introduced in 1976 in the form of broadcasting technology. Cable carries more distinct channels than transmitter towers; this was then the end of spectrum scarcity. In the mid-20th century, modes

were built to create more publicly funded media institutions. It then paved the way for the governments of other states, especially the United Kingdom (UK), France, New Zealand, etc., to consider privatising public broadcasting during the 1980s. Public broadcasting was allocated more funding, and capping license fees filled the hole of budget strain to avoid privatisation of public broadcasting media. The evolution of media paved the way for broadcasting media to grow extensively and be exposed to many people who had never preferred it (public media broadcasting) as a medium of news and information. Visnovsky and Radosinska (2017) highlight that for the past 25 years, the media has gone through radical changes and transformations that have progressively adapted to new global contemporary demands in news-making.

The eagerness of other countries, from one continent to another, in line with the capacity of resources they have, made them see it fit to have this platform as one of their media sources for news and information. The first countries that managed to have public media broadcasting were those that were regarded as developed countries, the so-called Western countries, since they had resources and financial stability. According to Henderson (1988), the United Kingdom in 1949 put aside funds that were specifically for broadcasting developments. Colonisers who colonised Africa wanted to be updated and informed with news of their countries of origin, and broadcasting media was more effective and faster at providing news and information in full detail. The colonizers were not in isolation but part of the African community. The introduction of broadcast media was exposed to various communities where black Africans resided, and it became an orchestrator approach used to condition African society to distrust their culture, traditions, and customs. Predictions by experts in media professionalism claiming that the broadcasting media would result in a decrease in readership of the press or even face extinction of the print media have appeared repeatedly (Visnovsky & Radosinska, 2017).

Furthermore, public media broadcasting became a substitute and competitor to print media worldwide because of its features. Countries like Germany and Italy in Europe rely on TV news bulletins (Speck, 2020). Broadcasting media was popularly white-owned media as it was invented in western countries, and franchises were opened across parts of the world. The platform was initially broadcast in Afrikaans and English because it was made to inform white communities, and most entities were white-owned. Corbyn (2021) points out that in the twentieth century, media, including

broadcasting media, gave rise to English and Afrikaans having strong ties with strategic sectors and also acting as an organ of propaganda for the imperialists' regime. Even though it was regarded as a public broadcasting medium, it never fulfilled that mandate of serving the public but was used as a propaganda tool by the government. Colonial administrators, who introduced broadcast media to Africa, controlled and used it mainly for political propaganda purposes (Article 19, 2003); mass media is influenced and controlled by the state authority, whereby media fulfil the wishes and commands of what the authorities want; this is equal to dictatorship (Bajracharya, 2018). Nonetheless, that is how far broadcasting media has come in its time of existence and evolution since its invention.

This section has given a broader perspective on the history of public media broadcasting, where it comes from, how it was initiated, how it was transferred to other countries, and its main mission towards being franchised in most especially countries that were variously colonised by the western countries that are the creators of this public media broadcasting.

2.3 THE RISE OF PUBLIC MEDIA BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Wasserman (2020) states that to observe the current state of South African media, it is very necessary and essential to look within the setup of historical developments that go back at least 25 years, dating back to 1994, when South Africa transitioned from the colonial system as a minority group to a democratic state. Television (TV), as one of the types of broadcasting media, started to operate in South Africa in 1976, before the broadcasting landscape emerged in the form of radio. The South African Railways set up the first radio station in Johannesburg. The pace and momentum in which broadcast media had been inevitable, with the influence of colonies by Western countries on the so-called developing continents such as Africa. Broadcasting will remain Africa's most influential media form for the foreseeable future (Mosime, 2015).

Public broadcasting media was introduced during the era of apartheid in South Africa. Like any country that was colonised, by then it was under the rule of white settlers. Mosime (2015) evidently shows that control of broadcasting media began during British colonialism before it was then turned into public media broadcasting; therefore, the features of broadcasting and development stages closely resembled those of the United Kingdom (Tomaselli & Muller, 1989). In 1927, African broadcasting media

companies were created, and their existence provided new services that South African listeners had never experienced. Public media broadcasting has two eras in South Africa, which are during the apartheid era and post-apartheid. This section will outline the rise of public broadcasting media since its introduction in South Africa. Print media was the most used media platform to provide news and information before the existence of broadcast media.

South African media then entered a new phase of media evolution whereby broadcasting media became a competitor to print media and a substitute for media platforms. Stayner (2001) shows that in the new century, changes in the media environment were witnessed, which included an intensified competition between the old media and broadcasting. Stayner (2001) further alludes to the fact that broadcasting media and print media will be increasingly in direct competition with each other. Broadcasting media was more accommodating and more accessible to master, unlike print media, which required literate people who were able to read; that is supported by Article 19 (2003), which says that the press tends to have an urban bias and is dependent on literacy. Broadcasting media is versatile; it features both radio and television, which are user-friendly for illiterate people, blind people, deaf people, etc. As a broadcasting medium, the initiation of it required funding and resources to popularise it in communities, either rural or urban. Therefore, the government took it and made it a state-broadcasting medium.

There is a difference between state media and public broadcasting media, but their roles are almost the same; what made them differ was how they were handled, regulated, and utilised. The assumption to discuss broadcasting media without mentioning state media would be blander. The South African Broadcasting Corporation was founded in 1936 through the Act of the South African Parliament after it managed to acquire the African Broadcasting Company (Mphahlele, April, & Barnardo, 2019). The birth of public broadcasting media in South Africa came after the broadcasting media utility was moved from the ownership of the government to being a fully operational public broadcasting medium. In 1976, South Africa had nationwide television broadcasting through the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). It is said that South Africa was one of the last countries on the African continent to access TV. Television, through the SABC, was used as a tool of oppression and propaganda by the apartheid regime. State broadcasting media is or was a media

entity under the control of the government in a way to disseminate news and information about the government; also, to play a role of being a propaganda agent of the government to society and promoting racial divide and upholding colonial legacy (Shole, 2022).

The upliftment of broadcast media at the expense of print media in South Africa came in a fast, rapid manner, even though it was introduced by the minority population (white people) by that time. By the apartheid era, whites were solely in power and control of the state, capital, and resources of this country. This is evident because in 1936, when the South African Broadcasting Corporation was created, it broadcast in both English and Afrikaans. This bridged a gap between white and black audiences because there was separation of radio and television channels as there was strict adherence to exclusivist language and purism (Shole, 2022). Therefore, even though there were certain white individuals who owned private broadcasting media entities, the government had more power and advantage to establish the entity. Taylor and Francis Group (2022) share that more than two-thirds of African countries have state monopolies on television broadcasting. South Africa entered a new era of post-apartheid, where democracy was witnessed by South African citizens, and that paved the way for broadcasting media to be democratic and open to the public.

Democracy requires public media broadcasting that constantly interacts with citizens who are active, informed audiences (Mano and Milton, 2020). Taylor and Francis (2022) further articulate that through this process of decolonisation, public broadcasting media became an organ of the post-colonial state and the new regime; the liberalisation process opened up new democratic spaces in many African and Asian societies. South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was transformed from state media to public broadcasting media; it is the only public media broadcasting in South Africa to date since the country witnessed the introduction of broadcasting media during the apartheid era. Mano and Milton (2020) state that the government of the Republic of South Africa is the sole shareholder of the entity. The argument for noting whether there is a difference between this public media entity during the apartheid era and post-apartheid lies in the effort of the entity to meet its sole responsibility of always serving in the best interests of the public.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation is under the control of the government, regulated by government policies and other broadcasting and communication statutes, with the view to upholding the integrity of the functioning of the broadcasting entity in line with the code of conduct and amendments of the SABC statutory framework (SABC Annual Report, 2021). SABC, as a public broadcaster, must never function as if it were a private media brand. That is why it has certain obligations to fulfil in its day-to-day operation. The introduction of the new democratic order after 1994 forced SABC to change to a public broadcaster with a new mandate and responsibilities of promoting a new public broadcasting entity that will accommodate all languages, with the newly adopted South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and new regulatory bodies of broadcasting such as the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) (Shole, 2022). Despite the reconstruction of South African media into a democratic dispensation after 1994, the South African public media broadcaster's tunes to change seem to be a lie in affirming an approach to transformation (Milton and Mano, 2020); Mokonyane (2018) also argues that media transformation is still a concern today since the ownership of media at large is still in the "white hands."

This demonstrates that the South African Broadcasting Corporation was still used as a tool for power elites, as censorship to silence the voices of the disillusioned masses, and as a state organ. The utterances of how public media broadcasting is being treated raise questions about what the purpose of public media broadcasting is and who it should be accountable to regarding news and information. The rise of public broadcasting media shows that time-to-time, public media entities are not fully fulfilling their mandate in a free and obligated manner due to certain interferences, either from the apartheid era or post-apartheid. It is evident that the current public media broadcaster SABC came a long way back and went through various transformations, which saw it becoming a public broadcaster and black society buying into broadcasting houses (Corbyn, 2021). It first started as a state media entity, then upgraded to public service broadcasting, and then was revived as a public media broadcaster. It was a long journey to get to where it is today. Scholars have raised the assumption of the importance of broadcast media in the democratic phenomenon from various theoretical currents (Corbyn, 2021).

SABC, as a broadcasting media entity, is crucial during this time of democracy, as it moulds the public's views by sharing various social, political, and economic

developments. This section outlines various points that led to the rise of public media broadcasting, from its existence up to the current stage and the transformational steps it went through to be where it is today.

2.4 THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MEDIA BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is a country found in extreme various forms of inequalities, among them class, race, etc. Thus, there is a need to transform and redress these inequalities of the apartheid era, which reorganised society at the onset of democracy in 1994. Public media in South Africa consists of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, known as the SABC. The SABC, as a public broadcaster, has the mandate to provide entertaining, educational, and informative content to all South African citizens in an honest and truthful manner (SABC Annual Report, 2021). This entity is mainly established to be the voice for the voiceless and to be there at all times to guard the interests of the people and monitor government operations and its officials. South Africa is popularly a multimedia nation; in this regard, SABC is not the only media house that operates.

Therefore, it has to gain the trust of the public at large since it is a public broadcaster obliged to be responsible for the content it disseminates to the people. The value and integrity the public media hold is an assurance to the public that what it disseminates to the people does not have any influence from any outsider (SowetanLive, 2018). In some other ways, SABC assists the government in disseminating information that is of paramount importance to the public. Here, what is being discussed is the South African Broadcasting Corporation, which is entirely free from any violation of its operation process by external forces.

The discussion revolves around a purely dignified entity that follows procedures and mandates to serve in its best honesty and transparency. Even though the situation has much improved and the South African media is now freer to act as a robust watchdog, the relationship between the entity and the government has shown signs of strain (Wasserman, 2020). With detailed evidence showing how the broadcasting media entity SABC was used in a wrongful manner by the apartheid government, even the post-apartheid government, there needs to be a thorough and intensive analysis to determine whether its current operation method is truly fulfilling its core mandate as a public broadcaster. This public broadcasting media entity is under the control of the

government, regulated by government policies and other broadcasting and communication statutes, with the view of upholding the integrity of the functioning of the broadcasting entity in line with the code of conduct and amendments of the SABC statutory framework (SABC Annual Report, 2021). SABC, as a public broadcasting media corporation, is governed by a board of directors called the SABC Board, appointed by His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Africa with the assistance of the National Assembly. This board consists of twelve (12) non-executive directors and three (3) executive directors who oversee the work of the SABC executives, which is led by the CEO, COO, CFO, and a certain number of board committees (Corporate Plan, 2020–2023). As much as SABC is a public entity, its major shareholder is the government in terms of funding, and that should not deter the entity from running independently. Still, it should always be monitored by appointed government officials.

This ensures that SABC fulfils its role as a public media enterprise and acts professionally whenever it has to account to the public. The duties and public mandate of the SABC are outlined in the Broadcasting Act of 2002, which stipulates that the entity has to prioritise public interest, offer news and information that is plural in terms of views, educate, entertain, and open for opinions, and criticism. As a public broadcaster, the SABC is mandated to provide information and allow society to exercise their rights and be part of a national building of equality, editorial independence, transparency and upholding the ethical code in operating the entity (SABC Editorial Policies, 2020). South Africa is a complex nation with a variety of cultures, values, norms, customs, beliefs, languages, and traditions; therefore, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has to look into those aspects at all times when it conducts and disseminates news materials. As a public broadcaster, SABC aims at all times to do good on the side of the public audience as it represents that group and has a mandate to fulfil.

A nation without means of information and communication is as good as dead because whatever is occurring in their surroundings and abroad, they have no knowledge about it and might be affecting them directly or indirectly. The most crucial role of media in a democracy is informing the public about what is happening in politics and society (Fawzi & Mothes, 2020). The impact of public broadcasting media in society is witnessed when there is essential news people should be aware of in a short period.

Media is one of the most potent organs that can shape one's opinion on an issue. When you hear about it in the news, you are more likely to perceive it as most important (Zulu, 2021). Print media is known to be too reluctant and slow in terms of their news materials reaching their audiences; for example, if a story is written and printed today in a newspaper, it might reach its audiences the next coming day. Tunez-Lopez, Vaz-Alvarez, and Fieras-Ceide (2020) show that television news channels under public media broadcasting have been the most widely used source of information worldwide during COVID-19. Unlike broadcast media, which is urgent and fast in disseminating news materials, it gives exclusive coverage of the latest updated news every hour and even provides live events to audiences. Therefore, with the urgency broadcasting media provides, it then shows it's the kind of media which is the best suitable alternative to utilise in this 21st century era.

Corporate Plan (2020-2023) distinguishes that the SABC, as a national public media broadcaster, exists to bring all South African citizens together in a broader understanding of their true identity within the country and the world. SABC, as a public broadcaster, has an obligation to be urgent to society, meaning whatever it might be reporting about must be of paramount importance to society. The notion that public media broadcasters are able to provide transparent and impartial news and information is growing in line with future events (Fourie, 2003). There is no entity that can ever be run with integrity, honesty, and perseverance without the implementation of policies, a constitution and a code of conduct, together with the missions and visions of the organisation.

The same applies to SABC as an entity. SABC, as a public broadcaster, has a mandate firmly rooted in a pull of policies, regulations, codes of conduct, statuses, and license conditions (Annual Report, 2022). For any entity to operate as a well-oiled machine, it must implement and amend certain measures to make sure the procedures of the entity are followed at all times. SABC, as a public entity that is responsible for disseminating news materials to the public, must be responsible for their actions whenever they are informing society. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa is the regulatory body of the broadcasting industry, which SABC falls under. This regulatory body overlooks whether the broadcasting entities do not violate their rights or report material news in an unacceptable manner and all protocols are adhered to.

This means it must avail its services throughout the republic and collect news and information around the world in any manner which may be fit to establish news capacity (Corporate plan 2020-2023). SABC strives to be a leading entity with a credible voice for the voiceless and be the face of the nation of South Africa at all times. Through its programmes, SABC plays a role in reflecting South Africa's behaviour, norms, ideas, opinions, creativity and talent. SABC offer a pull of plural views and various news and information analysis from South Africa's point of view; also, at the same time, advancing the national and public interest (Corporate Plan, 2020-2023). SABC is the only broadcasting entity in public space to provide content through radio to audiences in their mother tongue. This means that SABC is playing a crucial role in national development and social cohesion, which is stipulated in Outcome 14 in the National Development Plan.

2.5 IMPACT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATION NEWS IN SOCIETY

One can imagine a world without any communication stream. In the era of life we are living in, information and communication are the most crucial components of our lives. Without accurate information on events that occur around the public, it becomes difficult for society to make rightful decisions about their surroundings, worldview, or individually (Molokomme, 2021). In support, Hlongwane (2017) explains that the main aim of SABC is to inform, educate, and entertain. The material conditions and arrangements of the past can never be compared with the present's; a lot has changed.

In the past, media was not as effective and exposed to people as it is in the current era and was not even utilised by a large number of people. As a result, the 1st Industrial Revolution, there was not much equipment and knowledge about technology from the public. The human race has experienced dramatic and drastic technological change and innovation; the 1st industrial revolution was driven by mechanization; the 2nd industrial revolution was the utilisation of electric energy; the 3rd industrial revolution relied on automation of electronics; and the 4th industrial revolution revolved around smart technologies, which then had an impact on professional practice (Dino and Irvin, 2019). During that time, the world experienced so many World Wars and dysfunctionalities that, if media at that time was most popular and used as it is now, much could have been avoided. Media, as it is, is a powerful component that controls

the world and impacts a lot of people who live on this earth, either positively or negatively, each day. According to Molokomme (2021), SABC develops knowledge and also allows society to know about things happening around them. The same applies to the citizens of South Africa who rely heavily on the South African Broadcasting Corporation, as it is regarded as a public broadcasting entity that serves the interests of the public. Based on Molokomme (2021), the SABC has to serve South African citizens at large, which makes it different from other broadcasting entities. As shown by the University of South Africa (2022), news is not just news; it's about who owns the news, who creates the news, who reads the news, and also who is in the news and who news is meant for.

It has been witnessed a couple of times how SABC news material has impacted the lives of ordinary South Africans. The impact of public broadcasting media in South Africa comes a long way from the apartheid era, democratic dispensation, and post-colonial era. Unfortunately, during apartheid, the entity was not independently operated as it was a government tool for disseminating propaganda in favour of or support of the white ruling state to oppress black people. Furthermore, Barnett (2000:94) is of the view that "the apartheid regime exercised considerable authority over the mass media through a combination of state control and extensive censorship apparatuses." This was against the principles of how public broadcasting should be operated; therefore, most people were impacted by black society in a negative way through the news materials supplied by the entity at that time. In the post-apartheid era, public broadcasting media had the groundwork to serve society independently since it had freedom as South Africa entered into a new system of democracy. Arndt (2018) states that for public broadcasters to act in the public interest, the media in a new democracy are confronted with various tasks that exceed the role of media. As a public broadcaster, SABC should be a pioneer in alleviating people's lives through its initiatives and the content it displays on its platforms.

Today, many people who were/are audiences of SABC, even those who are not in their lives, have been impacted directly or indirectly positively or negatively. Any public broadcasting media should have an impact on the lives of people. If not, then it does not serve its purpose and function as a public broadcasting media. SABC, known as a reliable source of information with the integrity of being truthful, honest, and transparent, they are fully aware that any information that it disseminates must have

been verified and declared to be suitable to be known by society. Suppose the news content information supplied by the entity triggers society or individuals to behave or act in a certain way. In that case, that is unacceptable and will ultimately jeopardise the entity. In South Africa, public broadcasting media should opt for law and order in all the news they disseminate to society, meaning that it has a powerful influence on maintaining order and calm situations during difficult times. Then, society does not become reactionaries in matters of social importance. People's lives have changed because of the impact of SABC as a public broadcaster. Information that many people were unaware of got from the entity, and it opened many opportunities for them and brightened their futures. Without the presence of public broadcasting media, many people were left miserable and stuck in dire situations such as poverty and basic human needs because those who would be willing to assist are not situated or residing in the same geographical location as those people or the government is not aware. As a public broadcaster, help the public to make informed choices about their lives in every sphere and be up to date about news and information about things happening in their surroundings and the entire world (Molokomme, 2021).

Therefore, the establishment of public broadcasting media entities such as SABC has been able to cover such stories and expose them on broadcasting media so that relevant people who can assist do so and even the government can play its role and take responsibility for such conditions its citizens go through. As stated in the SABC Annual Report (2022), the vision of SABC is to become the leading, credible voice and face of the nation and the continent. That is how much a public broadcasting entity can be impactful on the people it serves.

2.6 SABC EDITORIAL POLICIES, ACTS AND CODE OF CONDUCTS

South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is an international public media house professionally administered by professionals of high calibre under a well-structured code of conduct and SABC policies. Policies and Codes of conduct play a significant role in any institution, which is solely to serve the people honestly and dignifiedly. Therefore, SABC's mandate as a public broadcaster is enshrined in various statutes, regulations, policies, code of conduct and licence conditions (SABC Annual Report, 2022). The corporate world requires sustainable companies with morals and discipline in their day-to-day activities; the same applies to the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The code of conduct of the SABC is utilised to guide the entity to

fulfil its public service obligation (Molokomme, 2021). In addition, the policies are intended to assist staff in making rightful decisions on editorial and content issues to ensure all ethical and editorial standards are maintained (SABC Revised Editorial Policies, 2016).

These morals and discipline norms are the product of policies and codes of conduct that maintain the core of the SABC. Policies are principles of behaviour or conduct that are necessary or desirable and are formally expressed by either an authority body, an institution, or the government. SABC Revised Editorial Policies (2016) extrapolate that the SABC editorial policy document has a compilation of policies that the entity (SABC) must put in place as a guide in disseminating its public broadcasting mandate. Therefore, the role of policies at SABC is to be certain that the entity is under the principle of conducting its broadcasting activities in a formally desirable manner. SABC policies ensure everything is conducted within the law and proper procedures are followed. SABC has a range of policies within its context that are broad; each department has its policy.

The Broadcasting Act is the SABC's founding statute. According to the broadcasting acts of SABC, the public should be given a chance to own and occupy strategic positions in the media industry. The policies of the SABC apply to all the media platform services offered by the entity, be they radio, television, online, or social media.

2.6.1 REGULATORY BODIES OF BROADCASTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The role of regulatory bodies such as ICASA and Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) is to ensure the validity of broadcasting services, including SABC, in South Africa as required by the regulatory act. ICASA engages with broadcasting industries and stakeholders regularly to find solutions. Mkaize and Ndlovu (2007) show that engagements take place in the form of public hearing meetings. The existence of regulatory bodies is to assist SABC in improving its programs that are viewed by the public through properly amended license conditions. ICASA further ensures that the SABC fulfils its educational role and obligations without any external influence. The priority of these regulatory bodies is to protect and safeguard SABC. Smith (2002) posits that the IBA as a regulatory body was introduced in 1994 by the Broadcasting Act. This Independent Broadcasting Authority body was initiated to investigate broadcasting policies in the public interest and also to transform the national

broadcaster (SABC) from being a government mouthpiece to a public broadcaster. Therefore, ICASA was born after IBA and SATRA (South African Telecommunications Regulation Authority) merged together to become one thing in 2000. ICASA performs its mandate based on four statutes: the ICASA Act of 2000, the Independent Broadcasting Act of 1993, the Broadcasting Act of 1999, and the Telecommunications Authority Act No. 103 of 1996 (Smith, 2002).

2.7 THE IMPACT OF EDITORIAL DIVISION AT SABC NEWS

Any media house, be public or private, must consist of the editorial section which runs all the affairs related to news. The editorial is the heartbeat of journalism, a section that is the final decision maker of which news is chosen for publication. Editorial boards, which consist of several staff members from publishers, executives and editors, gather to debate and discuss issues in daily meetings until a consensus is reached on an agenda that will be selected to represent the media institution, but the editor is the final decision maker (Firmstone, 2019). A media entity without an editorial department is like a headless chicken because it would be impossible for news to be disseminated without the inclusion of an editorial. Therefore, SABC, as a public broadcaster, has an editorial section that is used to alleviate the entity from being concerned about the selection of gathered news by the SABC journalists, supported by Otieno, Mareri, and Khaemba (2023) showing that editors who are gatekeepers in the newsrooms decide what news content gets to be published and what does not see the light of the day. Firmstone (2019) affirms that the editorial section sets the tone for the rest of the media entity. Concluding which news should be chosen out of thousands is a milestone and tantamount task, it requires professionals/ staff with relevant qualifications who have much knowledge about journalism.

According to Otieno (2023), editors provide leadership skills and supervision throughout the entire publication process in the newsroom. Editors are under the umbrella of editorial, in charge of giving opinions and editorial knowledge on a topic or current event. An editor is a person who is in a media institution and edits stories that have been gathered by journalists and decides which ones are suitable to be disseminated to the public. Editors are regarded as senior media experts who are conversant with publication ethics, rules, and ethos (Otieno, 2023). “An editor is basically a leader of the team who is supervising the whole work to make it coherent and presentable” (Gilani, 2017). SABC is an international public media institution that

must have the best editorial team, which will at all times work harder to put the reputation of the organization in good condition. Editorial consists of various positions within it; these positions vary with levels and experience according to how appointed staff members perform or fulfill their duties; the same applies to SABC. This shows that editorials can make or break a media organisation depending on how and what type of news is selected to be published. Therefore, the editorial section should be familiar with their audiences; for SABC, it would be the public as its audience. This is to make sure that the news that is selected by the editorial department reflects the reality of its audiences. The SABC ensures that the principles of honesty, openness, and transparency dominate all editorial decisions (SABC Editorial Policies, 2020).

The role of editorial at SABC is to choose and select news content that is suitable and crucial to the public and that is verified, honest, truthful, and transparent, independently and without any interference by external forces. According to Wasserman (2020), the SABC, with its influential role in shaping South Africa, attracts threats to its editorial independence and signs of bias towards certain areas. It states clearly in the SABC Editorial Policies (2020) that SABC, when discharging their editorial responsibilities, SABC management and workers are accountable to the South African citizens and the SABC board. SABC is an influential public broadcasting media; any news content they release to the public always has an impact on the lives of people, so it ought to always be responsible and accountable for its actions. That is why Roper, Newman, and Schulz (2019) reiterate that the situation regarding editorial standards has improved as the SABC embarks on appointing a new board to fix the damage done to the public broadcaster.

Society reflects events and social impacts through information received; it is that information that will portray how society reacts and acts. Tampered information can lead to dire events. Wasserman (2020) alludes to the fact that despite interventions to fix the editorial issues of SABC, political interference persisted and manifested in the editorial section of SABC even during the recent era. There seems to be much involvement of outside influence when it comes to editorial, which raises concerns regarding editorial independence. The reality of the matter is that SABC, as a public media entity, even though it is stated to operate independently, has several stakeholders involved, such as shareholders, funders, public figures, and government officials in positions of power. It is those people mentioned that can trigger the editorial

independence of SABC because most who inject financial support into the entity (SABC) want something in return, and those who are in positions of power in government abuse it to interfere with the day-to-day running of the editorial section of SABC. According to Drunen and Fechner (2022), the state must play a role in preventing anyone who wants to obtain dominance or control status, which would allow the restriction of editorial freedom. Below, the study will discuss editorial independence at SABC and its importance.

2.7.1 Significance of editorial independence at SABC news

As stipulated by Hamada, Hughes, Hamantasch, Hollings, Lauerer, Arroraye, Rupar, and Splendore (2019), editorial independence is the ability to determine how news content is produced, published, and disseminated to the public free from any external influencers. While the role of editorial independence is to assure that there is accountability at SABC at all times, It also bans the involvement of outside influences (owners, advertisers) in the editorial choices of SABC (Arena, Bania, Brogi, Cole, Fontaine, Hans, & Kamina, 2016). Infringement of editorial independence policies is a very serious violation that undermines the rights of the people to get news and information that is free from any wrongful practice. Media laws are the ones that can be a remedy in solving editorial independence by implementing rules that will limit those with authority in government from interfering with editorial decision-making for mostly political purposes. Drunen and Fechner (2019) further show that media regulations must avoid the danger of state interference altogether by relying on the media to further safeguard its own editorial independence.

Editorial independence is mostly undermined by politicians, as shown in most study findings, which raises serious concern for the concept. There are certain processes that alternate how journalists and editors exercise their duties in editorial decision-making. Outlined by Dierickx (2021), Klinger, and Svensson (2018), these processes involve translating inputs—in terms of the structured source data, audience characteristics, and consumption of the news—into outputs: news articles, content recommendations, and metrics. This is the process that completes the remedy to sustaining editorial decision-making, which assists in upholding the editorial independence of SABC and any other media institutions. According to Drunen (2021), editorial independence is the precondition for the existence of different voices brought together in public debate. SABC, as a public broadcaster, requires distancing itself

from external actors in order to fulfil its role in democratic dispensation as a public watchdog or source of information and news to society in order to form their political views, opinions, and comments and to protect the audiences from manipulation by external forces.

If it is found that SABC has news content influenced by external forces and interference with editorial independence, it is a matter that should be taken seriously and investigated urgently. The main reason for the editorial independence of such public media entities as SABC to attract external apparatus is because they have a large number of audiences, and the entity can be utilised to manipulate and change the minds of the audiences. The next section will explore the impact and effects of editorial interference and the influence of external forces on SABC news.

2.8 IMPACT/EFFECTS OF INTERFERENCE IN THE EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE SABC NEWS

Mpofu (1996) shows that public broadcasting institutions have attracted interference because broadcasting channels such as television are perceived as agenda setters for political debate and as having an influence on the public profile of political parties and commercial interests. SABC, as a public broadcaster, is a dignified statue with high credibility, which makes it one of the most important organs in the existence of South Africa. Millions and millions of people's lives depend on the functioning of this entity (SABC); therefore, whatever will tamper with the normal operation of the SABC editorial will not only cost the institution but even ordinary citizens. As explained by Hanretty (2011), interference refers to threats and involvement that result in causing the media profession to act in an inappropriate manner. Public media's intention to be independent of the government is to decentralise news and information that give facts to the people about government activities and officials without any external interference. It is because of those facts that people from the outside jurisdiction of the SABC interfere with the operation of the entity to manipulate news and information in their favour. The interference of the SABC leads to misinformation campaigns to divert the attention of society away from corruption (Wasserman, 2020). Editorial interference at the SABC News has negative effects on audiences who rely on the entity for news and information. The negative effects provide significant information to show how long the issue of editorial interference existed.

According to Urbanikova (2021), the editorial interference bridge, which is meant to serve the demands of society, further affects workers who refuse to take part in the editorial interference process, putting their jobs and careers on the line. The impact of editorial interference creates a vacuum for journalists not to operate freely in being transparent with news affairs that viewers look up to, and it lessens the credibility and integrity of the SABC in the public domain as a source of information. Society reflects events and social impacts through information and news distributed by the SABC news; it is that information that will portray how society reacts and acts in the current and future stages. According to the SABC (2018), in line with the editorial principles of the corporation, there were several incidents reported regarding editorial interference, and investigations were conducted into a breach of editorial code pertaining to the coverage of how those stories were conducted. These allegations have raised serious concerns regarding the credibility and transparency of news content and information in the SABC news. As supported by Corby (2019), there is an increasing involvement of the government, politicians, and other third parties in the editorial interference of media organisations in order to twist stories to support their agendas.

Therefore, it is a clear indication that where there is smoke, there is fire. Having said that, this section will observe the alleged reported incidences of editorial interference at the SABC news. The Venda Building Society (VBS) Mutual Bank story is one of the stories that were reported, which is confirmed by SABC (2018). The VBS Mutual Bank story once became a trending story in 2018. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reported that they have taken action to investigate possible breaches in their editorial code. This comes after the manner in which the story was covered and handled by its newsroom in Polokwane. The decision is in line with efforts to ensure that the SABC News editorial principles of independence and impartiality are upheld at all times. The 14 people accused of looting VBS Mutual Bank are politicians, bank executives, municipal managers, and officials (Sadike, 2021). This shows that the accused used their positions of power to influence how stories implicating them in the VBS saga should be reported in their favour by compromising and violating the principles of editorial independence of SABC. As stated by the SABC spokesperson, Neo Momudu, in the SABC Media Statement (2018), should the investigations in Polokwane reveal evidence that the SABC News editorial principles of independence and impartiality have been compromised, such violations will be dealt

with decisively. Having said that, Momudu (2018) further declares that any selective coverage, perceived or real, poses a real danger to the editorial character of the SABC News. Therefore, any sort of interference, whether external or internal, that poses a threat to the editorial decisions of the SABC will not be tolerated. Neo Momudu (2018) concludes by making remarks that the SABC remains committed to providing South African public news content that is accurate and balanced and is responsible in any way that is transparent and constrained.

Another incident involves former communications minister Faith Muthambi. Her name comes up with other senior members of the SABC with editorial interference in several cases in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and several other incidences elsewhere. The report released by veteran journalist Joe Thloloe reveals evidence from 2012 up to 2017. The SABC executives took instructions from people with no authority in the newsroom (Enca, 2019). Thloloe and Tawana's (2019) findings are as follows:

- The commission found out that the SABC suffered from the unstable use of authority and power to petrify staff and derive the corporation from its mandate and its editorial policies.
- The inquiry found that the SABC is destroyed by torture, vexation, and terror; by irritation, eagerness, and apathy; and by carelessness, disinterest, and defencelessness.
- The commission found no evidence linking decisions at ANC headquarters, Luthuli House, and decisions in the newsroom, but the spectre of the ANC hovered over the newsroom.
- The evidence shows that from 2012–2017, SABC executives took instructions from people who did not have proximity to or authority over the newsroom, for example, members of the SABC board (Ellen Tshabala) and the Minister for Communication (Faith Muthambi). The executives thus failed to execute their duties regarding the editorial policies. The commission of inquiry further discovered that Nothando Maseko, Sebolelo Dithlakanye, and Nyana Molete were pivotal in executing instructions from Hlaudi Motsoeneng, Jimi Matthews, and Simon Tebele. They succumbed because of threats of dismissal from their immediate superiors. The evidence shows that from 2012–2017, SABC executives took instructions from people who did not have proximity to or authority over the newsroom, for example, members of the SABC board (Ellen

Tshabala) and the Minister for Communication (Faith Muthambi). The executives thus failed to execute their duties regarding the editorial policies. The commission of inquiry further discovered that Nothando Maseko, Sebolelo Dithlakanye, and Nyana Molete were pivotal in executing instructions from Hlaudi Motsoeneng, Jimi Matthews, and Simon Tebele. They succumbed because of threats of dismissal from their immediate superiors.

Another incident involves the SABC News editor-in-chief, Phathiswa Magopeni, who accused the SABC board chairperson, Bongumusa Makhathini, and Group CEO Madoda Mxakwe of interfering with the editorial policy. These concerns include harassment and intimidation of the SABC journalists by senior ANC members during the elections (McCain, 2022). As she describes the situation of the SABC, Magopeni says the editorial integrity of the SABC suffered a knock when a breakdown of governance systems was allowed over a long period of time, leading to the newsroom operating on autopilot (Corruption Watch, 2019). At the Zondo commission, she said she could not discount the involvement of political interference in the operations of the newsroom because journalists would receive instructions from outside sources. She (Phathiswa Magopeni) gave an example of a politically oriented show that was broadcast ahead of the elections without her knowledge. She further outlined the cost of external interference at SABC, stating that the entity was even failing to channel individuals to beats based on their skill sets or monitor their performance. Instead, the staff succumbed to pressure from external people who have no idea how journalism operates.

Another incident involves senior political anchor Vuyo Mvoko; this comes after the anchor refused to retract his public criticism of the lack of editorial independence at the SABC. Mvoko was one of the eight people who lost their jobs for objecting to the ban on broadcasting footage of violent protests where public infrastructure was burned (Legal Brief, 2023). Mvoko, in "MY HEEL at SABC," an article published by The Star newspaper, describes his personal experience of editorial interference and substantiates the importance of free debate in editorial meetings. He was discussing chief operating officer Hlaudi Motsoeneng and former heads of news Jimm Matthews Snuki Zikalala. Meanwhile, former Communications Minister Faith Muthambi, responding to the utterances of Vuyo Mvoko, dismissed claims of censorship at the SABC.

2.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

The chapter discussed significant concepts that apply in the study, such as the historical overview of public media broadcasting, the rise of public media broadcasting in South Africa, and the role of public media broadcasting in South Africa. This is very important because it provides a background foundation for understanding the study. Furthermore, the impact of the South African Broadcasting Corporation was discussed in order to see how influential the SABC is. SABC policies, codes of conduct, and acts, together with regulatory bodies in South African broadcasting, were also discussed to see how the entity should conduct itself, operate, and be guarded. The researcher also covered the role and importance of editorial independence at SABC News to understand why editorial is regarded as the heartbeat of journalism and news. Moreover, the effects of interference with editorial independence at SABC News were also explored. The researcher also mentioned incidences or allegations of editorial interference at SABC News, which made the study suitable. The researcher will discuss the methodology employed in the study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methodology that has been adopted in this study. Putting aside assisting the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study, the selected methodology helped the researcher to appraise the problem mentioned in detail in Chapter 1. Research methodologies imply the setting, advanced strategy, technique, boundary, collection of data, and data analysis instruments in the study. This chapter's point is to dwell on the research design, methods utilised to sample the participants, collect data, and analysis. Furthermore, it has discussed the ethical considerations that were taken into consideration during the data collection process. This study applied qualitative research methodology.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study has adopted an exploratory design within qualitative research methodology to investigate the interference of the government's officials in the editorial independence of SABC news. The qualitative research method is about seeking to understand the topic or research problem by the researcher by examining people's experiences in full detail by using certain research methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, content analysis, and the past history of life (Hennink, Hutter, Bailey, 2020). It is a type of method in which a variety of people, regarding their past events and experiences, play a huge role in providing information in detail when data is collected. The qualitative research method apprehends and traverses the expression of individuals or batches of people manifested in human issues and communal incidents.

Research design is the procedure for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Research design is a certain strategy that the researcher selects and uses to investigate. Moreover, Bloumfield and Fisher (2019) articulate that research design indicates the collection of data analysis plans and data collection. The reason why research design is preferred is that it portrays a commitment to the primacy given to a wide range of the procedures of the research. The researcher used an exploratory design to accumulate in-depth data

concerning the participants' viewpoints and insights regarding the system, initiatives, and outcomes of the interference of government in the editorial independence of the SABC news. According to Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole (2016), the determination of exploratory research design is to discover the width and extent of a certain topic and to bring about inceptive questions or theories as a conductor in research. It has assisted the researcher in better understanding the existing problems, which do not have conclusive results, through interviewing the participants and understanding their behaviours and perceptions. Exploratory research design searches out problems that are not clearly understood or explained. This concentrates on the investigation of zones where no preceding information subsisted and the disclosure of the style, conduct, and subject matters that appeared from the data that were given attention.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic procedure(s) and methods, approaches, styles, etc. that are utilized to point out, pick out, process, and examine information about a chosen topic. This study has employed qualitative methodology in data collection and analysis. Research methodology does not provide solutions as easily as thought. Methodology provides a system of theoretical analysis of detailed strategies undertaken in line with a certain knowledge of a field of study (Patel, 2019). Furthermore, research methodology encompasses concepts, including paradigms and theoretical models, in both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Patel, 2019).

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Method

This research study used a qualitative research approach. This qualitative research approach is used for this study as it addresses subject matters that are independent in nature. Aspers and Corte (2019) define the qualitative research method as a procedure of repetition of steps in which better knowledge for the scientific collective is achieved by making new important occurrences resulting from getting nearer to the event studied. Research methodology is mainly about a particular discipline of analysing and an in-depth understanding of how research is conducted and how to systematically solve a study problem through the logic of following certain steps. Methodology is an area that assists in understanding a complete process rather than only the products. According to Patel (2019), research methodology aims to describe and analyse strategies and test their resources to see how far they can go. This means clearing out the boundaries, restrictions, and materials utilised to achieve the

objectives of the research. Under this methodology, assumptions and consequences need to be clarified, which describe their capacity and area of advancement knowledge.

Qualitative methodology grants the researcher the ability to relate while at the same time laying out significant facts and the views of the participants regarding the practiced event or process. The qualitative method is scientific research that strives to provide solutions by laying out properly designed methods. This type of research method helps the researcher to be able to generate results and collect data that are very hard to figure out regarding the investigated study, as well as yield findings that are further away from the limitations of the study. The qualitative method affirms understanding of procedures and knowledge by including various in-depth approaches to the study topic (Myers, 2019). Moreover, the qualitative research method is focused on the qualitative process comprising standards, which distinguish between probing the how and why of decision-making, being measureless, illustrative, applying logic, and using words.

According to Cropley (2022), the qualitative research method deals with how human beings make meaning out of their cemented reality life experience through their thinking and words by examining these perceptions in the manner of behavioural knowledge such as socio-political, education, health, decision-making, and innovations. The qualitative method radically positions itself in the ideology that reality is instinctive, and each and every human establishes and experiences events individually and holds their personal view of how the world functions on the basis of their interactions with the world. The qualitative method is supple and explicit in nature, and it raises issues for the researcher that are largely attached to thoroughness and depend heavily on a particular criterion of rationality, such as reasoning (Aspers and Corte, 2019).

The qualitative research method deals with observing individuals in a real-life setting and archiving what occurs or actively brings about detailed definitions and information about real-life events from people by means of interviews, focus groups, or observations, either verbally or that illustrate spoken utterances referred to as narratives. As stated by Wisdom and Cresswell (2013), the qualitative research method provides a voice to a study participant and cements that phenomenal findings

are grounded in participants' experiences. Cropley (2022) shows that the duty of qualitative research is to retrieve how human beings establish order in the flow of experience to make sense of events and occurrences in their lives. In that notion, the phenomenon study found that qualitative research approach design is the best way to understand factors contributing to the interference of government at the SABC news.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

This part focuses on the quality of selecting the population and the sampling technique. The researcher utilised focus groups and textual analysis to fulfil the study objectives. Therefore, there is a requirement for population and sampling in the study.

3.4.1 Population

The population of this study includes SABC audiences. These are people who mostly rely on SABC for news and information. This population is exposed to the public broadcaster on a daily basis. Furthermore, news articles that reported on the alleged editorial interference at SABC formed part of the population. These news articles have been analysed to extract evidence and facts about the study. News articles were significant in this study since they depicted in-depth information regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The use of public broadcasting media by many people makes the SABC audiences relevant to the study. The SABC is estimated to have +-30 million audiences in both the news and current affairs and digital platforms such as YouTube channels (SABC Annual Report, 2020). Therefore, it had much knowledge in giving substantial facts. Shukla (2020) spouts that population is a set of groups of various units in which the findings of the research are to be implemented and include different characteristics of the underlying study in a general view.

3.4.2 Sampling

The purposive sampling technique under the non-probability sampling method was deployed to select participants who have taken part in this study. The purposive sampling technique directs the researcher to select participants who possess features that are significant for the examined study. This technique is used when a researcher is directly focusing on the participants, who provide a view or introspection about the problems that are incomplete. The main criteria in selecting the participants were their reliance on SABC for news and information. The targeted population consists of eighteen (18) participants divided into three (3) groups, each with six participants who

are part of the SABC audience. The researcher selected participants who are familiar and active audiences of the SABC news who rely on the entity platforms to access daily news and information, and the participants from all three groups were those who have knowledge and experience regarding the selected topic.

The researcher has also analysed related news articles that specifically reported on the alleged editorial interference of the SABC news and were published in the period of 2018–2022. These participants were identified through the use of SABC social media platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter). The researcher visited social media platforms and followed engagements taking place around several news reports; thereafter, he purposefully selected the followers who were engaging with news reports posted by the public broadcaster. Furthermore, the researcher collected specific online articles from reputable web sources, including News24, IOL, the Sunday Times, and other related sources. According to Shukla (2020), non-probability sampling has certain units that may be selected over others as a sample from a population.

Purposive sampling is explained as a type of method by which individuals are selected for a certain mandate (Hoban, 2019). Purposive sampling techniques deal with participants who are only there to assist with a particular study, meaning that going further than the agreed terms of participation will be in breach of the conditions in relation to the study. According to Schreier (2018), the purposive sampling technique is used to choose participants for the study when the researcher has a particular awareness and understanding of the participants. This technique requires the researcher to know what type of participants are required in terms of their experience, knowledge, awareness, and views regarding the study.

A sample is defined as a part or piece of something (a population) that is selected, put into representation, and observed to come up with or detail information and evidence that cover the quality of the whole population and serve to solve research problems (Hulland, Baumgartner, and Smith, 2018). In this study, the sample refers to the eighteen (18) participants selected through various social media platforms of the SABC, together with news articles that specifically reported on the alleged editorial interference.

The population constitutes the best engrossment of the study, and the researcher chose it based on the issues encountered and deliberated to be solved to attain the objectives of the study. In the best interest of the study, participants converged on unquestionable standards, like being an SABC audience member, a follower of SABC social media platforms, and relying on the broadcasting entity for news and information on a daily basis. Consequently, the researcher selected participants on different social media platforms of the SABC and also selected news articles that particularly reported on the alleged government officials' interferences with the editorial independence of the SABC news from the 2018–2022-year period.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is a procedure for bringing together information about the study and, in the meantime, creating an arrangement of operations that allow the researcher to answer questions and reassess the results (McIntoch and Morse, 2015). Moreover, to achieve this, data is required for this study.

This study has employed textual analysis and focus groups, both within the qualitative research methodology, to collect data. Textual analysis has been adopted to collect data from news reports and articles that reported on allegations of government officials' interference with editorial interference at SABC. Furthermore, focus group discussions have been used to collect data from the SABC audience. This audience was sharing their perceptions of the allegations of editorial interference at SABC and its impact on the public.

3.5.1 Textual analysis

The researcher selected textual analysis because it provides detailed information regarding life experience and how human beings construct ideas of studied phenomena. Textual analysis has assisted the researcher a lot in this study. The researcher was able to collect crucial evidence or findings that the participants went through regarding the studied phenomenon. The data was collected subjectively based on the content of the text data through a classified systematic process of collecting themes, coding, and patterns. This was done to assist the researcher in avoiding any tampering with data that was not factual in the findings. News items reported on the alleged editorial interference at SABC were collected and analysed. These news items were collected from various articles related to the study. According

to Voxco (2021), textual analysis is a research method to interpret, understand, and describe texts. This includes exploring patterns, languages, and pictures in the text. This data collection method helps to understand and provide full details of how human beings communicate their ideological phenomena and life experiences through texts. Examples of these texts include newspapers, articles, journals, and recorded video interviews that elaborate on how certain matters are influenced by other people (Voxco, 2021).

Furthermore, MonkeyLearn (2023) states that textual analysis is made to understand the normality and ideological views that reign in a text and how they are interconnected with the studied phenomenon. In this context, texts in the news articles that reported on the alleged interference of government officials with the editorial independence of the SABC news will be analysed and aligned with the research study. The news article texts that will be analysed consist of characteristics that are described and interpreted carefully and cautiously to answer specific questions in relation to the study.

3.5.1.1 Advantages of textual analysis

Textual analysis allows the researcher to explore the research study. In addition, textual analysis enables the researcher to retrieve crucial information from unstructured text and analyse it. According to Aransiola (2023), the advantages of textual analysis are as follows:

- ❖ Textual analysis enables the researcher to compare and analyse vast amounts of data.
- ❖ It can be utilised to spot trends, take decisions, and predict outcomes on the researcher's findings.
- ❖ The researcher is able to make decisions regarding the data.
- ❖ Textual analysis is based on algorithms than humans, which makes it not to require much effort on the side of the researcher.
- ❖ It is easier scale and can be utilised on large amounts of data without needing expensive hardware or extensive training.
- ❖ The researcher is able to quickly answer questions regarding the researcher's data.

Even though textual analysis fit perfectly for the study, it also has its limitations in research. The disadvantages are stipulated by Aransiola (2023) and are as follows:

- ❖ It makes it difficult to analyse text that are not written in English or other different languages not in the researcher's jurisdiction.
- ❖ It is time consuming to retrieve data as it is often easier and accurate to count words.

The researcher has taken into consideration the above advantages of textual analysis when collecting data. The researcher has used algorithms and specific terms to identified relevant data. It was easy to scan through various news articles before one can thoroughly read the whole texts.

The researcher visited online news web sources such as *Independent Online* (IOL), *News24*, *the Sunday Times*, government gazettes, *eNews Channel Africa* (eNCA), *The Times*, etc. to retrieve news articles that have reported on government officials' interference with the editorial independence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) news between the years 2018 and 2022. Textual analysis was utilised to observe how the news articles reported regarding editorial interference at the SABC. In this regard, it is through textual analysis that the researcher has the ability to assemble data, which is published information in relation to SABC editorial interference, which is having an impact on the entity and the audiences.

3.5.2 Focus groups

The researcher adopted focus groups because of their natural process of bringing together a small group of participants to answer questions in a moderated setting to collect data. The objective of the researcher in a focus group engagement is to generate a significant number of disputes and viewpoints within a restricted period (Tumen-Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021). Focus groups are superior in providing more genuine and original environments in which participants impact one another and are influenced, and they also create harmonious outcomes for participants. The researcher raised open-ended questions to attain answers and invigorate debate among the participants. Prasad and Garcia (2017) explain that this type of method is used when the researcher desires to illustrate a matter or issue with a deeper understanding than a questionnaire method. The focus group in this study assisted the researcher in having participants who have common experience together to scrutinize a particular subject of interest; in this context, it is the editorial interference of the SABC by government officials. These groups were divided into three. Each

group consisted of six participants, as Tumen-Akyildiz and Ahmed (2021) show that the researcher should not have more than seven (7) members in the focus group.

A focus group is beneficial when compared with other data collection techniques because it explores the inner perspective and sentiment of participants on an individual spectrum. Mishra (2016) states that the focus group is the interconnection within the group, whereby participants are brought together to talk through one or more chosen topics and to impact each other through the feedback they give in contributing to the study. Individual participants of the focus group were selected in terms of having experience and knowledge about the topic and contributing information that is intended for the study in order to get appropriate data (Gundumogula, 2021). The researcher briefed or workshopped participants regarding the study and how important it is to be truthful. The researcher also outlined to the participants that their responses are important, they must not undermine each other, and there is no wrong answer in their responses. The researcher listened to all participants while asking open-ended questions and provided all the rules simultaneously, making the participants feel confident enough about the subject.

3.5.2.1 Advantages of focus group

The researcher chose to utilise focus group as a collecting data tool due to the following advantages as outlined by Tumen-Akyildiz and Ahmed (2021):

- ❖ Discussion is an underlying characteristic in which the interconnection among participants discloses everyone viewpoint, their beliefs, values, and language discourse relating to the topic.
- ❖ Focus group are exceptionally good at retrieving huge quantity of data and information from social groups at fewer costs.
- ❖ Focus group are quick, productive, and constructive method for assembling information with a group of compelling participants in a socially fair-minded environment.
- ❖ It is an accepted, satisfying data collection tool by the participants and permit the researcher to be present in the meeting such that the dialogue can pursue answers when needed.

3.5.2.2 Disadvantages of focus group

Despite focus group being the best possible method for data collection, each and every method has its own barriers and limitations. Gundumogula (2020) outline some of the disadvantages of focus group and are as follows:

- ❖ Focus group is the possible method which can be unfair and devious through prime or influencing participants.
- ❖ It is difficult to differentiate between an individual perspective and a group perspective.
- ❖ Focus group makes it hard to extrapolate the results from small group to the greater population.
- ❖ It is difficult to have an in fact characteristic sample and the analysis of the results and explanation of the results are quite a tantamount task for the researcher.

In light of the above advantages and disadvantages of the focus groups, the researcher has clearly explained to the participants that it is significant for all of them to participate in the study. The researcher further explained that there is no wrong answer or viewpoint from the participants, and that their opinions and discussions are important for the study.

Focus groups assisted the researcher to discover new aspects and information of one's research, as the participants own and contribute together a much more diverse perspective on the editorial interference of the SABC news than the researcher could imagine alone. The SABC news division audiences on the social media platforms of the broadcasting entity were identified as the relevant participants and invited to take part in the study. The researcher provides the participants with a consent form to make them understand the terms and conditions before they take part in the study. A focus group was conducted to catch a glimpse of how people feel and express their views, beliefs, experiences, and realities regarding the editorial interference of the SABC news phenomenon. The timeframe was not stipulated by the researcher, as the participants in the focus groups had a significant impact on this study.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, the data analysis technique utilised by the researcher to analyse the collected data is discussed. Data analyses include the evaluation of the data collected

using stages and reasonable details of the concepts of the data. Reflexive thematic analysis is relevant for analysing transcripts and group discussions that include deeper examination of data to spot common themes and patterns of meaning that are gazed at more often (Caulfield, 2020).

3.6.1 Reflexive thematic analysis

The data gathered using textual analysis and focus groups was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. This analysis assisted in creating a nourished, detailed, and even complex account of the data set. Reflexive thematic analysis is relevant for the study because there is a need to analyse the socio-cultural phenomenon and structure of the context rather than the subjective factors of the data provided by individuals. Barkley (2021) shows that reflexive thematic analysis is easy to learn, flexible, goes way beyond deep-rooted analysis, and allows data interpretation to go beyond a phenomenal level. The researcher applied the six stages of reflexive thematic analysis in analysing the data for this study. These stages, as themes, and lastly, producing the report.

➤ Stage 1: Familiarisation of data

This stage required the researcher to analyse the collected data methodologically and rigidly to acquaint themselves with the data that was interpreted from online news articles and focus groups, which were later archived from the focus group questionnaires. Mogaji and Youn (2019) spout that the retrieved data, no matter whether it be speeches or interviews, should be interpreted scrupulously with accurate grammar, as this part impacts other parts of the examination.

The researcher accumulated data and afterwards familiarised himself with it by interpreting it regularly. The researcher wrote down the interviews and documented them, then scrutinised and re-scrutinised through the transcripts, making records of inceptive propositions to be intimate with the collected data. This is connected with a cautious study of the data to take out subject matters, describing the editorial interference of the SABC.

➤ Stage 2: Generating codes

This step is associated with the classification of the discovery in relation to the aim of the study. Scharp and Sanders (2019) indicate that the researcher generated a list of preparatory points in relation to the study, aligned them into importance, and provided

inceptive codes to the data. At this stage, the researcher archived all the source articles and meetings of the participants' and utilised a coding structure to produce codes. Furthermore, in this instance, it is crucial for the researcher to start with the whole procedure wisely from the laying down of data and pick out significant components that cannot be replicated in the phenomenon.

When the researcher has acquainted himself with the collected data, ideas that were produced will be listed. This stage conforms to the construction of inceptive codes from the data collected. These codes have spotted the characteristic of untreated data. All verified codes were selected and assembled at the same time within each code. Codes of analysis of why government officials interfere with the editorial independence of the SABC news

➤ **Stage 3: Constructing themes**

This stage demands the labelling of related subject matters (themes) in the collected data. Themes are arranged according to the codes, which are based on how they are represented. The researcher was guided by Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) in order to provide a name to each and every code by putting down a short explanation of the phrase definitely. Scholars describe how codes are generated into themes, subthemes, and incidents of codes, and in the same procedure, the researcher will have to jot them down and take out themes from them if required. Mogaji and Youn's (2019) application of strategy in the form of charts, operating systems, and illustrations is very useful in the study. Afterwards, when data had been encrypted, coded, and gathered, various codes were assembled and picked out into acceptable themes. Extracting related data that is coded in line with the related themes was concluded. The analysed codes by the researcher were considered according to how various codes will be brought together to structure all-inclusive themes. Afterwards, the themes were organised into themes.

➤ **Stage 4: Reviewing potential themes**

This stage mentor the researcher to evaluate the examined data to make sure dependability and rationality for the motive of rectifying errors and changing themes. Moreover, data that require themes ought to be comprehensible for the themes to be understandable and point the individualism (Vaismoradi and Snelgrove, 2019). This stage implies the inspection and scrutinising of the issues pointed out in stage 3 to

decide whether they supplement the inner similarities. Researcher after had to proofread the whole collected data to inspect that whether there are no coincident of themes and according to what can the themes be produced. Those themes that expanded from the data collected come about and discussed and be more up to date. The researcher goes about to criticise the themes in a way to clarify them and endured with important and riveting themes. Including aggregated selection of all themes were studied and observed to view if in case they materialise to shape a reasonable style.

➤ **Stage 5: Defining and naming themes**

This is a stage in which the researcher possesses the ability to explain themes, evaluate them, and continue to examine the data collected. According to Scharp and Sanders (2019), it is important for the researcher to describe and clarify codes to be skilled in recognising what is required by the general denotations of the same themes. Themes were described and, moreover, purified. The researcher defined and named the themes emerging from the data. At all times, the researcher examined and constructed themes that corresponded to alleged editorial interference as guided by the aim and objectives of the study.

➤ **Stage 6: Producing the report**

This is the last stage, whereby a researcher has acquired themes from the data and the record is put together. This stage permits the researcher a chance to provide the reader with a glimpse of the whole study through discourse that is assisted by a literature review. The researcher constructed a final closing inspection and put down the report; in this regard, the examination for the dissertation The researcher has laid out a logical, short, and interesting report of the narrative of the collected data. According to Vaismoradi and Snelgrive (2019), related themes are revealed through proper reasoning and thinking. The researcher completed the final analysis and put together the research report.

3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA

This section observes the quality criteria that were observed by the researcher in the session when the study was conducted. In this study, the researcher has received or gained trustworthiness through sticking to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.7.1. Credibility

According to Stahl and King (2020), credibility is concerned with how findings relate to reality and is based on the individual judgments of participants. Furthermore, the researcher tried to understand how the reported findings come together in such a way that they should share some relationship with each other. The researcher utilised focus groups as data collection and exploratory research design to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the study. Shannon (2012) points out that credibility seeks to ensure that a study measures or tests what is actually intended.

3.7.2. Transferability

Transferability generalises that the results of qualitative research data can be transferred to other situations and arrangements. Research findings can be transferable or generalised in situations that they click with into new set-ups outside the main study focus, but outcomes cannot be definitely proven based on interpretations and external validity (Mamba, 2019). The researcher provided characteristics of the participants and the procedure of the study in order to give anyone reading this report access to find out whether the findings of the research can be transferred or not according to their set-ups.

3.7.3. Dependability

The dependability of the research went through consistent observation of the same findings under similar circumstances. Dependability alludes to the idea that collected data through research instruments should yield the same outcome and remain reliable despite the various participations of individuals (Mamba, 2019). The audit trail was undertaken by checking and tracking data from their sources. The researcher checked the analyzed and interpreted data and tracked them back to the extracted, summarized information. This was performed through the transcribed notes and the recorded data.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability was concerned with making sure that the results of the study were clearly confirmed from the data and not from any imagination. For this study, the researcher upheld this by confirming that the interpretation of the data is based on the researched and collected data rather than the researcher's preferences and perspectives.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following research ethical considerations have been considered in the whole process of this study:

3.8.1 Permission to conduct the study

The researcher requested approval from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee before collecting data for the study. It was necessary for human participants in the research that validation and ethical standards are conducted; to provide guidelines for responsible conduct of research on human participants; to protect the human participants; and to educate and monitor researchers in ensuring high quality ethical standards (Manandhar & Joshi, 2020). The study observed all the critical steps of research ethics outlined by the University of Limpopo.

3.8.2 Human dignity and respect

The researcher assured and guaranteed that the participants' rights were given the dignity and respect they deserved. Respect and dignity are the roots of expressing sympathy to other people and showing importance and worthiness to human beings; respect and dignity signifies respect that all humans deserve, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or status in life (Borowski, 2021). During the study, participants were communicated in a respectful manner, which is appropriate for the study, and what they said during their participation will not be used against them.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles (2006) argue that researchers need to ensure that participants are protected and are kept anonymous during research. The identities of the participants were only known to the researcher. Dougherty (2021) explains that anonymity and confidentiality allow the researcher to obtain reliable data on sensitive topics from interviewees who speak without fear; thus, it means the researcher ensures that any statement by the participants cannot be traced back to them. This practice is used to protect the privacy of human subjects who are taking part in the study while collecting, analysing, and reporting data (Hoft, 2021).

3.8.4 Informed consent

The participants in this study were informed about the patterns and layout of the study and its purpose. Bhandari (2021) states that participants should know the benefits,

purpose, risks, and funding behind the study before they agree or decline to join. The participants have read and understood everything, agreed to take part, and were required to sign a consent form. Participants were informed that they should voluntarily take part in the study and they could withdraw at any time if they felt so.

3.8.5 After care of participants

The researcher guaranteed that no participant would not be exposed to any level of harm, either physically or emotionally. According to Method Space (2022), once a study is complete, the researchers have a duty of care to participants; participants should receive help, healthcare, and guidance on their wellbeing. Participants who, after the study, became overwhelmed by stress, both psychologically and physically, were offered counselling and therapy.

3.8.6 Plagiarism

Sathuluri (2019) defines plagiarism as the exercise of stealing someone's work or idea and making it your own. Furthermore, Nguyen (2021) elucidates that plagiarism is duplicating others' work and extremely conveying it using someone else's words without acknowledging them through proper referencing. The researcher in this study made sure that all work utilised and not belonging to the researcher but someone else was properly cited and referenced.

3.8.7 Turnitin

Turnitin is an internet-based infringement detection software that is trained to advance standard academic writing within higher institutions of learning to help academics know how much of the work they copied from the original sources (University of South Africa, 2023). The researcher checked for plagiarism by submitting the study to Turnitin on the University of Limpopo webpage.

3.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

This chapter discusses the methodology and research design utilized in this study. In this study, the researcher decided to choose a qualitative approach due to its natural characteristics aligning with the study in terms of individual human experience, actions, and conduct with regard to the interference of government officials with the editorial independence of the SABC news. Furthermore, focus groups and textual analysis were selected as the most appropriate data collection tools. Ethical

considerations were rigorously displayed, as they are vital for every research description.

This chapter continued to discuss the significance of the chosen research design and its applicability within the study. Recommendations were made regarding sampling techniques, samples, and the population of the study. The chapter also provided quality criteria, which are as follows: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Research methodology is a course of direction chosen by the researcher in a way to achieve the aims and objectives of the study and further give out solutions to the research problem.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter three (3), the research methods utilised to control and run the study were distinctly communicated. In that regard, this chapter presents a discussion about the findings of the study. The study aimed to investigate the impact of government officials' interference on the editorial independence of the South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was utilised to examine the collected data, which was gathered from textual analysis and a focus group scheme. The objectives of the study are in line with the recognised themes and are as follows: (a) to assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy; (b) to examine the alleged editorial interference of the SABC on the public; and (c) to establish the effects of editorial interference of the SABC on the public.

These themes that are recognised in this component, answered the following questions below:

- ✓ What are the roles of editorial policies at public broadcasting media institutions in South Africa?
- ✓ What impact does the allegations of government official's interference have on the editorial independence of public broadcasting entities?
- ✓ How much impact does the editorial interference of public media broadcasting entities has on the public?

The selected themes provided crucial answers to the above-mentioned research questions and, moreover, provided an advanced logic for the phenomenon researched. As an outcome, this section comes apparent for themes that were constituted from the data analysis.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE TRANSCRIBED DATA

The procedure that was followed after the data was retrieved is explained. After textual analysis and focus groups were conducted, all the participants' answers and questions were typed accordingly, and all the recordings were interpreted. The entire chapter, besides the textual analysis answers, are utilised and introduced exactly as they are as outlined in their original context.

Following the process of compliance with the ethical conduct as stated clearly in Chapter 3 to warrant confidentiality, the participants of the study are mentioned by use of numbers, for example, participant 1, 2, 3, etc. The characteristics of any type of participant that will assist in making them identified are excluded.

4.2.1 SECTION A: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Textual data analysis has been conducted taking into consideration the objectives of the study.

4.2.1.1 Implementation of the SABC news editorial policies

This objective has allowed the researcher to single out and detect information about the entity's implementation of the SABC policies. Furthermore, this objective has given the researcher a path and light to pinpoint how the policies assist SABC in operating as an ethical organisation. Despite all that, this study has necessitated that the SABC policies are the core of how the SABC should be used and run to continue to uphold its integrity and status in society, forming a formidable relationship with all its stakeholders to provide news and information that is transparent, trustworthy, and validated. Moreover, SABC Revised Editorial Policies (2016) supports the idea that policies are a system that guides the decisions that are necessary or desirable and are formally expressed by either an authority body, an institution, or government statutes.

- According to SABC Editorial Policies (2020), policies are meant to assist all staff members in making informed decisions on matters related to editorial, while on the other hand maintaining the highest form of editorial standards and ethical stability. The findings of the study in the 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Interference in the Decision-making in the Newsroom of the South African Broadcasting Corporation', were that SABC suffered from the interference of authority and power to terrorise staff and deflect the corporation from its mandate and its editorial policies. The analyses of the texts show that the entity's editorial policies must always be considered whenever news is gathered and reported by SABC staff members to avoid any misconduct and deflect from the entity's mandate through the use of authority and power, and Joe Thloloe and Stephen Tawan note that:

Staff members are guided by the SABC's Editorial Policies, which are intended to assist the editorial staff in dealing with editorial issues and decisions while in the meantime upholding the highest form of ethical discipline and editorial standards.

The report of Joe Thloloe and Stephen Tawana indicates that SABC policies were bridged and not taken into consideration when news was gathered and reported, because should it be that policies were adhered to, it was not going to be one of the points in the findings of the report. Furthermore, the analyses of the report in the findings indicate that SABC Executives took instructions from people with no authority in the newsroom, from the likes of SABC board member Ellen Tshabalala and former Minister of Communication Faith Muthambi, which then compromised the SABC Executives from fulfilling their duties in line with Editorial Policies terms.

- SABC policies are developed to cover a wide range of editorial issues (Mail & Guardian, 2006). The article published by Angela Bolowana on SABCNews online shows a true reflection that the SABC editorial policy structure has been unstable. When something is changed, that shows it does not serve its best purpose. The researcher notes that the restructuring of the editorial policies is to strengthen editorial control and make sure journalists take full responsibility and accountability for all editorials in the newsroom. Angela Bolowana, the writer of the article, has named it 'New editorial policies aim to protect editorial processes. This shows that the implementation of policies at SABC is a very vital organ that protects the position of the entity as a premier source of transparent news in society. SABC CEO Madoda Mxakwe's analyses of his text highlight that sabotage of editorial policies can put SABC in a dire situation:

Ethical drifts in the editorial decision-making of journalistic practices and the abandonment of the existence purpose in public can be dire and catastrophic for the entity; this can even reach the apex of washing away public trust and degrading the dignity of the entity's relevance in society.

Duncan is of the view that the initial policy process and resultant policies are to blame for the crisis (Qhobosheane, 2018). The researcher notes that the article discussed the refurbishment of editorial policies at SABC to be able to guide and channel staff

members in terms of work ethics and having a proper way of dealing with editorial processes internally and externally. The researcher notes that the implementation of policies at SABC comes after a thorough consultation with all stakeholders to make sure they accommodate everyone, not individuals. If it is found that certain stakeholders were not involved, it can be regarded as null and void. Therefore, the analyses of the article nullify that the Broadcasting, Electronic, Media, and Allied Workers Union (BEMAWU), the workers union at SABC, was never consulted and threatened to take legal action for the reversal of the editorial policies. The researcher found that the analysis of the article shows that without having implemented a proper structure of editorial policies at SABC and involving all stakeholders, the entity will find it hard to be transparent and accountable in carrying the mandate and capability to deliver news and information in a valid and legitimate manner.

- In the Mail and Guardian article, Stefanie Jason on SABC clamps on editorial control and is interested in the editorial policies being reinforced and applied at SABC. The article shows that SABC centralised editorial content on all 18 of its radio stations. This decision was praised by the then-COO of SABC at the time, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, who said that the decision would play a huge role in dealing with matters of politics and governance in a systematic way in line with the editorial policy act. That is supported by SABC Revised Editorial Policies (2016), which state that these policies apply to all the services offered on all SABC platforms from which its content can be accessed.

The textual analysis of this article shows that there is a crisis of politicians and government officials interfering with the day-to-day operation of SABC. The centralisation of editorial content protects the news and current affairs from any interference through editorial policies, which will make the entity accountable and have control at all times in the interest of the public. The SABC notes and announces that:

The decision to centralise editorial content will assist the SABC to deliver on the editorial policy requirements.

Noting that the importance of SABC editorial policy, which is guided by the Broadcasting Act No. 4 of 1999 in terms of dealing with the political spectrum of parties, is to show that the editorial policies are meant to nurture editorial staff members to ensure the SABC policies regarding accuracy, fairness, impartiality, objectivity, and balance are adhered to, This is supported by SABC Revised Editorial Policies (2016), which are made to assist SABC workers in making correct decisions on matters of content and editorial priority while observing the highest ethical and editorial standards. The analysis of the text presents an overview of how the abuse of editorial policies implemented at SABC hinders the editorial progress of the entity and harms the entity's staff members. This comes after the workers of the SABC wrote letters of concern regarding the political interference at the broadcaster. It is adequate that this letter was written simultaneously with the announcement of the process of centralizing editorial content.

This is noted with the highest form of clarity and perseverance: indeed, without a proper channel for managing editorial content through the implementation of editorial policies, the SABC as an organisation will not have a stable and functioning operation that will serve the best interests of the public. The researcher has noted that SABC, without the existence or following procedure for utilising editorial policies, will put the entity in an awkward and compromising state. The aforementioned clearly shows that editorial policies at SABC, if not centralised and properly coordinated, can allow interferers to have easy access and capture the entity in terms of how and which content should be disseminated.

4.2.1.2 Allegations of editorial interference at the SABC

This objective has assisted the researcher to be aware of incidents relating to allegations that have been made against SABC regarding editorial interference by government officials on the editorial independence of the SABC. Furthermore, this objective has alerted the researcher that this is the most crucial part, which clarifies if the allegations through substantive evidence and proof are true or not. The factors that cause the SABC to lack independence are the political factors, one of which is that the SABC should be able to fulfil its mandate of informing, educating, and entertaining the public without any interference from outsiders, and lastly, it should be free from government interference and pressure (Molokomme, 2021).

- The textual analysis of the Daily Maverick article titled 'SABC to take disciplinary action against those implicated in the editorial interference report', of those who were implicated in the allegations Numerous high-ranking staff members and government officials were implicated, which forced the entity to investigate. The article's analysis of the text shows that the evidence found did not implicate the ANC as the ruling party in government, but there was some indirect 'ghost' involvement of the ANC. Furthermore, the allegations are further substantiated by the fact that from 2012 to 2017, SABC executives were taking mandates and instructions from people who had no say or powers in the entity's operation, including SABC board member Ellen Tshabalala and government official former Minister of Communications. The SABC Editorial Responsibility Statement states clearly in the SABC Editorial Policies (2020) that SABC recognizes the centrality of news and information and also ensures that its news service operates fairly, transparently, and openly without any interference from either the Board, the News and Editorial Subcommittee, or outsiders.

Furthermore, the text analyses further reveal that there were staff members who were taking instructions from members of the executives, which are Hlaudi Motsoeneng, Jimm Matthews, and Simon Tebele. These executives are part of the decision-making body of SABC and are expected to uphold the integrity and protect the public broadcaster's and program independence as set out in the editorial policies. These actions were severe for staff members to maintain belief and destroyed them through pain, anger, and fear, which they succumbed to in fear of dismissal from their bosses. The researcher has found that the SABC executives acted out of the entity's policies, code of conduct, and mandate, which then allowed individuals with no authority to give instructions to infiltrate the editorial construction and operation of the organisation.

The aforementioned is supported by the recommendations stipulated in the article, which were in the report of veteran journalist and former chairperson of the Press Council of SA, Joe Tlloe. The recommendations clearly stipulate that indeed, the SABC experienced editorial interference, without any doubt. SABC board member Bongumusa Makhathini added that:

It is a concern and a worry for those individuals who were implicated in the report, and it has been indicated that harsh and serious disciplinary actions could be taken against them.

The researcher has noted that the aforementioned statement is a clear indication that supports the objective of this section and affirms the facts to be true and valid. Furthermore, the researcher found that the actions of SABC executives in allowing interferers at the entity were contrary to the guidelines and policies of the organisation. Therefore, it is with great disappointment and confirmation that SABC, a highly respected, commendable, and public statute, went through one of the toughest periods of torture by being derived from serving its main purpose to being used as a weapon to disseminate news and information in favour of certain individuals who felt they had power and authority and were untouchable internally and externally.

- Society believes that public broadcasting entities should disseminate and supply balanced, politically unbiased coverage of news and information (Asano, Tago, Tanaka, 2021). The text analysis of articles of alleged editorial interference at SABC shows that they are mostly dominated by the interference of politicians, political parties, or those serving in government portfolios, such as in the cabinet, which raises a serious concern. The researcher analysed Business Day online news article titled 'Editorial interference claims damaging to SABC, says board chair' written by Bekezela Phakhathi and Eye Witness News online article titled 'Allegations of political interference at SABC must be looked at: Media Watchdogs'. The two articles are written by two different online newspaper organisations but speak of the same matter. The article shows that even after the SABC was destroyed by political interference once again, it faces another looming allegation of editorial interference against its SABC board chair, Bongumusa Makhathini, and the entity's CEO.

The allegations are seemingly having a negative impact on the entity, which is entrusted by millions of people who rely on it to uphold its mandate and responsibility to serve society in a transparent and accountable manner. What seems to be transpiring at SABC is that the entity is no longer serving its

purpose but has turned into the mouthpiece of certain individuals who want to use the entity for their own agenda and feed the public information that will be in favour of their side.

Makhathini denies that he tried to force or abuse the former news executive to schedule an interview with the current President Cyril Ramaphosa ahead of the local government elections in 2021.

Watchdog group media companies in South Africa called for the allegations of political interference at the SABC to be taken seriously with caution and be properly investigated. This comes after the decision by the public broadcaster SABC to fire the head of news, Phathiswa Magopeni, with the immediate effect of being blamed for breaking trust with the entity. *Eye Witness News* (EWN) and *BusinessDay* point out that the sacking of Phathiswa Magopeni is not entirely because of misconduct but because of her refusal to take instructions, which will jeopardize the entity's integrity, and her standing firm against any interference by either politicians or government officials. The decision to fire Phathiswa Magopeni is a political move by the ruling party, the ANC, as enshrined in the articles.

This shows that since government officials are deployed by their political parties, especially the ruling party, they then use their political influence and the power of state portfolios to abuse staff members of the SABC since it is a public entity with a direct and close relationship with the government since it is a state-owned enterprise (SOE). *Eye Witness News* online newspaper notes that there were multiple media organisations that raised concerns regarding the political and editorial interference infiltrating the entity. Moreover, this raises serious concern that this might be a normal activity that continues to hammer the public broadcaster.

The researcher notes that these allegations have pushed the SABC Board to find out what could have occurred for the sake of the public interest and find closure. The statements provided by the SABC and Phathiswa Magopeni, backed by media watchdog organisations, show that there was political and editorial interference at the SABC during that time. Furthermore, the researcher analysed the articles and found that politicians' disrespect and undermining of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), one

of them being the SABC, and the way in which staff members are forced to take mandates and act out of the entity's conduct is a clear indication there is abuse of power and threats made towards workers of SABC.

- In Support Public Broadcasting (SOS) online article, 'titled SOS and MMA calls for investigation into alleged SABC editorial interference by Director Mpho Tsedu'. The SOS organization was concerned with the allegations levelled against the entity involving the newly appointed board member, Mpho Tsedu, by that time, which made the SOS call for this matter to be investigated in a transparent manner. The article shows the dissatisfaction of two organisational bodies with allegations by Mr. Tsedu, who is a chair of the News and Editorial Subcommittee, that on several occasions, he has interfered with editorial decision-making by commanding staff members to cover certain stories he prefers and removing others from being broadcast. SOS highlights that this article focused on the bridge of taking an oath by protecting the editorial independence of the SABC by a board member, but the independence of the entity is compromised.

SOS considers complaints of Mr. Tsedu bypassing the Head of News and the SABC's Editor in Chief, Mr. Moshoeshe Monare, when he requested the editorial staff present plans for election coverage. That is what alerted and made Mr. Monare take steps and lodge a formal complaint against Mr. Tsedu with the SABC Board:

If the accusations of editorial interference are deemed to be true, that would be unacceptable coming from a board member who has a mandate and duty to protect the SABC's editorial independence and ensure accountability by following the editorial policies of the entity.

As SOS points out, this complaint interprets the text in a particularly concerning way: it contains many elements that are recognizable as burning issues of editorial interference analysis of the article. These involve the problematic matter that, because of this online news article by SOS, all those implicated in the alleged editorial interference at SABC are seen as being guilty, wrong, and

breaking the trust that was vested in them, which is then a breach of the bridge of taking an oath as a servant of a public entity such as SABC. SOS highlights Section 1.4 of the Terms of Reference of the News and Editorial Subcommittee, whose purpose is to defend the editorial independence of the SABC and to maintain the highest form of professional standards.

The section is highlighted to show that each and every staff member of the SABC knows and is aware of their duties to fulfill, and any action taken that puts the entity in dispute is done knowingly and precisely. Therefore, SOS argues that should it be found that there was editorial interference at the SABC by Mr. Tsedu and he is found guilty, strict and serious measures should be taken against him. SOS further argues that while South Africa is heading into national elections by that time, the independence of the SABC is of paramount importance. SABC has been rebuilding itself to gain credibility, relevancy, trust, and independence that have been caused by interference from internal and external political and commercial interests for the last 7 years. This is a clear indication that the entity has been victimised by editorial interference in previous years and at such an important time when it has a critical role to play.

Any effort that seeks to undermine editorial independence of SABC also undermines our democracy.

The researcher found that Mr. Tsedu's appointment as a board member has a conflict of interest since he worked for some government officials, such as ministers, which raised concerns that he politically has the potential to interfere at SABC. The aforementioned analyses show that Mr. Tsedu, according to statements and arguments provided by those who raised concerns about his actions, has damning reputation damage to the SABC, and he also bypassed certain individuals who hold positions of responsibility above him, and without their knowledge, he performed duties that were not in his jurisdiction, which was alarming enough to indicate something wrong is happening.

Mail & Guardian article titled "SABC inquiry: EFF says it was a victim of editorial interference" The EFF in this article is concerned that it

experienced being a direct victim of editorial interference at the SABC: EFF spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi affirmed the party was “marginalised” as a new player and opposition party.

The article shows that the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) at the commission of inquiry that was looking into political and editorial interference at the state broadcaster shared their sentiments when making submissions regarding how the party was affected by interference in the newsroom of the SABC. The party represented by then-EFF spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi showed that one of the SABC shows, Morning Live, refused to invite the party during its launching. This statement by the EFF spokesperson was supported by former SABC chief executive Jimi Matthews in 2016, when he admitted the public broadcaster indeed deliberately banned the EFF and its leader, President Julius Malema, calling the EFF and its leader a nuisance. The uttered words by Jimi Matthews prove the remarks made by the EFF that the party became a victim of editorial interference at the SABC and that it was deliberate. Mbuyiseni Ndlozi further revealed the names of former SABC Board members who tried to stop the party from making criticisms about the entity:

“The African National Congress (ANC) has always been attempting to marginalise and force marginalisation of opposition coverage”, Mbuyiseni Ndlozi.

The text analyses show that the ANC made utterances that, since it is a dominant and ruling political party in parliament, it should get more news coverage than other political parties, which Mbuyiseni Ndlozi outlined as being ridiculous and showing an oppressive attitude. This was then brought to the attention of the researcher to show that the ANC as a political party is unruly and hooligans towards feeling privileged to control how the SABC should operate and who must be on their news coverage and who should not. This is wrong and unacceptable and cannot be encouraged to continue to happen, as it is undermining the sovereignty of the SABC and its independence. By that time, Zizi Kodwa, head of the presidency of the ANC, had made the argument that SABC must recognise the party (ANC) as having the majority of the vote and demanded more coverage from the public broadcaster when approaching the 2019 general elections. The researcher’s text analysis revealed that EFF, with the

submissions brought forward against the SABC and ANC forces of interference, has more confidence, and without reasonable doubt, it proves that indeed the party was a victim in these whole damning allegations.

4.2.1.3 Impact of editorial interference of the SABC on the public

This objective has assisted the researcher in determining what effect the editorial interference of the SABC has on society. This is in regard to the type of disseminated news and information. The issue of editorial interference at the SABC does not only have an impact on the entity but also on the public at large. Furthermore, this objective has equipped the researcher with knowledge of how bad the editorial interference activities of the public broadcasters' entities by either internal or external forces have on the lives of ordinary people. Qobhosheane (2018) stipulates that losing public trust and relevancy to the public by the SABC is one of the challenges the SABC faces during editorial interference. SABC is a public entity, which means it exists in order to serve the needs and interests of the people in a democratic manner. As a trusted public broadcaster, SABC disseminates news and information that has an impact or influence on people's lives and decision-making, which ultimately shows the media's influence to persuade people's thinking on a daily basis. The articles, which have been analysed textually below, discuss how much impact editorial interference by SABC has on the public.

- Editorial interference at SABC compels the entity to play a watchdog role in society by keeping political power to account through intensive investigation and reporting into wrongful doings such as corruption and misconduct (Wasserman, 2020). An article by the South African National Editor's Forum (SANEF) titled 'SANEF calls on political leaders to stop interfering in newsroom matters', demonstrates serious concern about the public not receiving independent, impartial news and information from the SABC during government elections. Furthermore, the text analyses point out that journalists who are resigning from the public broadcaster because of editorial interference to avoid being used are a great loss to the public. Journalists who are transparent and dedicate their jobs to serving the public with honesty perish from the entity, which means there will be a huge chance that the remaining journalists will be captured and used to disseminate news that carries the agenda of the interferer

to influence the perspective, ideas, opinions, and decisions of ordinary citizens. The fact of the matter is that the moment journalists begin to meddle in political factions, it means that any news material selected and displayed will not be in favour of the public but in favour of those who have captured the public broadcaster.

The researcher notes that the exploitation of public media broadcasters by politicians in a way to have influence in the newsroom and compromise the credibility of the entity has jeopardized the freedom of expression and advocating of promoting quality, ethics, and diversity amongst South Africans. Furthermore, the text analysis shows that intimidation, harassment, and resignation of journalists who have complained and raised concerns about politicians mostly coming from the ANC and deployed by the ruling party in government portfolios have been interfering with the operation of the newsroom editorial, which is the heartbeat of any media fraternity. In line with what has been mentioned above, it clearly shows that journalists at SABC are not given freedom and space to do their job as stipulated in the code of conduct and editorial policies documents. In addition, the researcher noticed that state organs are being used in a wrongful manner to disseminate news content, which is negatively impacting society.

- For example, in 2016, SABC announced that it was no longer going to provide publicity for any actions that involved protests and vandalism. The reason this decision was taken was that the country started to experience various incidents of protests that led to the burning of public institutions and infrastructure. Therefore, it was realized that news content disseminated by the public broadcaster, which displayed protesting and vandalism, had an influence on agitating other people into participating in such events. This is to show how powerful media content can be and even cause serious disorder and disruptions in society. The above-mentioned example is in solidarity with news materials that have experienced editorial interference, which will also have the same negative impact on the public. SABC has a huge task of serving the public interest and not that of those in authority (Jjuuko, 2005). The text analysis of 'The Conversation' online article titled 'Why South Africa needs to fix its troubled public broadcaster' notes that editorial interference by the public broadcaster

SABC is violating Chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act 1999, which is to defend the South African citizens. It further elaborates that the role of the public broadcaster has been increasingly undermined to protect freedom of speech, constitutional rights, and the right to credible and factual information.

The violation of editorial independence by SABC compromises the entity's capacity to critically engage South African citizens on matters of serious importance and affecting society for the benefit of the entire society.

The article shows that many individuals who are able to analyse the situation of SABC can see how society is affected amid the rise of newsroom manipulation by politicians and commercial pursuers of profit, while we are living in an era whereby information is very crucial and of paramount importance. Furthermore, the researcher analysed that the SABC footprint reaches millions of South Africans who can access news materials in their own languages and is also a universal public broadcaster. This then justifies why the entity is a victim of editorial interference because it reaches millions of audiences globally, and to make sure that those who want attention or to disseminate news and information to reach society will consider it as the appropriate public media platform to utilise.

4.3.2 SECTION B: REFLEXIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This section analyses data collected through the focus group discussions.

4.3.3 PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Proper information about the participants through biographic displays is presented below. Eighteen (18) participants were intended to participate in this study, six per group; unfortunately, another group had five participants due to some participants complaining about network connectivity as the sessions were held on a virtual platform. However, that did not have any effect on the data collected since the participants who took part were enough to provide information for the collection process to proceed. Participants' identities have been hidden taking into account research ethics as far as anonymity and confidentiality is concerned. Participants were labelled through numbers and letters. For example, 1D.

Table 1: Demographic details of the participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Occupational role	Qualification Status
1	20-29	Male	Radio presenter	Currently doing Honours degree in Media studies.
2	30-39	Female	Indexer	Diploma in Information studies
3	20-29	Male	Teacher Assistant	BA in Media Studies.
4	20-29	Male	unemployed	BA Hons Journalism and Media studies
5	20-29	Male	None	BA in Media Studies.
6	20-29	Female	Marketing communications intern.	BA in Media Studies.
7	20-29	Female	News journalist, Marketing and PR coordinator	Currently doing Honours degree in communication studies.
8	20-29	Female	Student	Bachelor of Education (final year)
9	20-29	Female	Student	2 nd year Master of Arts (Media Studies)

10	20-29	Male	Student	1 st year Master of arts (Media studies)
11	30-39	Male	Self employed	Civil Engineering (N5)
12	20-29	Female	Student assistant	1 st year Master of Arts in Media Studies
13	20-29	Female	None	Honours Degree
14	20-29	Male	Student	4 th year Law degree
15	20-29	Male	Student	Honours degree
16	20-29	Female	Library student assistant	1 st year Master of Arts in Information Studies.
17	30-39	Male	Lab assistant	1 st year master's in chemistry

4.3.4 DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section presents a summary of themes and subthemes that became evident during the focus group discussions. These themes and subthemes were inscribed to attain the objectives of the study based on the questions that were put together from the objectives.

Table 2: Themes emerged during the study

OBJECTIVES	THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Objective one: assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy.	Theme 1: Exploring the role of editorial policies.	Sub-theme 1: Impact of editorial policies at SABC. Sub-theme 2: Impact of editorial policies to SABC workers.
Objective two: examine the alleged editorial interference at the SABC	Theme 2: Impact of political and government official's interference at SABC. Theme 3: How SABC channel news to audience.	Sub-theme 1: SABC not an independent public media institution. Sub-theme 2: Funders and sponsors at SABC and their relationship linkage Sub-theme 1: Impact of news content material on society.
Objective three: establish the effects of editorial interference of the SABC on the public.	Theme 4: Effects of editorial interference at the SABC Theme 5: Exploring operation and functioning system of the SABC.	Sub-theme1: Influence of editorial interferes at SABC. Sub-theme 2: Society's alternative to other media houses. Sub-theme 1: Aim, objectives, and mandate of the SABC.

4.3.5 Objective one: Assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy

4.3.5.1 Theme 1: Exploring the role of editorial policies

The study revealed that participants from all three focus group discussions are knowledgeable and clarified about editorial policies through how they interact with news materials from the SABC on a daily basis. The majority of participants were found to be fully aware of the core significance policies play for public media institutions. Under this theme, two sub-themes were generated.

✓ Sub-theme 1: Impact of editorial policies at SABC

Participants who engaged in the discussion of the focus groups understood what editorial policy in the media context is according to how they answered. The participants specified that policies are one of the most crucial aspects of the media industry and play a vital role in producing and disseminating news. They further showed that policies assist SABC media workers to be ethical and follow principles accordingly.

The findings of the study disclosed that almost all respondents who participated in the focus group discussion outlined and understood the functions of policies in any institution and also understood the role of policies at SABC.

“Policies play a significant role at SABC in a way that any news they display or broadcast speaks a lot about what they stand for, and these policies are made in consultation with the public and other stakeholders in the public broadcaster to make sure SABC follows rules, guidelines, and the functions of a public broadcaster.” (1D)

✓ Sub-theme 2: Impact of editorial policies to SABC workers

According to the findings, respondents are fully aware of how SABC media workers should operate and do their jobs through the utilisation of the entity's editorial policies. SABC editorial policies are established to guide the workers to be cautious with how they gather news; furthermore, editorial policies are aware of the need for workers to be morally driven, know what to broadcast and not to broadcast, and avoid propaganda and hate speech news content.

Moreover, there were participants who were in solidarity that editorial policies are meant to protect SABC journalists' dignity and profiles. The findings reveal that SABC workers are operating and working under the influence and guidance of SABC editorial policies because their work affects not only the entity but also their image.

“Institutions like SABC require policies to establish clear guidelines and standards for their operation because these policies will assist in ensuring consistency and ethical conduct in various aspects of SABC workers, including content creation, employee’s behaviour, financial management, and providing a framework for decision-making, accountability, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements” (2C).

However, there was a contrary view brought forward by one of the participants regarding editorial policies, who alluded that ethics rather than policies are the ones that play a significant role in the morality of SABC workers. The respondent provided an example to support his argument.

“Policies is something that is written down or documented and can be manipulated, while ethics is meant to oversee whether something is good or bad”. (2C)

“Policies are more detrimental, while ethics induce morality and humanity.” (3B)

OBJECTIVE 2: Exploring the alleged editorial interference at the SABC

4.3.5.2 Theme 2: Impact of political and government official’s interference at SABC

According to the findings of the study, political interference is a serious offense and undermines the sovereignty of the SABC. The majority of participants alluded mostly to politicians interfering in the daily operation of the SABC. They showed that the entity is not independent in taking decisions; rather, certain politicians and political parties are consulted first on what to report.

This theme on the impact of political and government officials' interference at SABC has generated two sub-themes, namely: SABC not being an independent public media institution and funders and sponsors at SABC and their relationship linkage.

✓ **Sub-theme 1: SABC not an independent public media institution**

The findings of the study show that editorial independence at the SABC is compromised, and it is hard for SABC media workers to do their jobs in line with the entity's public mandate. There is a lot of political interference, especially in the broadcasting section of news, which jeopardises the media freedom of SABC and abuses the rights of the public to access information and news that is impartial, credible, and trustworthy. Furthermore, the participants extrapolated that the functioning of the SABC lies in the hands of outsiders, mostly government officials and politicians who have captured the management of the entity on their side.

"If political parties interfere with what should be broadcasted to society, it then makes it seem that SABC workers have been ordered to consult with their interferers first before they can decide to disseminate any kind of news content, and it shows that political interference is a lot at the SABC and there is no such thing as being an independent entity" (1E).

✓ **Sub-theme 2: Funders and sponsors at SABC and their relationship**

According to the findings of the study, audiences of SABC are aware that those who assist SABC with money to make sure the entity operates do not only do it from their pure hearts of willingness but also want something in return. SABC generates income from advertising and other broadcasting shows, but it gets its budget allocation from the government since it is a state-owned enterprise. The SABC audience participants have also agreed that most of the news content broadcasted is purely evident that SABC is pushing a certain agenda of someone according to how they broadcast the news, especially political news content.

"For example, you may find that those who funded the CR17 campaign are the very same people who have shares in the media industry, including the SABC. As a public broadcaster, most companies approach it for advertising and broadcasting show slots." (3B)

"The demand of the funders, sponsors, and advertisers will cause the SABC to succumb and manipulate the news gathered in favour of the funders and sponsors since they are desperate for money, which the entity really needs" (1D).

The findings of the study illustrate that those who have relationships with workers of SABC, especially those in strategic positions of decision-making, are in favour of having influence in the editorial interference of the SABC. Several participants illustrated that since SABC Board members are appointed by the President, who represents a certain political party, it then justifies that the members of the board will have a close relationship with members of that ruling party and take mandates from them. Furthermore, the participants showed that these board members are politically affiliated with the ruling party, just as those holding government portfolios are known to hold strategic positions in the ruling party.

“Let us give an example with the ANC as the ruling party. You find that the government is influential; they become an external force that influences the SABC. Like now we are going to elections very soon, you will find that they will want the SABC to broadcast information in their favour and certain information of other political parties disadvantaged, which will then damage the integrity of the SABC” (3D).

“The board of the SABC is appointed by the President together with the CEO and COO. As an individual, the president may appoint members who will put his or her interests or those of his party at the SABC.” That is how editorial interference occurs: people who are put in strategic positions at the SABC are not going to serve with the mandate and policies of the public broadcaster but of certain individuals outside the entity” (1D).

4.3.5.3 Theme 3: How SABC channel news to audience

This theme grasped how SABC channels news to its audience. This study found that participants who took part in the focus group discussion are aware of news content that SABC is disseminating to provide information and is free from any interference, and they are also able to note news content that is carrying a certain agenda to convince audiences in their favour. Under this theme, two sub-themes have been produced and are as follows: Impact of news content material on society and alternative media houses.

✓ Sub-theme 1: Impact of news content material on society

The findings of the study make it clear that every type of news and information disseminated to society has an impact, either negative or positive. The majority of

participants alluded to the fact that how they react to situations and events is mostly based on SABC news, according to how they carry the message that is being portrayed. Moreover, participants showed that how they respond, engage, take decisions, and express opinions and views on societal issues is mostly influenced by the news materials of the SABC. Furthermore, the majority of participants went further to provide examples of events that occurred, which they believed were because of the reaction of the SABC news in terms of the content they carried out.

“There are some stories you read and can see there are certain things missing, you need more information, the stories are broadcasted in a narrow way not to get the full picture, and to me it is interference because it is not allowing you to make your own mind and decisions.” (2C)

“Actually, it is falsely giving you one side of the story without you saying I have all the facts and can choose a side or what is true and what is a lie, that then perpetuates a lack of diverse perspective in the reporting, which hinders the transparency of news in society” (1C).

OBJECTIVE THREE: Establish the effects of editorial interference of the SABC on the public

4.3.5.4 Theme 4: Effects of editorial interference at the SABC

The theme encapsulated the effects of editorial interference at the SABC brought by government officials. The study has found that majority of participants showed that the aftermath of editorial interference activities have dire consequences on the reputation of the entity, workers, and the public. Therefore, it is with no doubt according to the respond of the participants that lot of people in their various aspects attached to the SABC, directly or indirectly are pretentiously victims of actions of external interferes at the SABC. This theme generated two sub-themes and are as follows: Influence of editorial interferes at SABC and Society’s alternative to other media houses.

✓ Sub-theme 1: Influence of editorial interference at the SABC

The findings of the study have disclosed that editorial interference hinders and compromises the independence of SABC in the editorial section to select, compile, and disseminate news in a fair, impartial, and independent manner. As claimed by some of the participants, they highlighted a few repercussions of the effect of editorial interference, which have a huge negative impact on the lives of ordinary citizens in

most cases. Society relies on SABC News as a public media platform to be transparent and trustworthy in their broadcasting because, should it happen, the news is tampered with a lot of inaccuracies that may occur and be detrimental.

“Editorial interference or censorship affect the interest and preference of the people and also manipulation of public perception. Furthermore, journalists are not able to do their work in a free manner since they are told which news to cover and that compromise the dignity and image of the SABC workers and might ruin their chances of being employed anymore by other media companies” (2B).

“Editorial interference or censorship affects the interests and preferences of the people and also manipulates public perception.” (3E)

“Furthermore, journalists are not able to do their work in a free manner since they are told which news to cover, and that compromises the dignity and image of the SABC workers and might ruin their chances of being employed anymore by other media companies” (2A).

✓ **Sub-theme 2: Society’s alternative to other media houses**

According to the findings of the study, audiences have the choice to use other media institutions and various social media platforms to source news that they feel is free from interference. Public media institutions and private media institutions operate, generate income, and do things differently in terms of their mandate, aim, and objectives. The mandate of the public media entity is to serve the best interests of the people, while private media mostly focus on commercial aspects. Some of the respondents pointed out that audiences who feel dissatisfied with the broadcasting of news by SABC should look for other alternatives that they think will serve their best interests in an impartial manner.

“The public has an alternative to utilizing other media houses such as eNCA, Newzroom Afrika, Power FM, etc., so that when SABC does not broadcast or censor news, other independent media houses do broadcast those stories; even on Twitter, you find a lot of verified Twitter accounts of journalists who provide raw news and information of paramount importance” (1F).

In addition, it is strongly pointed out that news verification and credibility are crucial in the compilation of news at the SABC as a public media entity. Certain participants criticized how media houses in general source news are worrying about the verification of news, whether it is fake or truthful. The pressure of media house competition is compromising the value of news because media companies want to be the first ones to give out information to the public and forget about the verification of news first.

“Each and every media house want to be the first one to break out the news to the public, so they can see if they wait to verify the news they will lose out, that is why we come across to fake news most times.” (1B)

“I conclude that credible news are the ones on newspaper because the process they use to compile news is newsworthy and truthful since facts are gathered and verified first” (1E).

4.3.5.5 Theme 5: Exploring operation and functioning system of the SABC

This theme captured the exploration of the operation and functioning systems of the SABC. The study found that the majority of participants showed that SABC is not a fully independent public media entity. Furthermore, the findings reveal that there is less to do with making sure SABC operates in an independent and impartial manner. SABC is known to operate under the influence of its implemented policies, broadcasting act, mandate, objectives, and aims, which exist to align the entity with the interests of the public.

✓ Sub-theme 1: Aim, objectives, and mandate of the SABC

In order for the SABC to operate and function as a public entity, ethical standards and policy measures must be implemented. There is a strong belief that SABC has lost its integrity and value according to how it gathers, compiles, and disseminates news and information. The majority of the participants showed that most of the news broadcast by SABC does not have transparency due to the influence of background controllers such as politicians and government officials.

“I don’t think SABC is an independent public media entity, I believe we have background controllers behind such as politicians, who want to have influence in selection of news. Therefore, there is no transparency of news to the public hence the entity is depending on those with upper hand, those who might be providing funding which on SABC is government” (2B).

Furthermore, some of the participants highlighted that SABC in the past has been accused of allegations of editorial interference, which they believe was caused by threats and bribery from external sources, in most cases government officials. Some of the participants stated that this occurs because of the appointment system of the SABC board members and other strategic positions such as CEO and COO. Moreover, they showed that it will be better if the appointment powers of board members of SABC are elected by the public than the President as head of state since there is a conflict of interest.

“The government has a hand in the SABC, if there is information the government does not want the public to know about, they are able to influence the information not to be broadcasted or be broadcasted as long as it’s in their favour” (3D)

Furthermore, should it be found that there are any state officials who are abusing power to interfere in the daily operation of the SABC and make it lose its purpose and mission, they should be identified and serious measures taken against them. They must never be allowed to occupy any public office that has anything to do with serving the public.

4.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4

This chapter laid out the analysis of the collected data, findings, and discourse of textual analysis and focus group discussion utilizing reflexive thematic analysis. Moreover, the study addressed five themes and eight sub-themes. The first theme generated two sub-themes, theme two produced three sub-themes, theme three produced one sub-theme, theme four generated two sub-themes, and the last theme produced one sub-theme. These themes were taken from the data collected during focus group discussions with participants. The next chapter will focus on the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented data and analysis of findings. This chapter draws out the conclusion and gives recommendations for the study based on the findings presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 4). Data was collected through textual analysis, analysing an online news article that once reported an allegation of editorial interference at the SABC, and a focus group discussion that consisted of sixteen participants who had experience and knowledge about the topic. This chapter provides clarity on whether the data presented answered the aim, research questions, and objective of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Through textual analysis, the study has found that the SABC has experienced activities of editorial interference by government officials, mostly politicians, who abused their power to pass through their agenda to society via the SABC. The purpose of the textual analysis was to identify and analyse online news articles that have reported on the allegations of editorial interference at the SABC and how editorial interference has impacted the entity and the public. Furthermore, the observed findings of the study were extensively expanded through the use of focus group discussions.

Five (5) themes were generated from the analysed data and are as follows: exploring the role of editorial policies, the impact of political and government officials' interference at the SABC, how the SABC channels news to the audience, the effects of editorial interference at the SABC, and exploring the operation and functioning system of the SABC. These themes are discussed with regard to the objectives of the study. In correlation with associated themes, the study managed to answer these research questions. (a) What are the roles of editorial policies at public broadcasting media institutions in SA? (b) What impact do the allegations of government officials' interference have on the editorial independence of public broadcasting entities? (c) How much impact does the editorial interference of public media broadcasting entities have on society? The research provided a more in-depth understanding of the study.

The first objective of the study was to assess the implementation of the SABC's news editorial policy. Participants in this study understood the role of editorial policies at the SABC. Participants showed that they know the functions and use of policies at institutions such as the SABC and how policies assist media workers to be principled and ethical. SABC workers should not work in isolation but be guided by the implemented policies of the SABC. The findings of the study, as discussed in the previous chapter and the literature review, reveal that policies are of paramount importance in the operation and functioning of any institution, such as the SABC. In line with the study conducted by Molokomme (2021), the SABC policy process allows society to provide input to the board in order for the entity to have policy documents so that its workers are clearly commanded on what the public is anticipating from the broadcaster.

The second objective of the study was to examine the alleged editorial interference at the SABC. Some of the participants indicated that the functioning of the SABC lies in the hands of outsiders, mostly government officials and politicians who have captured the management of the entity on their side. This study found that the appointing system of the SABC board members and other crucial SABC positions is what makes the entity easily interfered with, especially by government officials and politicians. A study conducted by Qhobosheane (2018) found that editorial interference at the SABC has had a huge negative impact on the lives of ordinary citizens and the image of the entity.

The third objective of the study was to establish the effect of editorial interference by the SABC on the public. Participants showed that the aftermath of editorial interference activities has dire consequences for the reputation of the entity, workers, and the public. Moreover, participants further demonstrated that SABC is a public media broadcaster meant to be transparent and credible in their reporting based on the responsibility the entity is carrying, which is why it cannot afford activities of editorial interference. Participants pinpointed that audiences have the choice to utilize other media institutions and various social media platforms to source news, which they feel is free from any interference. Furthermore, participants reveal that there is less to do with making sure SABC operates in an independent and impartial manner. In line with the study by Hanretty (2011), it was found that interference refers to threats and

involvement that result in causing media professionals to act in an inappropriate manner.

5.3 THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

This section details the analysis of the theoretical framework against the backdrop of the data.

5.3.1 Agenda setting theory

Lippmann, cited in Zain (2014), predicts that agenda-setting theory traverses how mass media can set a particular agenda in influencing the views and opinions of people. Lippman further posits the concern that agenda-setting theory insinuates on the role mass media play in influencing the setting of definite images in a society's mind. The theory examines how media has influenced, from the perspective of people, what they are fed as news and information content and how they react to that news and information. Therefore, agenda-setting theory is relevant to this study because it explores government officials' interference with the editorial independence of the SABC. The findings of the study show that editors at the SABC want to set their own agenda in society by disseminating news and information that is in their favour. This news agenda will have an impact on how the public views and analyses events. The theory fully agrees with the findings of the study that SABC, as a public broadcaster, has an audience footprint of millions; therefore, it is a suitable entity that can carry any agenda message to reach a large number of people. Valenzuela and McCombs (2019) describe agenda-setting theory as the media that decides to tell us what we need to know in relation to politics, scientific discoveries, wars, etc.

Agenda Setting Theory further corresponds with this study in that people tend to have trust in media news from public entities since it is believed to serve the best interests of the people with integrity and dignity. Therefore, the public uses SABC news material to shape public opinions regarding which issues get the most attention. The theory shows that nations ruled to have more political power tend to have higher media exposure. The findings of this study correlate that SABC, as a South African-based public media entity, is used to drive bias on issues such as politics because it is mostly interfered with by either government officials or politicians.

5.3.2 Authoritarian theory

According to the theory, mass media is influenced and controlled by the state authority, whereby the media fulfils the wishes and commands of the authorities, and this is equal to dictatorship (Bajracharya, 2018). The main reason for authoritarians is to control the media to prevent and protect people from national threats through any means of communication. The theory correlates with the study that the government, as the authority, has the power to decide which news and information is satisfactory and acceptable for society.

Furthermore, Wojcieszak, Nisbert and Kremer (2019), show that national media in authoritarian control mostly serves as the mouthpiece of the government to disseminate the information of the regime government. Therefore, authoritarian theory is relevant for this study because it explore the editorial interference of the SABC by government officials as the authority. Moreover, government officials abuse power of the state of overlooking on the flowing of news and information in media by seeing it as an opportunity to interfere with operation and functioning of the SABC for their own personal agenda.

This theory clarifies the misconception of what role the government, as the authority, has to play in the media in monitoring the type and kind of news and information that is not posing harm to the public, rather than what has been discovered in this study. The theory relates to the findings of this study that government officials take advantage of being the authority elite in choosing which news and information should be disseminated to society and have the power to appoint who should be appointed as SABC Board members.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made.

- The study found that editorial policies are the heart and backbone of the SABC. Consequently, the study constructs the recommendation that policies should be made compulsory tool sections, which consist of independent members who are democratically elected by the public to monitor and overlook all activities that SABC workers engage in, and that the editorial policy body should not give powers to the government in the appointment of members. Moreover, editorial

policy induction and workshops should be held regularly for each and every SABC worker.

- The discovery of the study indicates that SABC has experienced and encountered editorial interference by government officials and politicians. Therefore, the study recommends that the appointment powers of SABC board members be stripped away from the president and that SABC board members, CEO, and COO should not hold any political positions in any political party. Furthermore, the government should be barred from overseeing the operation of the SABC; rather, media regulating bodies should be brought on board and take charge of such responsibilities. The only thing the government should do is provide financial support as per the budget allocation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs).
- Outcome of the study retrieved that editorial interference aftermath have a dire and catastrophic negative impact on the SABC, its workers and the public. The study recommends that clear policies should be passed to deal with any wrong doing pertaining editorial interference at the public broadcaster.
- Various government entities including parliament, ICASA, Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, media regulatory bodies should work together to guard against any editorial interference of the SABC.
- Furthermore, these interferers must never be allowed to occupy any public office which has anything to do with serving the public. The outcome of the study found that editorial interference aftermath had a dire and catastrophic negative impact on the SABC, its workers, and the public. As a result, the study recommends that serious measures, actions, and harsher repercussions should be taken against state officials and politicians who are abusing power to interfere in the daily operation of the SABC. Furthermore, these interferers must never be allowed to occupy any public office that has anything to do with serving the public.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

- Further studies should be pursued regarding the significance of editorial policies on the operation and functioning of media companies in South Africa.
- A further study which focuses on the abuse of power by politicians and government officials on state owned enterprises in South Africa should be conducted.
- Another study focusing on the impact of news and information content on people's lives and decision making of societal issues should be undertaken.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study only focused on the SABC as a public broadcaster, thus, the findings of the study could not be generalised to the entire South African media sector.
- The sample used was limited to regular SABC audiences, and thus, the results of the study cannot be generalized to the general population of new followers.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter provides a summary of the findings of the study on the exploration of government officials' interference in the editorial independence of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Despite the fact that there were constraints regarding the study, it provided positive information that can benefit future research. This study gives confidence that it has made a mark in strengthening the anatomy of wider knowledge and understanding regarding government officials' interference in the independence of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Despite the selected population sample, this study is obsessed nationally and globally in terms of the SABC footprint's access to audiences. Furthermore, the researcher has courage and confidence that the study has the means to abet the media sector, public media institutions, state-owned enterprises, relevant stakeholders, and policy-shaping bodies to successfully amend policies and measures that will protect media companies and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Ultimately, the study has provided an inner understanding of the impact of government officials' interference on the editorial interference of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The study has highlighted the need for further and additional research, specifically in the broader context of the impact of interference on public and state institutions. The researcher

has hope that the study will play a huge role in motivating future research on the risk and endangerment of editorial interference in public media institutions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, COMMUNICATION, AND INFORMATION STUDIES

Research Project

Master of Arts : Media Studies

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Supervisor

Surname & Initials : Dr NC Baloyi

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Dear Participants

You are cordially invited to participate in a Master's research, in the media field to assist the researcher to complete the study. You are requested to record your agreement to participate in this study in this consent form which also serves as a letter of request. If you agree to assist this researcher in this study, please indicate your agreement to participate below.

I ----- agree to volunteer to participate in this research project from the University of Limpopo. I understand that this research is designed to gather information about the investigating of government official's interference on the editorial; independence of SABC.

Moreover, I understand that:

1. My participation in this research is voluntary, and that I will not receive financial compensation for my participation. I may withdraw my participation in a case of discomfort, and my withdrawal will not affect my relationship with the researcher.
2. I have the right to decline to answer certain questions if I am uncomfortable with any question.
3. My responses to the questions will be recorded with my permission only if I agree to the recording process. However, if I am not comfortable about recording my responses, I will not answer the questions.
4. Information that will be obtained from me in the form of views will be strictly used for research purposes and I request to receive a copy of the final research once it is completed.
5. I have a right to be anonymous and my identity provided to the researcher should remain confidential even if the information can be published for public knowledge and to educate members of the public about digital broadcasting.

Participant

Date

I, Ramogale Peter Thabo, clarified the scope of the research to the participant and explained his/her rights concerning his/her participation in the research project. He/she freely agreed to participate in this study.

Kind regards,

Researcher

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS GUIDE

Name of the Researcher: Ramogale Peter Thabo
Title of the study: Exploration of the government officials' interference on the editorial independence of South African Broadcasting Corporation Synopsis of the study: The study aims to investigate the impact of government official's interference on the editorial independence of SABC. The study wants to identify the way in which SABC editorial independence is being violated by government officials. The study desire to show the challenges of SABC editorial independence being interfered by outsiders (government officials) it poses on society and SABC as a public broadcasting platform of disseminating news and information.

Guide for textual analysis:

1. News which reports on alleged editorial interference at SABC.
2. News articles which have been published by reputable media houses.
3. News articles which have been published in the period of 2018–2022.

END

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of the Researcher: Ramogale Peter Thabo
Title of the study: Exploration of the government officials' interference on the editorial independence of South African Broadcasting Corporation Synopsis of the study: The study aims to investigate the impact of government official's interference on the editorial independence of SABC. The study wants to identify the way in which SABC editorial independence is being violated by government officials. The study desire to show the challenges of SABC editorial independence being interfered by outsiders (government officials) it poses on society and SABC as a public broadcasting platform of disseminating news and information.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

This interview guide is a data collection tool for a Master of Arts in Media Studies research. The information provided will be used for this research project. The rights of the participants are always respected. All the research ethical principles such as anonymity and privacy, amongst others, are taken into consideration in this study. The research participants have the right to be treated with dignity and honour. Their rights to remain anonymous and privacy are well-maintained by the researcher during and after data collection procedure. Participants are not going to be forced to complete this questionnaire. Confidentiality, as a key ethical principle, will be respected in this research. You are kindly requested to be honest when answering the interview questions.

SECTION A: Demographics

1. Age

18-21 years	1
27-31 years	3
32-34 years	4
35+ years	5

2. Sex

Male	1
Female	2

3. Occupational role

Type of occupation:	1
Other, please specify:	2

4. Highest qualification

Matric	1
Diploma/Degree	2
Honours	3
Masters	4
PHD/Professor	5

SECTION B: Interview questions

1. What role does SABC policies serve in editorial section?
2. Why are editorial policies important in dissemination of news at SABC?
3. Does implementation of editorial policies play significant role on news and information of SABC? Yes or No? Explain Why?
4. Explain what you understand by the concept editorial policy?
5. How can audiences know if SABC implement editorial policies on news?
6. Why does institution like SABC require policies?
7. What effects does editorial interference have on transparency of the SABC news?
8. What causes outsiders to want to interfere with editorial content of the SABC?
9. Have you come across any article(s) in relation to editorial interference of the SABC?
10. What is the difference between editorial interference and editorial independence?
11. How can society determine news content which has been interfered and one that is independent?
12. What impact does editorial interference by government have on SABC Integrity?
13. How does the establishment of editorial policies assist in ethical conducts of employees of SABC in disseminating of news?
14. Does the public have alternative of using other media entities to compare news content transparency? Yes or No? Explain Why?
15. Does editorial interference have aftermath consequences on workers career of SABC? Yes or No? Explain Why?
16. What can be done to ensure SABC operate under editorial independence?
17. Is SABC a fully independent entity or it is just a myth and why?



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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 21 AUGUST 2023
PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/633/2023: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Exploration of the government officials' interference on the editorial independence of South African Broadcasting Corporation
Researcher: PT Ramogale
Supervisor: Dr NC Baloyi
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Language and Communication Studies
Degree: Master of Arts in Media Studies

PROF D MAPOSA
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



RIGHTMOVE MULTIMEDIA
UNIT C, MANKWENG
081 746 8032
Karabokonyani@gmail.com
rightmovemultimedia@gmail.com

Editing Certification

1 December 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This editing certificate verifies that this Research was professionally edited for
Ramogale Peter Thabo

Thus, it is meant to acknowledge that I, Mrs K.L Malatji, a professional Editor under a registered company, RightMove Multimedia, have meticulously edited the manuscript from the University of Limpopo. Title: "EXPLORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' INTERFERENCE ON THE EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION."

Mrs K. L Malatji