An investigation into the presentation of diverse sources in television news broadcasts: An analysis of Lesotho Television (LTV) news bulletins.

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Acknowledgments

Declaration

I, Lineo Motjamela, do hereby declare that this is my own work, unless otherwise specified in the text. I further declare that I have never before submitted this for an award of a degree to any University. This work is being submitted in partial fulfillment of Master of Arts in the faculty of Human Sciences, in the department of Culture, Communication and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal – Durban, South Africa.

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Durban, 2005.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my sons Monameli and Tabane Moqasa for their forbearance during the drawn out process of writing this dissertation.

Abbreviations

BCP-Basotho Congress Party

BNP- Basotho National Party

CR FM-Roman Catholic Radio

FIDA- Federation of Women Lawyers

FM -Frequency Modulation

IPA-Interim Political Authority

LCD -Lesotho Congress for Democracy

LEC-Lesotho Evangelical Church

LTV - Lesotho Television

MFP- Marema-Tlou Freedom Party

MILES- Media Institute of Lesotho

MISA- Media Institute of Southern Africa

NGOs -Non-Governmental Organisations

N.U.L -National University of Lesotho

PSB- Public Service Broadcasting

RCC- Roman Catholic Church

SADC –Southern African Development Community

TV- Television

WLSA- Federation of Women Lawyers in Southern Africa

Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the presentation of diverse sources of news in Lesotho Television (LTV) news bulletins. The sources of news in this case study are divided into two categories namely the 'knowns' (prominent people in society who occupy well-known positions) and the 'unknowns' (average citizens). The study measured the frequency with which the 'unknowns' appear as sources of news and/or as protagonists of news stories as well as subjects. The diversity of opinion was measured in terms of age and gender.

The study is informed by public service broadcasting (PSB), news and source theories. The public service broadcasting theory highlights the hypothesis that LTV as a nation-builder has failed to fulfill its obligation of representing all the members of the society equitably. News theories highlight the notion that news selection favours the dominant or known sources and that newsworthiness is determined according to the broadcasting organisational demands. This study thus demonstrates that news stories at LTV are selected in terms of the economic, social and political requirements of the station.

The findings of this research confirmed the assumption that news sources are the prominent members of the society while the ordinary or average people are mostly featured in news bulletins as subjects. The time and space allocated to them is not equal. More time is allocated to sound bites on 'knowns'. Although the station assumes the responsibility of a public service broadcaster by following its tenets of informing, educating and entertaining as well as being a nation-builder, this study has shown that it is a state broadcaster. The station serves the elite most of whom are middle-aged men from the government organisations, reporting on government policies. The study also confirmed that LTV editors and reporters are not as editorially independent as claimed in some writings. There is a tradition of self-censorship among journalists at LTV, as they are treated as public servants and are reminded that they serve the government and cannot 'bite the hand that feeds them'. As a result some information is withheld from the public and journalists rarely expose the malpractices of the government. This has resulted in limited dissenting or alternative views from the general public.

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Introduction

Many studies concentrate on the analysis of news but do not question from where journalists get their information (Manning, 2001). The question of news sources is very important in the discussion of democracy. The media's role in democratic countries is to reflect political life by being a public sphere. This can be achieved only if the media, particularly the news media, provide airtime to diverse sources of news. This will allow the voters to make informed decisions. This study investigates the role of Lesotho Television (LTV) as a nation-builder in pluralistic politics promoting diverse sources of public opinion[1] in news as a process towards sustainable democracy. The choice of LTV is based on the fact that television has gained a prominent position within the political systems of the world and the concern for democracy automatically necessitates a concern about television news (Dahlgren, 1995). Further, the Lesotho draft Media Policy (1997) recognises the role of media in consolidating and sustaining a democratic system assisting in the political and economic empowerment of citizens as well as contributing to nation building and the country's social and economic development (Lejakane, 1997: 5).

The study is premised on the hypothesis that news at LTV favours the 'known' sources while the 'unknown' sources are not adequately presented. Another contention is that stories are urban-based while the rural areas are neglected. The study assumes that LTV as a nation builder should provide for diverse sources of opinions from the public regardless of their religion, politics, gender or any other criteria. The question underlying this study is whether the 'known'[2] and 'unknown'[3] sources of news enjoy the same degree of coverage, i.e an equal amount of time and space in which to communicate their perspectives in LTV news bulletins.

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[1] In this study diverse public opinion relates to the 'unknowns' of diverse sources and examines whether public opinion is shown on TV (refer to notes 2 and 3 for a more detailed definition).

[2] In this study sources of news have been categorised as 'Knowns' and 'Unknowns'. Refer to the methodology and theory section for a more detailed description.
'Knowns' – are a combination of people, some assumed by journalists to be familiar names among the audience, others who have appeared frequently in the news, and those that occupy well-known positions (Gans, 1979: 9)

[3] 'Unknowns'- ordinary people/the average person in society.

Paul Manning (2001) states:

> One of the important issues to consider, then, in thinking through the relationship between news media and democratic processes is whether or not the less powerful are significantly disadvantaged in the scramble to secure access to the news media. In turn, this will have an important bearing upon the question of just how diverse are the perspectives and interpretative frameworks that are presented through the news media (Manning, 2001: 1).

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides the socio-political situation in Lesotho since independence, from military government until the advent of democracy. It outlines the background to the establishment of LTV which prompted the researcher's interest in undertaking this study. An understanding of how news is selected at LTV must be prefaced with an understanding of the formation of the organisation itself, and the political and social structures within which it operates. The chapter presents a statement of the problem, the objectives of the study and relevant research issues.

The second chapter provides an overview of the literature related to the topic, and critiques ideas that have already been established, and describes their strengths and weaknesses. The chapter also provides a brief review of the different historical perspectives of media in Lesotho. The chapter also discusses theories of the media.

The third chapter will develop the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin the study. It presents perspectives on the role of media in democracy, highlighting the importance of a public service broadcaster in public debate in the promotion of democracy and development. It also discusses selection procedures in the gathering and production of news and how this is consistent with organisational requirements.

Chapter 4 discusses methodology, setting out approaches taken in the research, the methods and tools that were used in the analysis of data. The advantages and limitations of the research methods are also outlined in this chapter. The methods of study adopted are expected to highlight the decision making process in the selection of news at LTV.

The fifth chapter analyses the content of LTV news bulletins recorded over a period of two weeks by breaking the bulletins down into sources, time, origin, organisation and news

categories. The sources' gender, position and age are also examined. The findings are further discussed in relation to the theoretical frameworks of news, sources and public service broadcasting. It also examines whether there is equal presentation of diverse sources in LTV news bulletins, and the extent to which the LTV newsroom staff enjoy editorial independence. Through interviews with (past and present) reporters, presenters and management the chapter examines the perceptions regarding any significant change in LTV news bulletins since the advent of democracy. The chapter ends by seeking to provide possible answers to proposed research questions with the data generated through the study of whether news selection is based on public service broadcasting principles.

Chapter 6, which is the final chapter, offers a conclusion in light of the study's findings. The chapter concludes by situating LTV within the normative models of the media and answering the question of whether LTV is a nation builder or a state broadcaster.

Chapter 1: Background of Study

Socio-political background

Lesotho has undergone different political stages since independence in 1966. Unstable political situations affected the country, and the media was not immune. The history of electronic media paints a gloomy picture where media was used to serve the ideals of the ruling party (Bereng, 2001). Since democratic rule in the country, the media has operated within a relatively free dispensation where freedom of expression for all citizens is encouraged[4]. In order to understand the recent developments in the Lesotho media a historical background is necessary.

Lesotho is a small mountain kingdom, a Southern African sovereign state landlocked by the Republic of South Africa. "Modern politics in Lesotho started in 1952 when the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) was formed by Ntsu Mokhehle". Lesotho's first Legislative Council was introduced in 1956, while in 1959 a Constitution that granted limited power of self-government was also introduced. The country's first election, won by the BCP, was held in 1960. This led to the drafting of the pre-independence Constitution in 1964 (Kasoma, 1992: 21). In 1965 Lesotho held its second election, won by the Basutoland National Party (BNP). The country attained independence on October 4, 1966. In 1970 the opposition BCP won the general elections. This caused the then Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan leader of BNP to declare a state of emergency and suspend the Constitution (Breytenbach, 1975). The BNP allegedly refused to hand over power to the BCP to save the country from the communist ideology propagated by the BCP (Gumbi, 1995)[5]. The party further alleged that BCP had rigged the election results. However, Gumbi (1995) states the validity of these allegations was never tested as the legal channels were closed through the suspension of the Constitution and the use of the armed forces to prevent a change in government.

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[4]Motlamelle, T. (2004) 'Lesotho'. In *So this is democracy.*
http://www.misa.org/sothisisdemocracy/lesotho/lesotho.html Accessed (18/07/04).

[5] Gumbi, L. (1995) 'Instability in Lesotho: A search for alternatives'.
http://www.iss.org.za/Pubs/ASR/4No4/InstabilityLesotho.html Accessed (12/09/04)

In 1973 an interim assembly began work on a new Constitution, but the BCP, led by Ntsu Mokhehle, refused to participate. Prime Minister Jonathan accused the BCP of attempting to stage a coup; the party was outlawed and hundreds of its members reportedly killed and most of them fled the country. The situation in Lesotho in the 1970s was characterised by bloodshed (Khaketla, 1971: 262). The members of the opposition party left behind had either to remain silent or to join the BNP. The Lesotho nation was not only divided along political lines but also in terms of religious beliefs:

> Churches such as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) supported the BNP government, while others such as the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC) supported the opposition. The civil service and the military service were all composed of people from the ruling party. All this was facilitated through the use of the BNP membership card that everybody had to produce for identity purposes (Tau, 2001: 9).

Radio Lesotho, a national radio station, was government-owned and was used by the BNP to legitimise their government (Bereng, 2001: 10). The national radio content was characterised by government speeches especially after the news and during prime time broadcast. The station also gained popularity after the banning of the alternative newspapers opposing the government (Tau, 2001).

In January 1986, Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya launched a military coup that toppled the then ruling BNP. The coup was a result of Chief Jonathan's lack of foresight and reluctance to introduce political reform measures that created tension and political dissatisfaction (Gumbi, 1995). The new military government claimed to have launched the coup to return the country to democratic rule through the process of national reconciliation (Gumbi, 1995). "BCP members and those members of the BNP who wanted peace and reconciliation were particularly supportive since, ironically, this was the supposed aim of the army" (Tau, 2001: 10). Lesotho Television was formed during this period when the then Lesotho military government was engaged in the programme of building the Basotho nation while at the same time attempting to reduce their dependence on the outside world, particularly South Africa. The establishment of the television station in 1988 was also prompted by the visit of the Pope to the country (interview, Makintane, September 2004). Tau (2001: 39) argues that the Pope's visit to Lesotho coincided with the Lesotho military

regime's agenda of uniting the nation. The Pope was considered a symbol of peace to a nation divided along political and religious lines. Lesotho was under military rule until 1993, first under Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya (1986-1991), and after him, under Major General Elias Phisoane Ramaema, who spearheaded the first democratic elections in March 1993. The elections were won by BCP with a landslide victory and the party's late leader Dr Ntsu Mokhehle became the Prime Minister. Since then, the Lesotho media has been relatively free allowing freedom of expression to all citizens (Motlamelle, 2004). Commenting on the role of the democratic government after the 1993 elections in Lesotho Khabele Matlosa (1993) writes:

> One of the challenges facing the new government (BCP) --- was to chart a practical policy in terms of ensuring accountable governance and multiparty democracy to embark on opening the government media to the various views and opinions of the electorate, opposition parties and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (1993: 11).

Despite the changes brought by the democratic rule, Lesotho experienced major incidents of political instability between 1994 and 1998. These include among others conflicts between army troops and the dissolution of Parliament by King Letsie III. The ruling party (BCP) at the time split to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) under the leadership of the late Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle. In 1998 the second National elections were held which resulted in political turmoil in the country as the major opposition parties BCP, BNP and the Marema-Tlou Freedom Party (MFP) contested the victory of LCD. This resulted in burning and looting in three major towns in the country and many lives were lost during the incidents. However, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) troops intervened to return the country to stability. Through international support and national dedication to peace and democracy, the third general elections were held in May 2002, based on the Mixed Member Proportional Representation Model. The elections led to 10 political parties getting into Parliament, with the LCD - under the leadership of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili- as the majority Party. "With the representative Parliament since its independence, Lesotho has now entered a new dawn in its history, with infinite possibilities for deepening democracy as well as accelerating efforts to develop the country" (Kimaryo et al, 2004: 17).

It is into this changing political environment that LTV, as a nation-builder, should serve as a sphere "between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state" (Jakubowicz, 1998: 12-13). The public sphere should be based on the principle of inclusion, of equality of access for everyone (Jakubowicz, 1998). The study recognises the media's importance of enabling diverse sources of public opinion in its news broadcasts. Denis McQuail (2000) points out that diversity stands very close to freedom. The freedom he states suggests "more or less equal chances of access to the voices of various social and cultural minorities that make up the society" (McQuail, 2000: 171). While the potential positive impact a public service broadcaster can have on society is indeed vast, questions have been levelled about the concept regarding its elitism in both control and content. John Thompson (1990) supports this view stating:

> Public service broadcasting vests overall control of the institution in the hands of elite which, by virtue of the appointment system, tends to compromise individuals drawn from a relatively narrow and privileged social background (Thompson, 1990: 256).

In this regard the Lesotho media were also criticised for keeping the people informed only about government activities and enlist their support for these activities (Kasoma, 1992: 93). Given this, the study therefore examines the role of LTV as a nation-builder in a democratic country. The intention of the study is to find out whether LTV promotes diverse sources of news in its news broadcasts. The contention is that unity in a country that experienced political unrest and divisions can only be achieved by sharing political institutions and public space. Moreover, the public sphere should be based on the principle of inclusion and of equality of access for everyone (Jakubowicz, 1998). This role can only be achieved if the national broadcaster is able to operate independently of the direct overall powers of their government.

Summary

The chapter provided the socio-political background of the study. It outlined the phases of political instability in the country, most of which ended with the toppling of democratically

elected governments. It also highlighted the need for democratisation of communication in newly democratic countries, Lesotho being a case in point.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The chapter gives an overview of the literature related to the topic, and critiques ideas that have already been established, and describes their strengths and weaknesses. This chapter also provides a brief review of the different historical perspectives of media in Lesotho. The emphasis is mainly on media policies, media accessibility as well as the concept of nation-building and democracy.

Lesotho media history is difficult to trace because of the poor archival infrastructure within the country. Les Switzer and Donna Switzer (1979: x) state that "there are no copyright libraries and the Lesotho Archives is an archive in name only. Even files of contemporary government publications are not kept systematically". Therefore the country has no single established repository where one may access necessary documents. Switzer and Switzer, (1979: x) state, however, that "until very recently the burden of preserving Lesotho's documented past fell on the missionary societies and on the efforts of individuals both inside and outside the country". Thus the churches within the country have played major roles in the development and maintenance of the media institution and practice in Lesotho. The National University of Lesotho (N.U.L.) however, has archives section where some national documentaries and publications are preserved although this section is not fully established.

Despite this, there are still few scholarly publications on the media in Lesotho. Those that have been published deal with the media policies in Lesotho (Kasoma, 1992) and the privatisation of the media in Lesotho (Bereng, 2001). Other studies which deal with media in Lesotho are unpublished dissertations by different scholars namely Lebohang Lejakane (1997), Thato Foko (2000) and Molikuoa Tau (2001).

Media policies and control

As stipulated by a number of writers (Kasoma, 1992; Lejakane, 1997 and Bereng, 2001) there is no policy that regulates the media in Lesotho other than a draft media policy which was completed in 1997 and has been put on hold since then. The document outlines the role of media as follows:

– Contribute to the cultural development of the country;

– Consolidate and sustain a democratic system;

– Assist in the political and economic empowerment of citizens;

– Contribute to the development and upgrading of people's skills and knowledge in a lifelong learning process;

– Contribute to nation-building and the country's social and economic development;

– Close the gap between those sectors in society who are already 'information rich' and those who are 'information poor'; and

– Communicate Lesotho's aspirations, opinions and visions at the international level (Lesotho Draft Media Policy 1997: 5).

Although there is no policy regulating the media in Lesotho there has been little interference from the government. Since independence in 1966 the government found that "a system that allowed a plurality of voices through the print media, controlled primarily through registration with the Law office" was in place (Bereng, 2001: 10). Thus people were allowed to produce a publication provided they had financial capability. The missionaries had financial backing or capability and were thus the forebearers of the press in Lesotho. This statement is supported by Mohlalefi Bereng (2001: 10) who states "[f]reedom to publish newspapers seems to have been won by missionaries through a long tradition of book publishing, which was neither questioned by the colonial government nor offended local authorities". However, he contends that the press enjoyed freedom as there were few people who could afford the cost of regular publishing. Francis Kasoma (1992) also maintains that the press is relatively free in Lesotho and criticism against the government is common:

> If freedom of the press means 'getting away with murder' then the press in
> Lesotho can be regarded as free. The church-owned newspapers, particularly the

Catholic weekly *Moeletsi oa Basotho*, do 'get away with murder[6]: in some of their hair-raising revelations and criticisms of the administration'[7]. But there have also been occasions when the Government has taken exception to the reports and cracked its whip (Kasoma, 1992: 33).

It should be noted that Kasoma's statement is somewhat in conflict with Bereng's statement, quoted earlier that the missionaries' long publishing tradition had not "offended local authorities" (Bereng 2001: 10). Kasoma argues that the church-owned newspapers were particularly free as compared to the privately-owned newspapers. This view is supported by Switzer and Switzer (1979: 2) who argue that in the 1960's the political publications (private) in Lesotho were conceived with the issue of independence, but "[o]nce this was achieved in 1966, they shifted targets to the authoritarian policies of Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan". Many of these political journals closed due to the coup d'état of January 1970. These publications included *The Commentator* and *Makatolle,* organs of BCP, *Majammoho* the organ of the Communist Party and *Mohlabani* which was first associated with the BCP until 1960 when it became the organ of MFP (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: 21). These were all private opposition parties' publications. Consequently to fill the vacuum left by these political publications, the religious publications, trying to keep with the spirit of the times, moved beyond the denominational and ecclesiastical boundaries of the previous era. *Moeletsi oa Basotho* provided a kind of Basotho catholic mirror of contemporary events in Lesotho (Switzer and Switzer, 1979: 6).

Despite the relative freedom enjoyed by the print media (particularly religious newspapers) the electronic media in Lesotho set a different scenario as it was highly controlled by the government. "Proclamation 5 of 1927 contains some control measures in regard to radio operations and activities within the territory of Basutoland" (Bereng, 2001: 10). One of the measures "authorises the postmaster general of the union of South Africa to issue broadcasting licenses in the territory of Basutoland, thus subjugating the political existence of Lesotho to that of the Union" (Bereng, 2001: 10). The electronic media especially Radio

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[6] Kasoma's understanding of liberalisation is rather superficial. Refer to Tomaselli, K. (2003) 'Our culture our' vs 'Foreign culture' In *Gazette: The international journal of communication studies.* Vol. 65(6): 427-441 for a critical perspective on Kasoma's work.

Lesotho as indicated in the first chapter by Bereng (2001) and Tau (2001) was used by the BNP to legitimise their government as the station was dominated by government speeches.

Media Accessibility

In Lesotho, as anywhere on the continent, "broadcasting has always been chiefly state-controlled, heavily-subsidised, and urban-based, usually emanating from capital cities" (Bourgault, 1995: 42). This has led to uneven development between the urban and rural areas as well as groups of privileged and unprivileged urban dwellers. Moreover, this has resulted in a situation where urban voices, particularly that of the urban elites, mainly development policy providers dominate (MISA Consultants, 1995; Sechaba Consultants, 1994). The situation has also been experienced in the print media where "all newspapers (government and private) were based in the capital Maseru except for two mass circulation church journals which are based a few kilometres outside the capital" (Lejakane, 1997: 8). This has resulted in less coverage of the rural areas. In his study entitled 'The role of the News Agency in development (Support) communication: A case study of Lesotho', (1997) Lejakane argues that media can effectively perform its role in development of the country only if they are accessible to both the rural as well as the urban areas. He states that development strategies should be geared towards the empowerment of people at the grassroots level. He further points out that for the country to achieve development people have to participate in the decision-making process as beneficiaries to development projects. This should not be just for the elite or a favoured few.

However, given the skewed coverage of the rural areas in Lesotho, Lejakane (1997: 134) concludes that "the system's capability to be gainfully employed in development strategies and initiatives is questionable both in terms of its limited geographical reach as well as its top-down approach to communication". Thato Foko (2000) suggests that the Internet can be used to break down the geographic distances which were an impediment to delivery and access to news information to foster development. However, he is quick to point out that in a country such as Lesotho it is highly expensive to access the Internet. This has led to the Internet being used only by a selected few rich people in Maseru and the majority of the people left without necessary information. He therefore recommends that government formulate a policy which focuses on reducing the cost of information technology to the end user (Foko, 2000: 44). He

states that Lesotho can only participate meaningfully in the global economy and politics if the Internet infrastructure is fully developed. Despite the usefulness of the Internet in breaking boundaries of space and time, one could argue that, in a country such as Lesotho where a vast majority of people who live in the rural areas are illiterate, this seems to be a far cry as the Internet uses English and this is a disadvantage to people with little, if any English skills. The author's own contention is that not only is English a barrier, but the concern of rural coverage of news items should not be overlooked. The Internet could certainly expand the world to rural citizens of Lesotho, but what of ensuring that there is sufficient local coverage of events relevant to those people?

Nation-Building and democracy

Regarding nation-building, which is the central focus of this study, writers such as Tawana Kupe (1996) argue that the colonial legacy of state broadcasting monopolies has continued but is now under the guise of nominally autonomous corporations in which the state interferes in policy, appointments, management and programming decisions in the name of nation building and development.[8] Kupe argues that the question of national identity was linked to the nation-building project which depended upon national unity for national development.

In his article entitled 'Privatisation of the media and national survival in Lesotho', Bereng (2001: 11) argues that the process of privatisation "has neither empowered the individual nor the nation". The problem, he states, arises particularly because enterprises that were generated to serve the people were sold to private owners who are interested in maximising the profit and enriching themselves. He contends that although the process of privatisation is linked to democracy, "[t]he concept of privatising was never debated locally by the government and the people. It was generally imposed on the nation" (Bereng, 2001: 12). He comments that the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1998 saw the establishment of a number of radio stations, religious, commercial as well as private. This, he states, led to the opening up for different voices. Out of the four stations granted licenses during the time of his writing "two have clear

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[8] Kupe, T. (1996) 'Comment: New Forms of Cultural Identity in an African Society'. *Media and the Transition of Collective Identities*. http://www.postcolonialweb.org/africa/kupe2.html Accessed (28/07/04).

independent editorial policies and caused state authorities to question the wisdom of allowing many voices on the air (Bereng, 2001: 10). He argues, however, that the privatisation of media and ownership of economic enterprises should be in the hands of the locals. This, he says, will enhance the process of national identity and survival. The argument is borne of the fact that the liberalisation of the airwaves was meant to create a plurality of voices from the local citizens. Thus the licenses were issued to the Basotho nationals; however, in most cases the bulk of the financial support for running these stations came from outside sources. Bereng further questions the concept of pluralism in serving as a catalyst in nation-building initiatives given the ownership of the broadcasting stations. He states that the thesis that privatisation frees society of domination fails to reflect the true picture (Bereng, 2001: 13) which is that "issues of national identity cannot effectively be focused on by media financially dominated by foreign interests" (Bereng, 2001: 13).

The issue of nation-building and commercialisation is further discussed by Tau (2001) in his study 'The paradox on nation-building and commercially driven broadcasting: The case of Lesotho Television'. Tau outlines the limitations of the project of nation-building with M-Net, a commercially driven station. He reveals that LTV has to treat its viewers as citizens while M-Net treats its audiences as consumers. Moreover, he argued that "in its nation-building attempt the Lesotho government was less effective by relying on the importation of foreign media. This is even more significant in light of the fact that the SABC was notoriously known for promoting national divisions along colour and tribal lines" (Tau, 2001: 29). He points out that LTV as a nation builder should reflect the culture of a nation and thus promote social identity. "Public broadcasters will always emphasise the heroic acts of the founders of a nation and how they made the nation what it is today—these heroes are considered a symbol of unity that everyone in the society identifies himself/herself with". He states that national sports games, inaugurations and cultural celebrations such as a King's birthday in Lesotho promotes "national identity and unity since the king symbolises unity and oneness of the nation" (Tau, 2001: 35). He argues that LTV should dissociate itself from the foreign media. "Within the dissociation paradigm[9] mass media are useful in the development of national pride, which in turn influences nation-building" (Tau, 2001: 34). Moreover, he contends that nation-building within Lesotho requires local broadcasters, not foreign broadcasters such as

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[9]The theory emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with modernization. The argument is that the underdevelopment of the Third World is a result of its dependency on the First World. Thus the underdeveloped countries (periphery) should break this dependency and dissociate themselves from the developed countries (centre). That is LTV should dissociate itself from M-Net a South African pay channel.

the SABC. Both Bereng (2001) and Tau (2001) agree that nation-building within Lesotho requires local broadcasters to strive for national identity and survival.

The arguments of the two writers have merits. The national pride and improvement of economic status can be achieved by engaging the locals. The mass media as catalysts for development can be used to bring human interaction for the purposes of development. However, foreign investors are mainly interested in maximising profits and enriching themselves and not serving the people or concerning themselves with concepts such as national building. The two writers (Bereng and Tau), however, fail to acknowledge that the increasing disparities between classes in Lesotho tend to suggest that nation-building is less about building symbolic representations of national unity but it is about meeting the economic, political and developmental needs of its citizens. Unity and the spirit of nationalism can only be achieved in a democratic media where national issues are discussed by different groups which make up the nation. The author of this dissertation is of the opinion that media should allow for diverse sources of public opinion irrespective of religion, class, age, gender, politics or any other criteria.

These sentiments are supported by Hannah Arendt's (in d' Entrèves, 1989) who argues that the role of media in uniting distinctive individuals to form a political community is to be conceptualised in the new forms of communications that are highly accessible to all. Thus collective identity can only arise out of a negotiated "process in which actors articulate and defend competing conceptions of political legitimacy". Arendt's argues that this is not a result of religious or ethnic affinity, or even some common value system. Rather unity can be achieved by sharing a public space and a set of political institutions. What "unites people in a political community is therefore not some set of common values, but the world they set up in common, the spaces they inhabit together, the institutions and practices that they share as citizens" (d' Entrèves, 1989: 8). This suggests that the issue of nation-building in Lesotho cannot only be achieved through the portrayal of national celebrations and games as indicated by Tau (2001) but also through the engagement and participation of people from the grassroots level in decision making processes. This view has been supported by David Held (1987) who states that:

> Participatory democracy fosters human development, reduces the sense of
> estrangement from political power centres, nurtures concern for collective

problems and contributes to the formation of an active and knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking more acute interest in government affairs (Held, 1987: 259).

This argument is based on the fact that media in Lesotho, as discussed earlier in this chapter by different writers, is elitist and has been used by those in power to strive for their political agenda and by others for their own financial gain. The elitist nature of sources has also been described by Andrew Roth, (1998: 79) who states "[i]n gathering news, journalists depend on other parties to act as sources. Subsequently, in reporting news journalists exhibit practical, professional orientations to establishing those sources' authenticity, reliability and newsworthiness". These sources are from bureaucratic organisations of government. The argument goes that dealing with bureaucracies for the journalists provides for the continuous detection of events and reliable and steady sources of news" (Schudson, 1989: 271). In a review of Paul Manning's book *News and news sources: A critical introduction* (2001), Joseph Campell (2002) argues that powerful elite sources set the agenda and their stories generally appear in the news media as they understand the values that steer news selection. On the same note Lynn Zoch and Judy Turk (1998: 764) state "due to their centrality in power systems, they can supply a great deal of information without unduly taxing their organizations or the resources of journalists". Gans (1979) also claims that officials generally have the upper hand. He generally labels these sources as 'Knowns'. These are mainly sources that regularly appear on the news and because of their credibility are considered newsworthy, and journalists prefer those sources identified by name (Roth, 1998: 79). As indicated by Tuchman (1978: 124-32), print journalists attribute quotations to sources who are conventionally identified by name, while television journalists narrate news stories to include similar identifications of their sources to accompany videotaped footage.

The sources of news as stated in some writings are mainly men. Lejakane (1997) states that the majority of population in farming, manufacturing as well as small enterprises in Lesotho are actually women. However, women still continue to suffer discrimination. He argues that development in Lesotho can be achieved through the participation of both men and women in the decision making process. "Women are central to the development process in Lesotho and their full participation in decision-making at both local and national levels can only expedite and enhance the development process" (Lejakane, 1997: 203). The minimal representation of women in the mainstream media has also been elaborated by Pilar Riano (1994). She argues

that the women's subordinate position is revealed in the media through lack of participation and representation in news, current affairs and access to the new communication technologies.

Relevance and significance of the study

In light of the discussion and review of literature of media in Lesotho, the study explores the role of LTV as a nation-builder in the democratic presentation of diverse sources of news in its news broadcasts. As indicated, media in Lesotho since the democratic rule is relatively free; the study therefore seeks to find out whether the role that the press in Lesotho has played from the authoritarian government to the pluralistic politics and democratic dispensation has changed the way the Lesotho press operates, particularly with regard to Lesotho Television. The choice of LTV is stipulated in the Introduction of this dissertation is based on the fact that television has gained a prominent position within the political systems of the world and the concern for democracy automatically necessitates a concern about television news (Dahlgren, 1995). The research firstly examines the extent to which LTV news allow for the expression of alternative viewpoints from the general public. And to examine if there is a fair combination of the 'known' and 'unknown' sources of news/sound bites in the news bulletins in terms of time and space devoted to each. Secondly, it examines the extent to which journalists and editors at LTV enjoy editorial freedom. Lastly, it investigates the influences informing the criteria for selection of news stories at LTV, and whether these criteria are in keeping with the priorities of public service broadcasting obligations thus to find out whether LTV is a nation-builder or a state broadcaster?

As indicated by Alison Gillwald (1994) the transition to democracy will happen not only through constitutional change but should go beyond the limits of formal politics to meet a number of substantive ends in society. The mass media are central to this process of democratisation. They represent the major resource for effective citizenship without which people are not able to make informed decisions crucial to democracy. In spite of the "significant role of the media in the development and consolidation of democratic governance in [Lesotho], there has been comparatively little about their democratic significance" (Tettey, 2001: 5). It is, therefore, important to evaluate that significance, particularly under the new democratic dispensation. It is in the context of on-going transition that I explore the role of LTV as a nation-builder in encouraging diversity of opinion in enhancing democracy and

development in Lesotho. As indicated by Bereng (2001) the electronic media in Lesotho before the advent of democracy was used to perpetuate the ideals of the ruling government, and the study is to investigate if there are significant changes. With the liberalisation of the airwaves, and democratisation of polity, the assumption is that media plays a significant role in empowering individuals and groups to participate equitably regardless of one's gender, class, age, politics or geographic location. This authors argument is also based on the draft media policy of 1997 which provides for political and economic empowerment of citizens; closing a gap between those sectors in society who are already 'information rich' and those who are 'information poor'; and thus contributing to nation building and the country's social and economic development (Lesotho Draft Media Policy, 1997: 5).

It has to be noted that although journalists in Lesotho are said to enjoy the freedom of expression as observed by Kasoma, the draft Constitution of Lesotho does not make any mention of the freedom of the press (Kasoma 1992: 38). This view was also acknowledged in a *Review of Lesotho media law* (MILES, nd) which states that "not many laws make reference to press freedom, and in the absence of these laws it makes it difficult or almost impossible for the press to have a right to report and comment on public matters without government interference or any other interference" (MILES, nd: 1). Given the absence of the laws which provide for press freedom and the lack of national media policy the study investigates the possibility of the station in providing for diverse sources of news in its news broadcasts. The contention is that the media can fulfil its obligation of being a nation-builder in pluralistic politics only if there are policies and regulations which guide the journalists and protect their rights in publishing and seeking information from different dissenting voices without hindrance, or any form of censorship from the government or those in authority. The absence of these regulatory legislations questions both the universal accessibility and editorial independence of journalists at LTV.

The dissertation thus assesses the state of LTV station and its role as a conduit for democratic expression and consolidation. It particularly emphasises the extent to which LTV as a nation-builder presents diverse sources of news in pluralistic politics. There are three broad understandings regarding the relationship between broadcasting and nation-building. At the first level, electronic media is believed to have the capability of disseminating symbolic messages and representations of unification and reconciliation. At the second level, the media and communications industry is seen as playing a vital role in the process of economic

development and reconstruction. Thirdly, the media is assumed to have the ability to play an important role in the extension and democratic participation in [Lesotho] (Barnett, 1998).

It is on these democratic debates that I draw, and to which I hope this dissertation contributes a theoretical understanding of the central function of the mass media in the development and maintenance of democratic nation-building in Lesotho. Practically, this dissertation can contribute to a democratic framework for nation-building debates. Much attention, as has already been described, has been paid to the role of media in development as well as control and policies guiding the media in Lesotho. However, there is a paucity of knowledge on the issue of media democratisation and nation-building. The dissertation is therefore expected to fill the gap and provide an overview of the interaction between communication and nation-building in democracy given that there is little that has been documented.

Summary

The chapter reviewed the literature on media in Lesotho, and on the concept of the role of the media in nation-building. The focus was more on the concept of universal accessibility, gender, media policies as well as nation-building and democracy. The literature was reviewed to investigate how the present research project fits into the existing work. The significance of the study was also outlined based on the role of Lesotho media and the country's transition to democracy. It highlighted how electronic media in Lesotho was funded and controlled mainly by the state, and how the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1998 led to a more pluralistic media practice in Lesotho.

Chapter 3: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter provides perspectives on the role of media in democracy. Attention is placed on the concept of public service broadcasting, and its importance in contributing to the development of a public sphere in the promotion of democracy and development. Theories of the media were also employed to examine the notion of nation-building. It also discusses selection procedures in the gathering and production of news and how this is consistent with organisational requirements.

Media and democracy: general overview

The media is a critical ingredient in the transition of society from authoritarianism to democracy. It reflects the nature and level of maturity of democracy in a country as no other social indicator can[10]. The media is in turn affected by the maturity of that democracy (Ocitti, 1999)[11]. Folu Folarin Ogundimu (2003: 207) echoes this sentiment by pointing out that the media are significant institutions for sustaining democracy. The usefulness and potential power of the mass media to develop and maintain influence is widely recognised (Zaffiro, 2001: 20; Teer-Tomaselli, 1999). However, the role and impact of the media are still critically constrained by an underlying current of state erected impediments in African countries (Ocitti, 1999). Thus media in the emerging democratic countries in Africa are faced with the problem of state interference in policy, appointments, management and programming decisions in the name of nation building and development (Kupe, 1996). As Jimmy Ocitti (1999) puts it:

> The African leaders are still too deeply steeped in the politics of uniformity-
> of-views, and not in the habit of tolerating policy criticisms. With a generally
> weak opposition, the media in most of these countries are the only ones left to

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[10] Reddy, T. (1999)'Lesotho media report'. http://journ.ru.ac.za/amd/lesotho.htm
Accessed (06/09/04).

[11] Ocitti, J. (1999) 'Media and democracy in Africa' http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/fellows/papers98-99/ocitti.pdf1 Accessed (15/11/04)

punch holes into ill-conceived policies and expose corrupt practices that permeate much of what we call Africa's new democracies (Ocitti, 1999: 41).

The role of media in democracy

According to Catherine Ryan (2000: 1) "media's role in the public sphere is to become an overall representative of the people". Ryan (2000) argues that if media forms are to serve democratic communication and citizenship they themselves must become democratic. The role of media in democratic society is to serve the needs of the entire society and not just sectors of the society. Thus media should be equally accessible to all members of the society. The equality document as quoted in Bereng (2001) states that:

> Equality is a value that requires that special favours are not given to power holders and that access to the media should be on fair and equal basis to contenders for office and to oppositional or diverse opinions, perspectives or claims. Equality requires fair access to the media from all alternative voices in the public debate on national or public issues and matters (Bereng, 2001: 13).

The inclusion of all people in media develops a sense of belonging and creates interests on the part of the audience. Karol Jakubowicz (1998: 13) supports this view when he states that "self-recognition in media content needs to be addressed. People want to recognize themselves, their ideas, their way of life in an image of reality offered by the media". Kasoma (2000: 29) argues that democracy entails the right to choose from alternatives regarding the best course of action and to this end is largely based on availability of information which lays out those alternatives. McQuail (1994: 128) shares the same sentiment stating "the nearest approximation to truth will emerge from the competitive exposure of alternative viewpoints, and progress for society will depend on the choice of 'right' over 'wrong' solutions". This means that the media is to be allowed as much freedom as practically possible, so as to promote political debate and encourage a multiplicity of viewpoints on social issues, as a way of presenting the truth to the public.

Within the context of democracy media should have a degree of editorial independence, be financially viable, have diverse and plural voices, and serve the public interest. The public interest is defined as representing a plurality of voices both through a greater number of outlets and through the diversity of views and voices reflected within one outlet (CDG, 1999).[12] A pluralistic press requires the media to reflect the "widest possible range of opinion within the community" (Barker, 2001: 16). Democracy and pluralism in media can be attained only if there is diversity of opinion. In a democratic society public debate on the distribution of power is very crucial. This helps in examining and challenging the decisions made by the power holders publicly. However, the problem with the state broadcasters in the SADC region is that they are controlled and used as the voice of the government or the ruling party (Barker, 2001).

Watchdog Role

Television is also seen as an essential form of media for promotion of democracy as it provides a platform of debates and acts as a watchdog. James Curran (1991: 83) states that the watchdog role is defined as "revealing the abuses in the exercises of state authority". The role is said "to override in importance all other functions of the media, and to dictate the form in which the media should be organized" (Curran 1991: 84). However, "a press that is licensed, franchised or regulated is subject to political pressures when it deals with issues affecting the interests of those in power" (Kelley and Donway, 1990: 97 in Curran, 1991: 84). Given the present state of media Curran states that the watchdog role no longer holds. Curran argues that:

> The conventional view derives from a period when media were highly politicised and adversarial. Most modern media are now given over entertainment. Coverage of public affairs accounts only a small part of even news media content and only a proportion of this takes the form of critical scrutiny of government (Curran, 1991: 86).

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[12] The role of media in democracy: A strategic approach. "...*promoting the transition to and consolidation of democratic regimes throughout the world.*" June 1999.
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnace630.pdf.
Accessed (02/09/04)

The traditional watchdog role of the media is said to be worn-out as the watchdog status applies to the state issues only. However, there are other stakeholders who may have an influence in the running of the media such as the owners and advertisers.

Media as a 'Public Sphere'

Media in democracy is expected to function as a public sphere. The concept of the public sphere has been defined as:

> A particular type of spatial relationship between two or more people, usually connected by a certain means of communication… in which non-violent controversies erupt, for a brief or more extended period of time, concerning the power relations operating within their given milieu of interaction and/or within the wider milieu of social and political structures within which the disputants are situated (Keane, 1996: 34).

The concept of democracy that is highlighted in the definition presupposes an open information and communication system to ensure informed decisions in public affairs. The whole essence of the public sphere is to promote open lines of communication among the citizens and all interest groups. This means therefore that public service broadcasting should be an arena for a whole range of freedom of expression and should allow access to any information so that the electorate can have the information they need to make informed decisions.

The model of public sphere was propounded by Jurgen Harbermas (1962). The public sphere evolved in the 17th century coffee houses, salons, table societies and literary societies of France, Germany and England. Habermas's bourgeois site was free from constraints of both the state commercial and capitalist interests. It was an arena where political, economic, social and cultural issues were discussed. During the 18th century a new public sphere emerged which was opposed to the traditional power elite. It coincided with the development of capitalism and the changing forms of political power. This new bourgeois public sphere according to Harbermas (1962), was not part of the state, rather it was a sphere where the upcoming bourgeois class could criticise the state and claim power in society. For the first time the private person actively participated in the public sphere.

During the 19th century the public sphere declined due to a change in bourgeous life. There was a refeudalization in which media became commercialized, the state took control of the private world and experts formed bureaucracies, and the ordinary citizens were cut from the public discourse. The 20th century led to an authorised national press, and broadcasting institutions which defined the sphere through the work of media and political professionals (Calhoun, 1966). The proliferation of media led to the demise of the public sphere as the state began to control the content of the media through regulation. Commenting on this Thompson (1995) states:

> The separation between the state and civil-society – which had created an institutional space for the bourgeois public sphere –began to break down as state assumed an increasingly interventionist character and took on more and more responsibility for managing the welfare of citizens, and as organised interest groups became increasingly assertive in the political process (Thompson, 1995: 73-74).

The concept was, however, criticised on various grounds, predominantly for being too elitist, that is, it focuses on one certain class, the bourgeosie and therefore is not open to all (Calhoun, 1966). Moreover, women were excluded from the concept of the sphere. The concept also fails to recognise that there are alternative public spheres (Keane, 1996). Craig Calhoun (1996) argues that the mediated public sphere poses problems as it is difficult to bring all citizens together in one sphere to debate social and political issues. Harbermas (1989) argued that the modern capitalist technologies led to the decline of a public sphere:

> When the laws of the market governing the sphere of commodity exchange and of social labour also pervaded the sphere reserved for private people as a public (the public sphere), rational-critical debate had a tendency to be replaced by consumption, and the web of public communication unravelled into acts of individuated reception, however, uniform mode (Habermas, 1989: 163).

This therefore means a threat to democracy as the sphere treats the audience as consumers not as citizens. The work of Habermas however, poses problems in the modern context. The concept is said to be historical and it fails to recognise the tension that exists between the

state, economy and the public sphere within countries (Stevenson, 1995). Nick Stevenson further points out that Habermas is also criticised for directing all his attention towards the production and content of cultural forms and fails to focus on the context in which the media messages are received and the social relations which pervade these contexts. His work also fails to recognise that the public spheres in the modern era have to be accessible and available on a local, national and global level (Stevenson, 1995).

According to Stevenson (1995) the public sphere is supposed to fulfil three ideal functions; it has to be independent from the state and the economy, be an arena for a diversity of social groups to communicate with one another and the public as citizens rather that consumers. However, globalisation, new technological advancement and convergence pose a threat to the traditional public spheres. This has created the gap between the information rich and the information poor. In the information and communication sector this has been referred to as the 'digital divide'. Despite all the threats public service broadcasting (PSB) is still the best model of broadcasting. It is important for establishing a democratic form of government where the role of civil society is increasing. Moreover, PSB is the most efficient and the cheapest tool of supporting and developing the educational and cultural potential of a nation and a state. Paddy Scannell (1989) therefore argues that in a democratic situation radio and television should address public life and be made available to all.

Public Service Broadcasting Theory

This research is informed by the theoretical foundation of public service broadcasting (Scannell, 1997). Essentially, it emphasizes the role of public participation in ownership, control, funding and programming of broadcasting. The framework provides for diverse opinions from the public regardless of their religion, politics or any other criteria. Stuart Allan (1999: 49) argues "the responsibility for giving expression to the richly pluralistic spectrum of information sources places the journalist at the centre of public life." The news media, to the extent of being able to facilitate the formation of public opinion, makes democratic control over governing relations possible (Allan, 1999). The concept of public debate is important as a democratic function dependent on the freedom of expression to all citizens. This condition is set out in Section 14(1) of Lesotho's Constitution. The concept of public service

broadcasters will therefore be useful in analysing LTV news broadcasts to reveal whether LTV is equally accessible to both the government officials and the rest of the nation and whether it contributes towards nation-building.

What is public service broadcasting?

There is no fixed definition of the public service dimension in broadcasting. Marc Raboy (1995: 6) states that "in some countries, public service broadcasting (PSB) refers to a particular organization or sector of the broadcasting system, while in others the entire system may be viewed as a public service". However, public service broadcasting as an idea is rooted in the enlightened view of the public and public space in which social and political life democratically unfolds (Raboy, 1995: 6). The word "public" refers to the entire population of the country or region that the public broadcaster is responsible for serving.

Public service broadcasting principles

The fundamental principles for the public service broadcaster are outlined by Marc Raboy (1995: 6) as follows:

Universal accessibility (geographical). The broadcasts must be available throughout the country; this applies to the existing channels. PSB has to be available to all members of the society irrespective of location. This can be achieved if the transmissions are extended to all irrespective of being poor or rich. The idea behind this is that public broadcasters serve citizens in a democracy, as opposed, to maximising customers in the market (Ryan, 2000).

Universal appeal (general tastes and interests). A wide range of programmes should be broadcast to cater for the different needs of the public. This should include shows of an educational and informative nature. The television news in this case should represent the interests of the whole population and serve national priorities. The news should represent the viewpoints of all people or groups in the society, be impartial and non-partisan. According to Richard Collins et al. (1992) a broadcaster serving a newly democratic country is supposed to be accountable to citizens and responsive to changing needs and desires of the audience, in order to ensure that audience preferences, as opposed to elitist tastes of producers or political views of journalists, are satisfied.

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Particular attention to minorities. This may not necessarily refer to different race, but also to different gender, sexualities, languages, disabilities and socio-economic statuses. Minority gender, such as women who are mostly misrepresented in the media should also be catered for. The public broadcaster should provide minorities with the opportunity to speak to one another and voice their dissent. The interests, concerns and history of these groups are also important.

Contribution to a sense of nation. According to this principle PSB must reflect national concerns, interests, events and culture. The national broadcaster is expected to broadcast national events which bring people together such as general elections, state occasions and sporting events. National culture should also be televised, as a way of promoting social identity. In a culturally diverse environment, a public service broadcaster should act as a powerful means of social unity, binding together groups, regions and classes through the live relaying of national events (Teer-Tomaselli, 1999: 93).

Editorial freedom. The guidelines should liberate rather than restrict programme makers. James Curran (1991: 89) states, "public service broadcasting organisations have all resisted editorial interference. Their audience credibility and strategic long-term interests, the self-conception and self-respect of their journalists, have all encouraged a defence of their autonomy from government". According to John Barker (2000) editorial policy and decision-making in all broadcasting should be free from interference by government or the governing board. This means that journalists as well as editors have to be given all the freedom to choose what is newsworthy depending on the international journalistic standards. This will therefore help them to represent all the views of the society without intimidation and ascertain pluralism in their reporting. Commenting on this, Barker (2000: 3) writes "to meet the requirement of pluralism there needs to be a comprehensive, in-depth and impartial news and information coverage across a range of broadcasting outlets, in order to support a fair and informed debate".

Direct funding and universality of payment. Public funding is required for the maintenance and survival of PSB. However, the increased number of commercial broadcasting resulting from liberalisation of the airwaves which pose a threat to PSB resulted to the latter changing from the initial stance. Public service broadcasting has gone commercial or has concentrated on profit-making instead of opening up and functioning as a shared public arena where

citizens can deal with social problems. Internationally, the pursuit of profit has replaced that of serving the public interest as the driving force of public service broadcasting. "Journalists and their editors must therefore compete for market share (as reflected in television and radio ratings, newspaper and periodical circulations) and shares of advertising revenue. They are inclined to prioritise the popular over the pertinent, the racy over the relevant, the weird over the worthy" (McNair, 2000: 7).

Competition in good programming rather than numbers. Broadcasting should encourage competition in good quality programming. However, Jay Blumler (1992: 30-31) argues that the concept of quality in television has 'multiple meanings'. Quality is understood as 'a relation between sets of [programme] characteristics and sets of [assessment] value', which cannot be reduced to some single criterion (Rosengren et al, in Blumler, 1992). Blumler contends that what matters is not that some particular criterion of quality should prevail over all others but that:

> the system as a whole should regard the pursuit and evaluation of
> programme quality as a priority as well as a wide ranging spectrum
> of the several types of excellence to which programme makers could
> aspire should be encouraged (Blumler, 1992: 31).

Distance from vested interests. A public service broadcaster should be independent from the paymaster whoever it is. However, Raboy (1995: 10) contends that "[n]o broadcasting organization today can function obliviously to market pressures, and if politics is more acutely present in some situations than others, it is never far from centre". The sentiment is shared by Teer-Tomaselli (1989) who argues that the success of the claim to political independence depends on the willingness of politicians to abstain from interfering with the day-to-day running of the broadcaster, and of the ability of broadcasters to resist political interference by remaining in control of the reporting and analysis of news and current affairs.

Public service broadcasting plays an important role in the democratic society and can be viewed as a public sphere where rational public discourse is said to take place. However, given the contemporary media environment, the notion as considered by Sir John Reith is both idealistic and simplistic (Raboy, 1996). Raboy (1996) outlines some of the problems that it poses as follows:

While some of the characteristics (e.g. accessibility) are straightforward enough, certain others (e.g. contribution to a sense of national identity) are highly problematic, insofar as many states (including the British) the question of nationhood itself is not fully resolved. Distance from vested interests implies an ideal situation where the broadcasting institutions do not have their own vested interests (Raboy, 1996: 7).

Theories of the media

There are six theories of the media namely the authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, soviet media, development and democratic-participant (McQuail, 1987). The theories of the media in this study are applied to highlight how a free press that is considered a fundamental value in democratic societies functions. The Lesotho past, where the electronic media during the authoritarian BNP rule was used to legitimise its government, forms the backdrop for the media debate.

Where pluralism is not tolerated, the press cannot function as a channel for national debate. The journalists as well as the public at large are deprived of their right to have access to information under the **authoritarian** model. The **libertarian** theory is linked to the rise of democracy, the political, economic and religious freedom from government that emerged in the seventeenth century (Seibert et al. 1963). This model postulates that media enjoy full independence from the government. Moreover, journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media organisation (Seibert et al. 1963). A full-grown libertarian system encourages the press to challenge official government policies. However, since the media have full independence from the government the model is characterised by high a degree of tension between the two institutions.

McQuail (1994) outlines **social responsibility** model obligations as follow:

- Media should accept and fulfil certain responsibilities to society;
- These obligations are mainly to be met by setting high professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance;
- Media should be self-regulating;

- The media should avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or give offence to ethnic or religious minorities;
- The media as a whole should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to rights to reply (McQuail, 1994: 124).

These attributes of the social responsibility model suggest that media have to serve the people in its vicinity, inform them on issues affecting them and also allow for diversity of opinion.

Contrary to the libertarian ideals, the government has the right to intervene in the public interest for media to fulfil certain obligations to society:

> While libertarianism champions distinct roles between the two institutions, with the press serving primarily through its watchdog functions against the government, the social responsibility model is not foreign to the idea that both the press and the government have a nation-building function, thus cooperation between the two institutions is sometimes desirable and necessary (Skjerdal, 2001: 35).

According to McQuail (1987: 119) the **soviet media** model requires the "media to serve the interests of, and be in control of the working class. The media is the sole property of the community therefore should not be privately owned. Progressive movements at home and abroad should be supported". Skerdjal (2001: 93) argues that the model "challenges the view that the watchdog role and nation-building discourses are contradictory. It also challenges the view that the media must be either conflict-oriented or consensus-oriented". Unlike the politicised nation-building discourse, soviet media theory denies the necessity to control the media through top-down regulations but cyclic and dialogic communication and assumes a common ground across all societies and all ages.

Development media model insists on a participatory model which stresses the "importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels....." (Okigbo, 1995: 157). This nation-building ideal can be fulfilled only if media becomes an arena for democratisation of communication, both in structure and performance. This view is elaborated by Paul Ansah (1988) where he states:

> In order to educate the people on their civil rights and responsibilities and
> create in them the political consciousness that will enable them to
> participate meaningfully in the governmental process through periodic
> elections, they needed access to information and they should have the right
> to all possible avenues for obtaining the necessary data to enable them to
> participate in public discussion so as to be able to influence decisions
> (Ansah, 1988: 12).

The media should also accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy. In the interests of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in media operations (McQuail, 1987: 121). The aim of this kind of communication is to involve society, mainly local community in the organisation and structure of information disseminating from communication sources to receivers.

The **Democratic-participant** model was proposed following the new media developments and criticism of the dominance of mass media by private or public monopolies (McQuail, 1994: 131). As outlined by McQuail (1987) the model is based on the following principles:

- Individual citizen and minority groups have rights of access to media (rights to communicate) and rights to be served by media according to their own determination of need;
- The organization and content of media should not be subject to centralized political or bureaucratic state control;
- Media should exist primarily for their audience and not for media organizations, professionals or the clients of media;
- Groups, organizations and local communities should have their own media;
- Small scale, interactive and participative media forms are better than large–scale, one-way, professionalized media;
- Certain social needs relating to mass media are not adequately expressed through individual consumer demands, nor through the state and its major institutions;
- Communication is too important to be left to professionals (McQuail, 1987: 123).

The model expresses a sense of disillusionment with established political parties and with media systems, which are seen as having broken faith with the people (McQuail, 1994).

Given the above theories, the emphasis will be on development theory. This will enable to examine whether LTV as a nation-builder engages its audience to participate in public affairs.

The assumption is that the press as a fair-minded participant must be non-partisan and apolitical. It has to address the people as citizens and responsible potential participants in public affairs.

Theories of news selection

What is news?

Defining *news* is difficult for both theorists and journalists. To come to grips with the term scholars have come up with different definitions. There are those who argue that news is made or *manufactured* (Cohen and Young 1973, Tuchman, 1978), and those who describes how news is *discovered* (Schudson 1973) or *decided upon* (Gans, 1979)[13]. Generally news can be defined as new information about specific and timely events. News reporting is taken to be the responsibility of journalists. "The fundamental obligation of the reporter is to the truth" (Allan, 2000: 48). Commenting on this notion Keith Windschuttle (1997: 4) writes:

> Journalism is committed to reporting the truth about what occurs in
> the world. Journalists go out into society, make observations about
> what is done and what is said and report them as accurately as they
> can. Journalism in other words, upholds a realistic view of the world
> and an empirical methodology (Windschuttle, 1997: 4).

Most journalists uphold the view that they report the truth about what happens in life. The structuralist approach, however, sees news as a social construct. Dan Berkowitz (1997) for example argues that news can never be value-free: "news is a human construction that gains its characteristics through the social world from which it emerges" (Berkowitz, 1997: xii). This suggests "everything, from what a reporter chooses to make newsworthy, to the style in which a story is written, to the sources attributed, is a product of the structured process of news construction" (Davidow, 1999: 8). Berkowitz (1997) examines the nature of news from

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[13] De Beer, A. 'News: The fleeting, elusive but essential feature of global journalism'. University of Stellenbosch. http//www.sun.ac.za/journalism/papers/debeer.com. Accessed (24/07/04)

the social point of view with more emphasis on the social forces that influence and limit the gathering of the news:

> News becomes the product of the practicalities and constraints of the process by which it is created. It becomes the product of economic systems and political systems and the press systems that result from them. And it becomes the product of unspoken cultural values and beliefs by which people manage their daily lives (Berkowitz, 1997: xii).

News gathering, selection and construction

The study is premised on the routinization theory. Stuart Hall et al (1978: 53) states that:

> Media do not simply and transparently report events which are newsworthy in themselves. News is the end product of a complex process which begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events (Hall et al, 1978: 53).

In her routinization theory Tuchman (1978) states that the selection of news events is not a reflex action, but the socially determined construction of reality. This suggests that journalistic choices are intentional. This intention in story selection according to Herbert Gans (1979) is influenced by organisational requirements such as organisational policy and economic and social constraints. The executive of the broadcast "in an organisation will identify with the needs of the organisation and they will make decisions consistent with its overriding interests. These decisions will in turn shape its product the news" (Epstein, 1981: 120). The theory suggests that news, like any other product, carries the marks of the technical and organisational structure from which it emerges (Golding and Elliot, 1979 cited in Manning, 2001). Thus the selection of 'unknowns' as sources of news should be consistent with the broadcasting organisation's needs.

Routines may dictate the overall pattern of news, while individuals pick which pieces will make up that pattern today. Routines are necessary for they provide a way of coping with the virtually impossible task of reducing millions of messages into today's news (O'Dowd, 1996: 20). Gans (1979: 77) describes the advantage of news routines:

In reporting the news, journalists could in theory choose from thousands of potential activities. Yet they can learn about a tiny fraction of actors and activities. They are further limited by time and space and can only select an even smaller fraction of those activities which are presented to them. More importantly they cannot decide anew everyday or week how to select the fraction that will appear on the news; instead, they must routinise their task in order to make it manageable (Gans, 1979:77).

There are two ways in which news is constructed by way of routine namely 'beats' and news values (Hall et al, 1978). In the first, 'beats', "Reporters working a beat are rarely assigned stories. They are expected to generate news from the beat on their own initiative. Routinely they spend more time stationed in their beat locations than in the newsroom" (Tumber, 1999: 102).

In the second means of selection, news values guides the reporters' choice and construction of newsworthy stories. These values are significant as they are subconsciously applied to news messages through the routine socialisation of journalists. These news values are implicit in news construction. They do not only shape the story, but also the audience perceptions (O'Dowd, 1996: 20). Hall et al (1978: 53) argues that the news values help editors and journalists to "decide routinely and regularly which stories are newsworthy and which are not, which stories are major lead stories and which are relatively insignificant, which stories to run and which stories to drop".

There are twelve news values outlined by Johan Galtung and Marie Ruge (1981) in their study. They state that for a news item to qualify or pass through the gates it has to satisfy one of the characteristics of news values. The twelve values are as follow:

1. Frequency-events within a 24 hour cycle are favoured by television
2. Threshold-events of great magnitude or recently increased magnitude
3. Unambiguity- events whose meaning is not in doubt
4. Meaningfulness- events in some way related to the home culture
5. Consonance- events that fulfil expectations
6. Unexpectedness- within the confines of 4 and 5
7. Continuity- once accepted, an event is more likely to be accepted again
8. Composition- a selection of items in contrast to each other
9. Reference to elite persons

10. Reference to elite nations

11. Personalisation – individuals are perceived as easier to identify with

12. Negativity- bad news is good news. Bad news generally has many of the characteristics as well- it may be unexpected, unambiguous etc. (in Cohen and Young, 1973: 62-72).

The news values are not independent of each other but they are interrelated. Hall et al (1978) pointed out that news values are widely shared among the news media and they form a core element in the professional socialisation, practice and ideology of news workers.

A number of shortcomings however have been identified in Galtung and Ruges' classification of news values. The model (news values) is criticised of concentrating on three major international crisis, ignoring day-to-day coverage of "lesser" events. The model is more concerned on content of the selected crisis, and the list of factors made no reference to how the visual elements could affect content of written material (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001: 265). Moreover, it is stated that the gatekeeping approach appears to assume that there is a given reality "out there" which the news gatherers will either admit or exclude. Stuart Hall, applying a Marxist perspective informed by the analysis of Gramsci and Althusser, argues that the list helps in identifying the formal elements within the construction of news, but fails to explain the ideological meanings behind such "rules" (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001: 265).

News and ideology

The study is concerned with LTV's service to ordinary citizens and prominent people, and the research is framed within the paradigm of critical theory. In the context of media studies, critical theory seeks to examine the relationship among media, communication and social power. The study will examine how the media develops a specific ideology that supports a dominant ideology. Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Johan Muller (1987: 22) argue that ideology is not a system of ideas imposed from outside, but "rather, it is an interlinked ensemble of social, political and economic structures which permeate our everyday experiences". Thus news presents a picture of the world to assist in the reproduction of the relations of dominant values existing in society. Writing on this Michael Schudson (1973) states:

> The media reinforce the 'cultural hegemony' of dominant groups, that is, they make the existing distribution of power and rewards seen to follow from nature of common sense and succeed in making opposition views appear unreasonable, quixotic or utopian—perhaps even to dissenters (in Curran and Gurevitch, 2000: 181).

Berkowitz (1997: 245) echoes the statement writing "the news paradigm can therefore be said to operate within a larger ideological sphere—particularly in hegemonic process media". This takes us to the idea that news is a social construction. Things don't mean – we construct meaning, using representational systems, concepts and signs construction. While constructivists do not deny the existence of the material world, argue that it is not the material world which conveys meaning, but rather it is the language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts (Hall, 1997: 25). The study also examined how language was used to represent 'known' and 'unknown' sources of news. Audrey Davidow (1999: 9) argues that "as news is transmitted through language ideological power is revealed in its representation of events". This view questions the notion of news objectivity. However, Gans (1979) argues that journalists in their reporting try to be as objective as possible:

> In making the selection journalists strive to be objective, by applying personal detachment, and in effect, by disregarding the implications of news. They do not choose news on the basis of whom it will help or hurt; and when they cannot ignore the implications, they try to be fair (Gans, 1979: 183).

The above quotation implies that journalists adhere to the ideals of objectivity. One of the ideals of this notion is that journalists have to be impartial in their reporting, "news reports should be free from opinion or **bias** of any kind" (Allan, 1999: 26). Objectivity in this case means keeping one's own beliefs, opinions or feelings separate from the story. The principle is said to be difficult to follow. However, Elliot Cohen (1992) questions the notion of objectivity. The contention is that every reporter brings to the story his/her own biases and worldview. Every day individual reporters make choices in writing stories such as what to include or disregard, and what sources to use.

Theory of sources

Sources are people who provide information as individuals, members or representatives of interest groups. Gans (1979: 80) defines sources as "the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on air or who are quoted in magazine article and those who only supply background information or story suggestions".

Writing on the autonomy of news workers within a media organisation Hall et al (1978: 57) states; "the media themselves do not autonomously create news items; rather they are 'cued' to specific news topics by regular and reliable institutional sources. Sources not only provide newsrooms with information, they make the job of delivering a daily news product possible. Gans (1979) argues that news is shaped by sources on which a newsroom relies. The heavy reliance of news media on sources is influenced by the internal pressures of news production. Graham Murdock (1974: 210) writes:

> The incessant pressures of time and the constant problem of resource allocation and work scheduling in the news organisations can be reduced or alleviated by covering 'pre-scheduled' events; that is; events that have been announced in advance by their convenors. However, one of the consequences of adopting this solution to scheduling problems is to increase the newsmen's dependence on news sources willing and able to pre-schedule their activities (quoted in Hall et al 1978: 57).

Another reason which compels journalists to rely on the so-called credible sources is the fact that media reporting is underpinned by notions of "objectivity" and "impartiality" particularly in television. The journalists are required to keep their own personal biases out of the news. Thus sources are important to ensure that media statements are grounded in "objective" and "authoritative" statements from "accredited" sources so that the texts reflect "fact" rather that "opinion".

Reliance on accredited sources however, tends to limit the number of sources accessed by media organisations. Journalists rely on few sources which provided credible information in the past (Berkowitz, 1991). The reliance on few sources limits the media from reflecting or providing diversity of opinion from the general public and interest groups. The large

organisations are normally the ones accessed as sources of news. Berkowitz (1987) argues that the larger organisations may not offer better information, but simply have more ability to provide a consistent flow of information than the smaller organisations with fewer staff.

Gans (1979) outlines four factors which shape the success of sources to journalists as follow:

The ability to supply suitable information- "The ability to be newsworthy requires resources and skills, many of which go hand in hand with economic power, at least, and are possessed by only a few"(Gans, 1979: 121). Gans argues that organisations are normally accessed as sources of news as they can afford to carry out the equivalent of investigative reporting. However, Gans (1979: 122) argues "that affluent organisations have an advantage in the competition to gain access to journalists, for they can preschedule their activities so as to satisfy the news organisations' continued need for anticipated stories".

Incentives- Sources eager to provide information usually make it to the news. Sources become eager to give information either because they benefit from the publicity the news media provide or because they need the news media to carry out their duties. Source credibility is a major incentive. Sources that have provided incorrect or useless information in the past might be purposefully overlooked. Private firms can use advertising to obtain publicity, but even they prefer a news story about their activities, since it is more credible. Eager sources eventually become regular ones.

Source reputation and power – The sources' recruitment and access to journalists reflect the hierarchies of nation and society. Sources that are perceived as being powerful and having influence in a community have a better chance at getting their information into a newscast (Shoemaker, 1991).

Geographic and social proximity to the journalists- "Sources may be eager, powerful, and ready to supply suitable information but in order to gain access and overcome the isolation within which story selectors normally function, they must be geographically and socially close to the journalists" (Gans, 1979:124). However, Gans states that geographical proximity cannot guarantee social proximity. He states that powerful sources most of whom are from the upper-middle class, usually make it to the news as they know how to make contact with

reporters. People of lower social status fear rejection and most do not know how to deal with reporters (Gans, 1979: 124-125).

Suitability: Source considerations

Journalists determine sources suitable to be interviewed. The sources deemed suitable should satisfy a number of requirements to ease the reporters' work and meet the deadline, and with the least strain on the organisation's budget. Gans (1979: 129-131) identified six major considerations:

Past suitability- If sources have provided information leading to suitable stories in the past, they are apt to be chosen again, until they supply repetitious information over time; as a result, journalists become "bored" with some of them, dropping them from the news "because we've seen them too often lately".

Productivity- sources are judged by their ability to supply a lot of information without undue expenditure of staff time and effort. This partially accounts for the predominance of high public officials in the news: as spokespersons for their agencies, they can spare journalists time and effort by eliminating the need to interview other agency members.

Reliability- This relates to reliable sources whose information requires the least amount of checking. However, if a story or a fact is controversial or not readily believed, reporters are then expected to gather proof from at least two separate and independent sources.

Trustworthiness- When reliability cannot be checked quickly enough, story selectors look for trustworthy sources: those who do not limit themselves to self-serving information, try to be accurate, and, above all, are honest.

Authoritativeness- All other aspects being equal, journalists prefer to resort to sources in official positions of authority and responsibility. They are assumed to be more trustworthy if only because they cannot afford to lie openly; they are also more persuasive because their

facts and opinions are official. When stories become controversial, journalists defend themselves before news executives arguing that they had relied on authoritative sources.

Articulateness- When sources are interviewees, they must be able to make their point as concisely, and preferably as dramatically, as possible (Gans, 1979: 129-131).

Knowns in the news

Knowns are people who appear most frequently in the news and for the most part, those in official positions. Gans (1979) defines knowns as a combination of people:

> Some are assumed by journalists to be familiar names among the audience; others have appeared frequently in the news and are therefore well known to journalists. Some are not necessarily known by name but occupy well-known positions, like governor of a large state or mayor of a troubled city (Gans, 1979: 9).

Gans (1979) identifies five types of "Knowns" that are predominant actors in domestic news namely:

1) Incumbent presidents
2) Presidential candidates
3) Leading federal officials
4) State and local officials
5) Alleged and actual violators of the laws and mores (Gans, 1979: 9-13).

Some knowns as indicated by Gans are professionals, business and labour leaders, Supreme Court officials, vice presidents, past presidents and vice presidents, as well as civil rights leaders. Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller (1987: 26) argue that Gans generally labels primary news definers such as international press agencies, authoritative sources, newsworthy persons or an individual as 'Knowns'.

Knowns as sources can be divided into two categories namely, authoritative and popular. Authoritative sources are mainly official sources from the government, community as well as non-governmental organisations whose opinions are deemed credible. Because of their positions and responsibility in society they are not expected to provide false information. Popular sources include sports veterans and celebrities.

Authoritative sources

Hall et al (1978) define authoritative sources as accredited representatives of major social institutions – M.P.s for political topics, employers and trade unions leaders for industrial matter, and so on. Such institutional representatives are 'accredited' because of their institutional power and position, but also because of their 'representative' status: either they represent 'the people' (M.P.s and ministers) or organised interest groups. One final 'accredited source' is 'the expert' (e.g. doctors, lawyers etc).

Unknowns in the news

Unknowns are ordinary people, including low-level public officials like policemen. Gans (1979) divides unknowns into five levels, that is;

1) Protesters, "rioters" and strikers
2) Victims
3) Alleged and actual violators of the laws and mores
4) Participants in unusual activities (e.g. cult members or child prodigies)
5) Voters, survey respondents, and other aggregates (Gans, 1980: 5-15)

Thus "Unknowns" in the news are mostly "convention-breakers". These are the people who are less quoted as sources of news in the press.

Knowns and unknowns in LTV news

In this study the author has divided news sources into two categories namely the knowns and the unknowns. The knowns are people who are frequently featured in LTV news bulletins, and because of their position in society they are considered credible sources. In the context of this study, knowns prove to be only authoritative sources. These sources encompass the prime minister, ministers, members of parliament, political leaders, members of Senate, diplomats, Judiciary officials, high ranking government and non-governmental officials, presidents, professionals, business leaders, labour and associations' leaders as well as secretaries. These are the people who appear regularly in the news media in Lesotho, they are easily accessible and the information they provide to the reporters is usually reliable. The author has therefore decided to collectively refer to authoritative sources and all newsworthy persons as "Knowns".

The unknown sources refer to ordinary people within the society including lower level ranking officials and school teachers. School teachers as well as low ranking policemen are usually not considered known sources as they are not frequently featured in the news broadcasts; rather they are authoritative sources because of their position in society. Gans label all those in authority –'Known' sources. In this study the author discovered that authoritative sources are not necessarily known sources (the case with the low ranking policemen (troopers) and teachers). However, the lecturers (professionals) as well as the high ranking policemen are regarded as authoritative sources. The other unknown sources are village wardens, community leaders/members, adults, students. The unknown sources hardly make it in the news. Their views are usually not regarded as reliable as those of the known sources and usually a second source is needed to verify their facts or to balance the story. They are only regarded as sources of news in cases where they were eye-witnesses. They are also included in the news coverage as sources only when they express opinions already emerging in official circles.

Summary

The chapter has outlined the conceptual and theoretical frameworks which underpin the study. The importance of the public service broadcaster in democracy is highlighted. The chapter indicates some of the requirements a public service broadcaster is to fulfill. The theories employed are to examine whether news selection is based on public service broadcasting principles of editorial independence, universal accessibility and attention to minorities. The employment of these principles will help investigate if LTV confirms to its nation-building obligation.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapter attention was placed on the theories which motivate this study, particularly those of PSB, sources and news. Also, the relevance of PSB in democracy was highlighted. In this chapter concentration will be on the methodological approach adopted in this study. The methods adopted will help to find out whether LTV since its establishment during the military regime until the inception of democracy in Lesotho has maintained its obligation as a nation-builder by being accessible and allowing diverse sources of news equal airtime in its news broadcasts.

Methodology

The study has engaged both quantitative and qualitative content analysis as well as documented material to analyse the overall views regarding LTV news bulletins. The use of triangulation methods in this case is "to contrast data gathered from different methods" (Gray, 2003: 72), that is, content analysis of the recorded news bulletins and the interviews with editors and journalists at LTV as well as other media practitioners. The analysis of documented material will help further validate results. Commenting on the use of the triangulation method Anne Gray (2003: 72) argues that the process helps "to confront threats to the validity of the analysis, and to allow differences and contradictions to emerge".

The quantitative content research method was used as it employs a statistical focus making it possible for the researcher to measure content according to a limited set of variables which, in turn, facilitates comparison and generalisation. As the two research methods involve different strengths and weaknesses they constitute alternative, rather than mutually exclusive, strategies (Patton, 1990: 14) and help to validate the findings of each approach. To assess how often 'known' and 'unknown' sources of news appear in LTV news the author conducted quantitative content analysis. The qualitative analysis was used to interpret the data, and examine how the two groups have been represented. Interviews as well as documented materials were also used to strengthen the objectivity of the results.

Sampling

The study focuses on the coverage of news at LTV for a period of two consecutive weeks in August and September 2004. The weeks during which the news was recorded were selected randomly. To present two weeks' worth of news, the study chose a systematic sample consisting of the evening news bulletins of each day, so a total of fourteen (14) days were selected. However, in this case it was thirteen (13) days. The systematic sampling was used as the selection can be more accurate than in a simple random sample and the procedure is generally inexpensive (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983: 64). However, Roger Wimmer and Joseph Dominick (1983) point out that periodicity can occur. This means that the order of days may bias the selection process as there may be more or less of the sources depending on the activities on that particular day. The prime time news bulletins (21.00) were selected for analysis. The research is based on a normal day's news bulletin to avoid the influence of specific events or issues such as campaigns and the like. The aim is basically to find out whose voice is dominant in the news. The national news forms the basis of the study because national news plays by far the greatest part in the news broadcast. Therefore it is the responsibility of the public service broadcaster to promote the local content.

Content analysis of News

The bulk of the research was conducted through quantitative content analysis of LTV news bulletins. Content analysis is a research method designed to examine the content of recorded information (Gunter, 2000). Content analysis of the prime time news bulletins provides a concrete basis for analysing and discussing the representation of sources of both the 'knowns' and 'unknowns'. According to Hansen, et al:

> Social stereotyping, misrepresentation,---(through under-representation
> or non-representation) of different groups and types of people in
> society have been central concerns of content analysis since the early
> part of the century (Hansen et. al. 1998: 111).

The content analysis sought to examine what divisions in the population appeared in the news, this was to highlight what types of people particularly among the 'unknowns', are likely to be newsworthy (Gans, 1979).

The content analysis method is also not without limitations; the findings of a particular content analysis are limited to the framework of the categories and definitions used in that analysis. Moreover, the method is time consuming and expensive (Wimmer and Dominick, 1983).

Quantitative content analysis

Quantitative content analysis is used to study and analyse communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Kerlinger, 1986). Wimmer and Dominick (1993: 139) argue that statements such as, "*Seventy percent of all prime time programs contain at least one act of violence*" are more precise than, "*most shows are violent*". These authors identify five main purposes of content analysis which are:

1. describing patterns or trends in media portrayals
2. testing hypothesis about policies or aims of media producers
3. comparing media content with real world
4. assessing and representation of particular groups in society
5. drawing inferences about media effects (Wimmer and Dominick, 1993: 140).

The method is accurate and adequate as a scientific measurement instrument studying what is actually in the media (Priest, 1996). Hansen et al. (1998: 95) states "the purpose of the method is to identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images and representations of such texts, and their wider social significance".

The quantitative content analysis in this study was used to "provide some indication of relative prominence and absences of key characteristics in media texts (Hansen et al. 1998: 95). A number of LTV news bulletins were analysed to determine whether the station provides an equal platform for 'known' sources of news as well as the 'unknown' sources of news. The content of thirteen packaged news bulletins starting on Monday 30th August to

Saturday of 11th September 2004 was used. Of the thirteen news bulletins three, that is weekend bulletins were aired at 7 p.m. while the rest during the prime time 9 p.m. For this research, the percentage of known, and unknown sources of news on LTV was measured. The frequency with which the unknowns and knowns appear as sources of news and as protagonists of news stories was measured. The unit of analysis was an individual story based on sources, space, soundbite, origin, category, position, gender and age (see Appendix 2, and 5). The story was split over the relevant categories by the amount of time given to each (Gans, 1979) to examine the sources of news that occupies more space in the bulletins at LTV. Commenting on the process David Deacon et al. (1999) writes:

> By counting how often particular topics, themes or actors are mentioned, how much space and prominence they command, and in what contexts they are represented, content analysis provides an overview of patterns of attention, it tells us what is highlighted and what is ignored (Deacon et al, 1999: 17).

The analysis was conducted over several stages by measuring the categories of news stories on which the knowns/unknowns dominate (see Appendix 5). The soundbite allocated for each source relative to the airtime for an individual story was measured to find out who is allocated more time; the knowns, unknowns or presenters (See Appendix 3 and 4). The news categories were also used to draw the types of stories that feature knowns/unknowns in terms of gender and age most. Moreover, the origin (urban/rural) of the stories was measured. The positions of the sources as well as the organisations from which they are from were analysed. The source sequence was also examined. This is very important because it signifies the relative importance of stories in a bulletin: for instance, the first story is considered the most important story of the day.

The quantitative content analysis is considered relevant as it analyses what is in the news, indicating what news journalists have selected over time and not how they have selected it (Gans, 1979: 5). The method is however criticised for being purely descriptive as it provides "accounts of the characteristics of media output and often make [sic] inferences in advance about the potential significance of their findings in the context of what they reveal about production ideologies" (Gunter, 2000: 81).

Qualitative content analysis

Purely quantitative features may not only be of importance. Barrie Gunter (2000: 57) argues, "counting and quantifying needs to be supplemented by interpretive procedures that can define the weight of a media message in terms of its impact upon the audience" (Gunter, 2000: 57). Thus the researcher employed interpretative/descriptive content analysis to interpret the findings of the research. According to Gunter (2000: 91), "[r]esearchers employing interpretative content ask descriptive research questions aiming at the discovery and formation of theory" and "[s]ampling is theoretically informed". The quantitative data analysed was interpreted on the basis of whether LTV is a nation-builder or state broadcaster. The principles of PSB namely; universal accessibility, attention to minorities (in terms of gender and age) were examined. This was done based on the number of stories from the rural and urban areas, the ratio of women to men in news categories, as knowns/unknowns. To validate the results of the interpreted data, documented materials as well as interviews were conducted to find if the criteria used for the selection of news at LTV is based on PSB principles or on organisational requirements.

Interviews

Content analysis alone cannot serve as the sole basis for claims about media (Wimmer and Dominick, 1994: 167). Therefore, to supplement the content analysis unstructured interviews with both journalists and editor at LTV were conducted. Unstructured in-depth interviews "provide a greater breadth than the other types given its qualitative nature" (Fontana and Fray, 1994: 365). The interviews were to highlight criteria journalists used to select stories and interview sources as well as which news topics are of significance to LTV. These were face-to-face interviews in which respondents answered questions on news selection. In the unstructured and in-depth interview, as Colin Robson (2002: 270) states, "the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern, but lets the conversation develop in this area". The interviews were generally designed to put the interviewee at ease, so LTV premises were used. The other interviews were also carried out at the interviewees' work places. The people who were chosen for the interview were reporters, the Director of Information, News Director, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) personnel, Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Communications Manager and media practitioners, the

Senior Engineer and some producers who worked at LTV. Unstructured interviewing is very helpful as it provides respondents with a chance of giving more information than the interviewer has expected. It allows for the researcher and participants to clarify misunderstandings.

Unstructured and in-depth interviews can also pose some problems; these include the difficulty in handling enormous interview data and time wasted in transcribing the recorded interviews (Berger, 1998: 57). William Foddy (1994: 2-8) states that the relationship between what respondents say they do and what they actually do is not always very strong. The respondents' attitudes, beliefs, opinions, habits, interests often seem to be extraordinarily unstable. Moreover, it is not always possible for respondents to give meaningful answers because most people do not know exactly why certain actions and decisions are taken.

Questions of interest to LTV reporters and editors ranged from the organisation of the newsroom, job descriptions and newsroom control at LTV. The researcher was also interested in criteria used to select news stories, how free they are in making story selection choices and to what extent they conform to the organisation's conventions. The issue of editorial independence was also important. The choice of interviewees was based on length of service; the newly recruited reporters were not interviewed, as they are not so familiar with the running of the station in the past few years. The management at the Ministry of Communications Science and Technology, LTA and MISA personnel were to comment on media policy, and the transformation of the LTV newsroom to suit the democratic ideals, while the media practitioners stated their views vis-a-vis LTV news. All the interviews were recorded and were transcribed where necessary. The reporters' names will remain anonymous as requested.

Documented material

Document analysis was employed to strengthen the objectivity of the results of the findings. The analysed documents include reports on LTV by MISA and MILES. The reports were also expected to reveal the views of people and media houses concerning LTV news bulletins.

A scanning of news reports in Lesotho print medium over a period of 6 months (from August 2004 to January 2005) was done to identify the most quoted sources of news during that time.

Limitations of research methods employed

The researcher had expected to start recording the news bulletins on Monday 19 July 2004 but missed two days due to a technical problem with her recording machine. Attempts to find the news bulletins for the missing days were fruitless as news bulletins at the time were not packaged at LTV due to a shortage of tapes. Due to lack of time the researcher used the packaged news bulletins starting on Monday 30 August to Saturday of 11 September 2004. Initially the number of recorded news bulletins was to add up to fourteen but one news bulletin for Sunday 12 September is missing due to technical problems at the station at the time. There are thus thirteen instead of fourteen news bulletins recorded. The 21.00hrs news bulletins are in English from Monday to Friday. There are no English news bulletins but Sesotho versions during the weekend, as these are conducted in Sesotho. These weekend bulletins will be analysed, as English and Sesotho are official languages in Lesotho. The study was also to examine class[14] however this was not possible as the researcher found it difficult to classify known and unknown in terms of their income distribution.

The interviewing was used to validate the results of the data collected. It was generally the most challenging of the methods employed, however, interviewees were cooperative. The problem was mainly with the media practitioners who were reluctant to give their views. The excuse from most of them was that they do not watch LTV and are thus unable to give their views. In one media house the researcher was requested to pay money which was regarded as a consultation fee by the editor before he would comment on LTV news bulletins. All other interviews progressed smoothly.

Summary

The methods of study adopted are expected to highlight the decision-making process in selection of news at LTV that are consistent with the organisations requirements. The methods are to examine whether LTV as a nation-builder is equally accessible to the Basotho nation and whether the station is autonomous.

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[14] Class refers to classification of people in terms of their income distribution. According to Gans (1979: 24) news contains a conception of stratification system, and there are four strata namely; the poor (now sometimes called the underclass), the lower middle-class, the middle class, and the rich.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected and provides the findings of the study. The findings are discussed in relation to the theoretical frameworks of news, sources and public service broadcasting. The chapter also seeks to answer the questions posed by the study of whether there is equal presentation of diverse sources in LTV news bulletins, how news is selected and whether LTV newsroom staffers enjoy editorial independence.

Descriptive Findings

The content analysis of recorded news bulletins is divided into two stages:

> ➢ The first stage focuses on the sources, duration of the news item, sound bite for the sources, origin of the story, category of story, organisation, position as well as gender of the source (see Appendix 2).

> ➢ The second stage examines if there are diverse sources of news. Diversity in this study was measured on the basis of gender (male or female) and age. Age is divided into three categories namely youth (0-19 years approximately), adult or middle- aged (29-59 years approximately) while the last category is of the elderly group (60 years upwards).

Sources of news in LTV news broadcasts

The sources of news in this particular study have been divided into two categories namely the knowns and the unknowns. The knowns in LTV news proved to be also authoritative sources. These are the people who are frequently featured in the news bulletins, and because of their position in society they are considered credible sources. The unknown sources refer to ordinary people within the society including lower level ranking officials and school teachers. The known sources of news refer to prominent people within the country such as the prime minister, ministers, members of parliament, political leaders, members of Senate, diplomats,

Judiciary officials, high ranking government and non-governmental officials, presidents, professionals, business leaders, labour and associations' leaders as well as secretaries (refer to Chapter 3 for detailed description).

Presence of unknown and known sources in news bulletins

	Mon 30.08	Tues 31.08	Wed 01.09	Thurs 02.09	Fri 03.09	Sat 04.09	Sun 05.09	Mon 06.09	Tues 07.09	Wed 08.09	Thurs 09.09	Fri 10.09	Sat 11.(
Knowns	5	2	5	7	4	3	4	3	7	2	3	4	3
Unknowns	0	6	4	4	1	4	2	0	6	1	2	1	2

Table 1 -Number of sources per news bulletin

Of the 13 news bulletins at LTV there are 85 sources of news, with 33 unknowns (39%) while 52 (61%) are knowns. Bulletin 1 (Appendix 2) shows that the five sources of news interviewed on that day are all knowns. This means that 100% of the stories concentrated on the known sources of news. The dominance of knowns is also apparent on bulletin 8 (Monday 6 September). In both bulletins it is evident that there is minimal coverage of rural events as all the stories are urban-based. Both bulletins have one known source from the NGOs while the remaining six are government officials (Appendix 2).

The dominance of known sources is also apparent in bulletins 4, 5, 7 and 12 (see Appendix 2). Bulletin 4, for example, had 11 sources, seven of which are knowns and four are unknowns. While the total number of sources featured in bulletin 5 was five, only one unknown source made it into the news. The unknown source was a taxi driver involved in car accident due to reckless driving. However, a greater number of unknown sources is represented in bulletin 2. Of the total three stories, there are six unknown sources and two known sources. Unlike bulletins 1 and 8, which showed no unknowns, bulletin 2 reveals a great number of unknowns from the community. The news bulletin revealed a minimal presence of knowns, both of which were government officials.

A slight significance of unknowns is revealed in bulletins 3, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 13. The bulletins show a more representative station with almost an equal presence of both knowns and unknowns. In bulletin 3 for example out of nine sources featured there are five known sources and four unknowns. While in bulletin 6 out of seven sources there are three unknown sources

and four knowns. The rest of the bulletins follow a similar pattern, but on the overall, known sources still out-number the unknown sources (see Appendix 2).

Overall representation of unknown sources of news in all news bulletins was very low. Of the total 13 news bulletins the dominance of the unknown sources is evident only in bulletin 2.
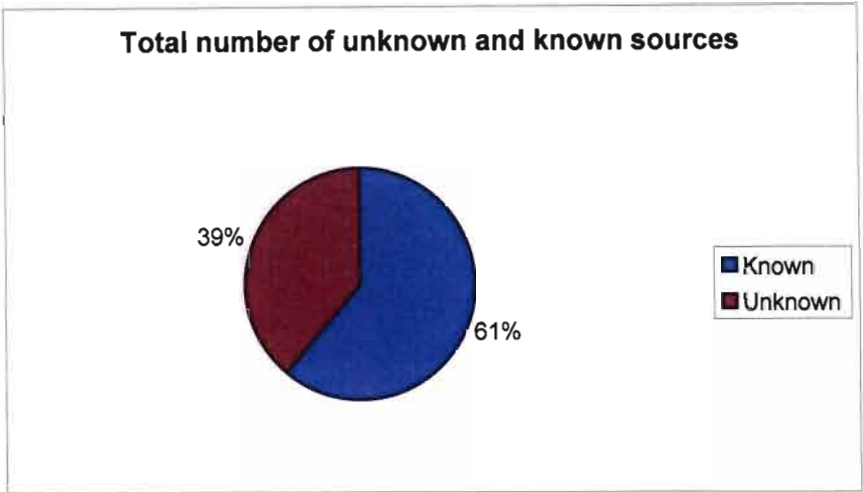
Figure 1: Known and Unknown Sources

Time allocated to unknown and known sources of news

The study revealed that more time was allocated to the knowns which is unsurprising as the preceding section has shown that knowns were more prevalent as news sources. Within the total broadcast time of 129.03 minutes, 96 minutes was allocated to the knowns while 32.25 minutes was allocated to the unknowns (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4). Figure 4 shows that of the total time allocated for the 13 bulletins 54 % was for the knowns, 30 % for the reporter while 16 % was for the unknowns. An extreme result of the allocation of time to the knowns was revealed in bulletin 8. Within the total of 6.38 minutes allocated for the two stories, 5.5 minutes were sound bites for the knowns while the remaining 0. 48 seconds was allocated to the reporter. Another extreme case is in bulletin 12. The time allocated for known sources was 6.59 minutes while 12 seconds was for the unknown.
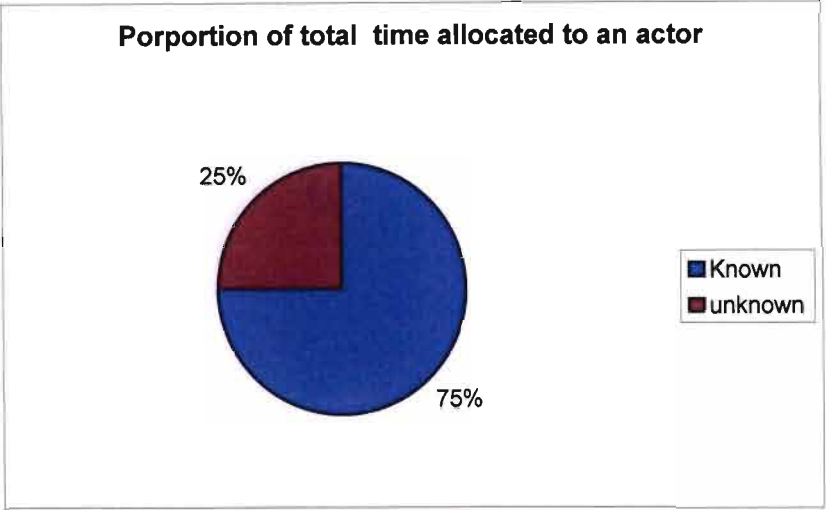
Figure 2: Time allocated to sources of news-over a two week period

Figure 2 above shows that almost three-quarters of the total time of LTV news for the two weeks is allocated to known sources. In an allocation of 20 minutes, this implies that 15 minutes would be for known source and 5 minutes would be for unknown (see Appendix 4).
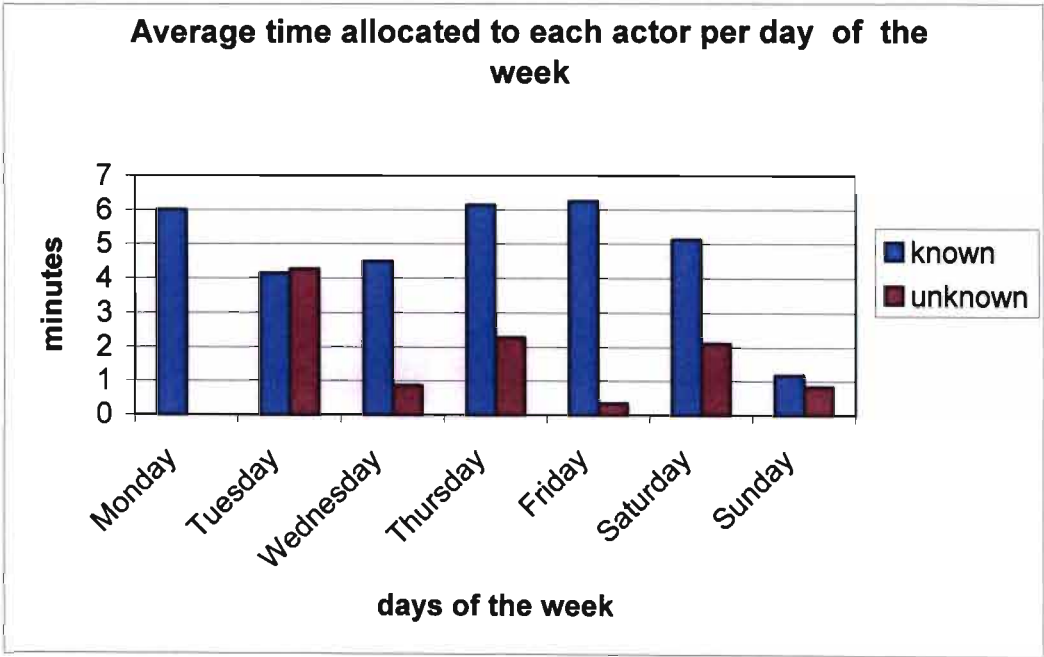
Figure 3: Time allocated to the sources of news per day of the week (figures reflect two weeks)

Figure 3 shows that on the Mondays in the study period there are no unknown sources hence the figure reflects only time allocated to knowns. The extreme allocation of time to the known

sources of news is also reflected on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the study period. However, on the relevant Tuesdays and Sundays the time allocated for the sources is almost equal. The figure shows that there is not a single day where the unknown sources of news were allocated more time. This was revealed even in bulletin 2 where there are more unknown sources (see Table1).

Average proportion of time per actor within period under review.
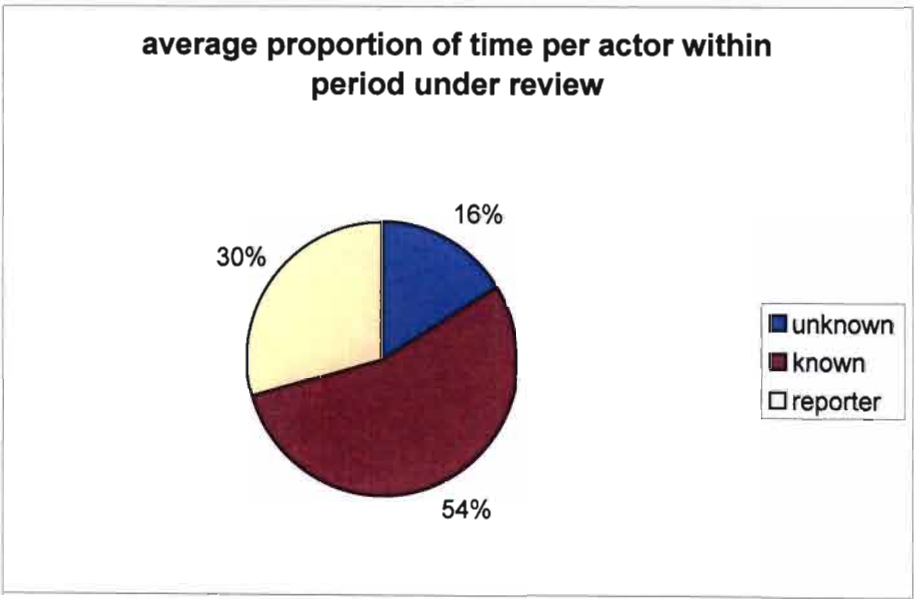
Figure 4: Time per actor

Figure 4 above shows that reporters are also allocated more time as compared to the unknown sources. The assumption is that reporters do not give unknowns more time to voice their opinions instead they prefer to present rather than air the views of unknowns.

Unknowns and knowns in news categories [15]

Source	Categories										
	Health	Education	Bus / Finance	Politics	Sport	Crime/ accidents	Dev/ com m	Defence	comms	cultu ral	Law/ cons
K	2	13	7	8	1	2	10	1	4	0	4
UK	0	11	4	0	3	5	6	0	0	4	0

Table 2: News category breakdown

Table 2 shows that unknowns dominate in crime, sport and cultural stories. However, unknowns are also frequently featured in educational, as well as in community and development stories. The group did not feature at all in defence, law and constitution, health and political stories. The known sources dominate in education, community and development, politics and business stories. The known sources are not featured in cultural stories.

Analysis in terms of origin

	Mon 30.08	Tues 31.08	Wed 01.09	Thurs 02.09	Fri 03.09	Sat 04.09	Sun 05.09	Mon 06.09	Tues 07.09	Wed 08.09	Thurs 09.09	Fri 10.09	Sat 11.09
Rural	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Urban	3	2	4	5	3	4	2	2	3	2	3	2	2

Table 3: Rural/Urban origin of news sources

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[15] Abbreviations- **Comm/Dev**=Community development, **Comms**=Communication, **Bus/finance**=Business and finance, **Law/Cons**=Law and Constitution, **K**= Knowns, **UK**= Unknowns.
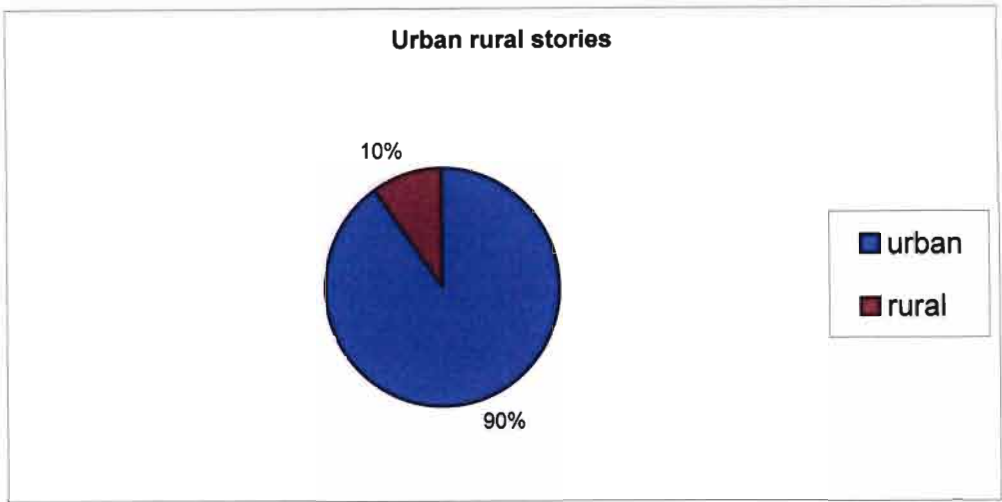
Figure 5: Urban/Rural stories

Of the total 13 bulletins, nine bulletins (69%) do not feature rural stories while four bulletins (31%) have rural stories. There were 41 stories covered during the two weeks, of which 37 were urban-based (90%) and 4 rural-based (10%). This means that only one news item out of seven would come from rural areas. Of the total stories from the rural areas one is dominated by the known sources under the law and constitutional affairs (bulletin 9). Out of the total 37 stories from the urban areas 35 are from the capital Maseru while two are from the other urban areas. The unequal proportion of the stories in terms of origin is apparent in almost all bulletins (see Appendix 2).
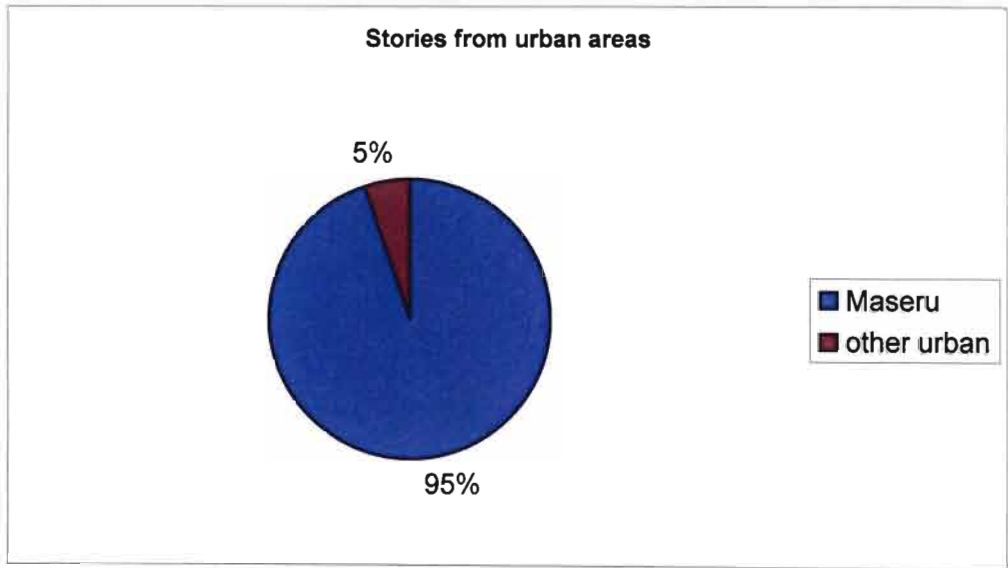
Figure 6: Urban story distribution

Analysis in terms of organisation

	Mon 30.08	Tues 31.08	Wed 01.09	Thurs 02.09	Fri 03.09	Sat 04.09	Sun 05.09	Mon 06.09	Tues 07.09	Wed 08.09	Thurs 09.09	Fri 10.09	Sat 11.09
Gov	4	3	3	6	3	2	0	2	11	2	2	5	5
NGO	1	0	6	1	1	4	6	1	2	1	1	0	0
Com	0	5	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

Table 4: sources' organisation

More than 50% of LTV news items are from governmental organisations (Figure 7). Only one news item out of six would be from the community. The government sources are deemed credible as the bulletins have the highest number of sources from that organisation. An extreme dominance of government sources is seen in bulletin 9. The organisation hugely outnumbered other organisations with 11 sources from the total 13, and the two remaining sources were from the NGOs. The NGO sources dominate in bulletin 7 while the community sources dominate in bulletin 2 (see Appendix 2).
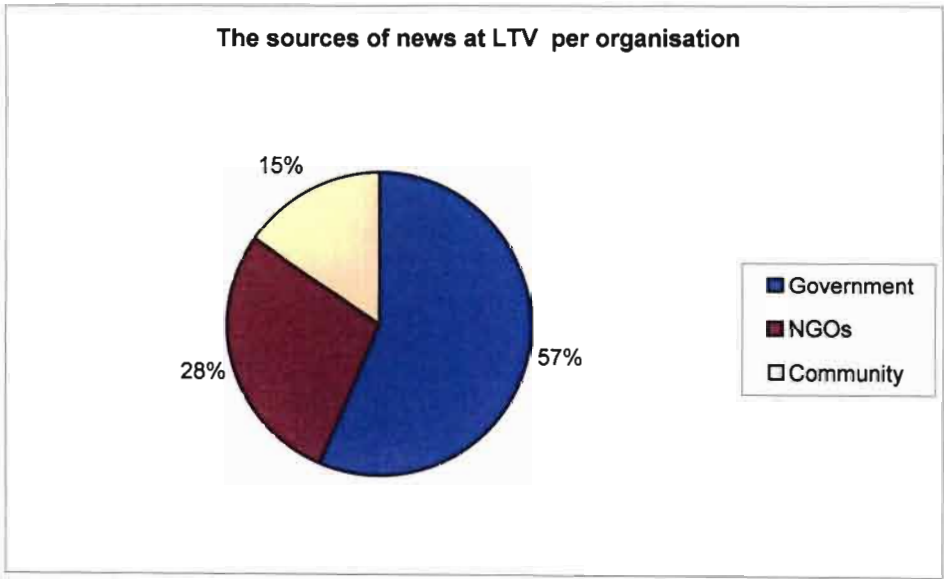
Figure 7: Sources of news per organisation

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Diverse sources classified according to gender and age

Gender and Age				
Age	Male	Female	Total	%
Youth	6	3	9	10.6%
Middle/adult	41	33	74	87%
Elderly	0	2	2	2.40%
Total	47	38		
Percentage	55%	45%		

Table 5: Gender and Age domination
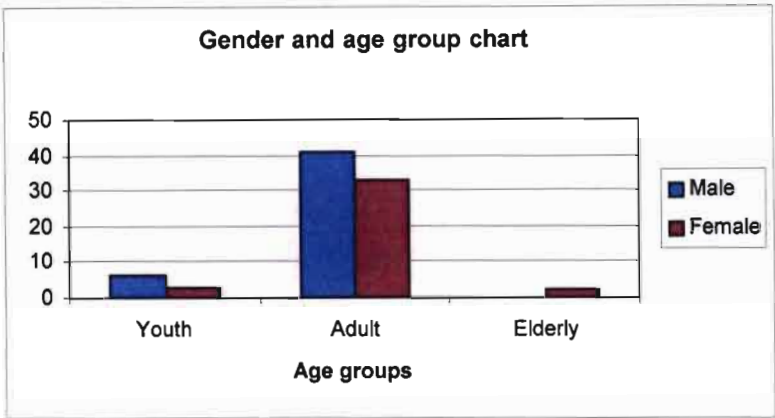
Figure 8: Gender and age Group

The number of sources of news according to gender is almost balanced even though the number of males exceeds that of females by 10 % (55% male and 45% female). Generally there is a significant number of women in the news bulletin. Females featured as known sources of news in bulletin 9 occupy prominent positions in government, a Minister and a Principal Chief. Other bulletins, which showed prominent women, are bulletins 7 and 11 featuring businesswomen and Speaker of the National Assembly respectively.

The middle/adult group dominates the news items within the given time slots, as 87% of the sources interviewed were adults. The youth constitute 11 % of the sources while the elderly group represent just 2%. The youths were mostly featured in cultural, crime, and educational stories. The elderly group was featured in finance stories as beneficiaries of pension funds for the aged.

Age	Known	Unknown
Youth	0	9
Middle/adult	50	24
Elderly	2	0
Total	52	33
Percentage	61%	39%

Table 6: Age and known/unknown breakdown
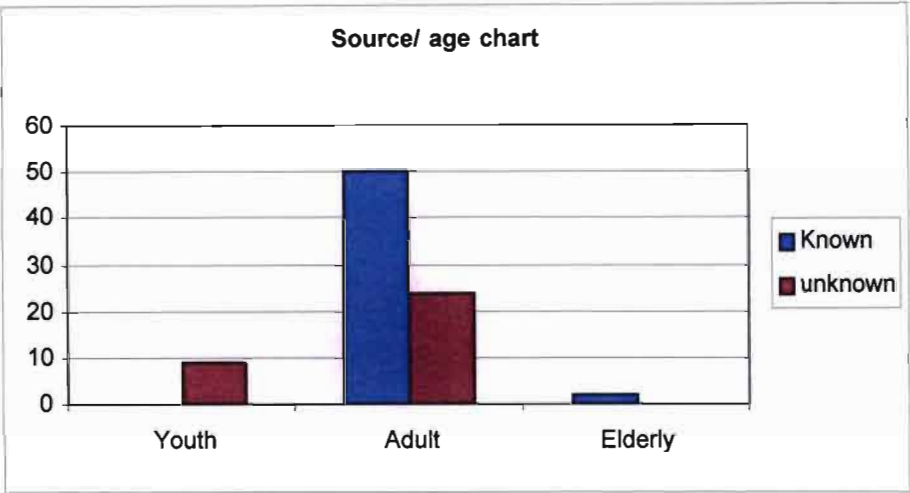
Figure 9: Source/Age Chart

It has been observed that the middle-aged group dominates the news bulletins and almost more than half of news items are from known sources (68% representing 50 out of 74 as shown in the Figure 9). There is a minimal number of youths as sources of news that is 9 out of 85. There are no sources of news to be classified as unknowns in the last group of the elderly. The group contributes only 2.4% as shown on the chart and these are only known sources. However, elderly women are not as marginalized as elderly men, as there are no elderly men identified as sources of news. The youths and elderly do not have a prominent voice in LTV news bulletins.

Summary table for gender/age/source				
	Male- known	Female -known	Male-unknown	Female -unknown
Youth	0	0	6	3
Middle/ adult	29	21	12	12
Elderly	0	2	0	0
	29	23	18	15

Table 7: Gender/age/sources summary
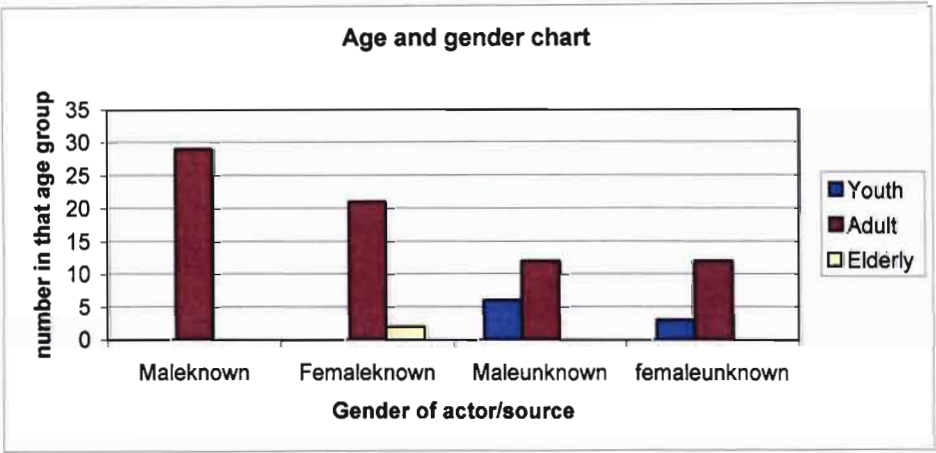
Figure 10: Age/gender distribution

Figure 10 shows that LTV news bulletins are dominated by adult or middle-aged males most of whom are known sources (see Appendix 5/Table 7). There is, however, a significant number of known middle-aged females. Figure 10 shows that there is an equal number of unknown middle-aged females and males. Although in general youths are minimally represented, males still outnumber females in this age group.

Discussion of LTV news bulletins

Generally as shown in Figure 1 in almost all the news bulletins, unknown sources of news were minimally represented when compared to the known sources. The known sources of news outnumbered the unknowns by 69%. Not only did LTV feature far more known sources, but within the total time of 129.03 minutes, 96 minutes was allocated to the knowns sound bites while 32.25 minutes was allocated to the unknowns' sound bites. Of the total

time allocated to the local news bulletin during the period of study 16% was for the unknowns, 54% for the knowns while 30% was for the reporter. The range of interviews proved to be very repetitive. The news is organised around the views of the knowns most of whom are middle-aged men. The over-riding majority of interviewees were government officials. Since the range of interviewees is not wide, some characters become familiar to the public, who subsequently recognise them as the standard sources of news for explanation.

The over-representation of the known sources of news contradicts one of the ideals of democracy, namely equal participation of citizenship from the grassroots, both ordinary and prominent. As stated in Chapter 3 people develop a sense of belonging in the country when their views and aspirations are aired. Despite this there are imbalances of stories in terms of origin, gender as well as age. More stories are thus urban-based and urban-biased, and dominated by known middle-aged men.

To find out why there is an overwhelming number of known sources of news, interviews were conducted with people who worked at LTV, present reporters, the editor/news director and management to find out how news was selected during the military regime and how it is selected at present. This process was to find out if there are any significant changes since the democratic rule in the country. The analysis on the presentation of sources of news is also meant to determine the social power existing within the society. Anders Hansen et al (1998: 108) states that the analysis of who is portrayed as *what* to *whom,* and with *what attributes,* is essential to an understanding of media roles in social representation and power relations in society. This helps to examine whose "views, opinions and ideas dominate the news" (Hansen et al 1998: 108).

Editorial independence

"In all countries of the region and of the world media practitioners – male and female – are subject to a form of self-censorship that they may not even be aware of because it is so deeply

ingrained in the way we are raised" (Molokomme, 2003)[16]. The question of editorial independence comes to the fore as "Journalists in the government media still exercise caution in its broadcasts following incidents in the past when disciplinary measures were taken against journalists on the basis of the 1970 Public Service Act" (Galant, Minnie, and Wales, 2000). Moreover, Tomaselli and Dunn (2001: 4) argue that the general trend in the SADC region points to increased control, interference and censorship of critical media in recent years.

The issue of editorial independence is also influenced by a high concentration of LTV news bulletins on the known sources of news. The idea is to find out the criteria used in the selection of news and how free or autonomous journalists as primary shapers of news texts are. The contention is that journalists operate within organisations and are to conform to the rules and news values of the organisation that employs them (Gans 1979). Another argument is that good governance should accommodate editorial independence to ensure a media's credibility and integrity. Coverage must be fair, unbiased, and independent to earn the audience's respect.

Responding to the question, on how news was selected during the military government, one of the reporters[17] who worked at LTV during the time state that:

> LTV news concentrated more on the government's activities during the military regime. The members of the regime used to go throughout the country holding public gatherings to inform the nation on the government's activities, more especially on the reasons that compelled the armed forced to topple the BNP government. Another crucial or important issue, which was addressed during the gatherings, was the preparation for the general democratic elections that were held in 1993. The atmosphere was a bit relaxed as political activity was prohibited. This also created unity amongst us as reporters (reporter (a), interview, September 2004).

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[16]Molokomme, A. (2003) 'What, in the end, could be more central to free speech than that every segment of society should have a voice?' www.genderlinks.org.za/docs/2003/GMbaselinestudy/countryreps/lesotho-Brochure-sm.pdf Accessed (31/07/04)

[17] Reporters' names will remain anonymous as indicated in methodology chapter – interview section.

Lineo: Were dissenting or alternative views on public affairs accommodated during the military regime?

> Reporter (a): Like I said earlier on party politics were suspended therefore it is difficult to assess. But we as reporters tried to cover other public events. We tried to balance our news by having different views from the public and also covering more of the public interest stories. But we had to make sure that whatever we reported was not against the government (reporter (a), interview, September 2004).

Lineo: How was the situation during the early 1990s during the preparation for the general democratic elections and after the elections?

> Reporter (a): The situation was a little bit the same but the political parties at the time were a bit free, as candidates were campaigning for the general elections. The candidates were given a slot in television to present their manifestos. However, this was one of the difficult times for us journalists. Our work deteriorated, as some of us were more interested in pursuing political agendas of their affiliated parties. The differences in politics made it difficult for us to perform our duties as expected as we were at the time classified as 'them' and 'us'. The unity that used to prevail was destroyed (reporter (a), interview, September 2004).

These feelings were reiterated by reporter (b) who states that:

> Initially it was very difficult, a very tense sort of situation where the newly elected government took office and was very sensitive on what was aired especially about BNP, the opposition at the time. One incident that comes to mind that got us into trouble for was the airing of a French Open Tennis Tournament, which was sponsored by French National Bank, "Banque Nationale de Paris" abbreviated 'BNP' an abbreviation for the opposition party "Basotho National Party" at the time. This was a prominent sport tournament, which caused trouble for most of us. The issue was even raised by one Member of Parliament in the National Assembly that we are

members of the opposition party therefore against the ruling government[18].
This really put us off (reporter (b) interview, September 2004).

The ex-reporters pointed out that after the newly elected democratic government (BCP) they were not free to air stories of their choice. The Director of Broadcasting selected stories to be covered:

> Invitations for coverages were directed to his office, that is people were requested to write a letter if they want their events to be covered whether outside or inside the government. It was on rare cases that we covered items without his approval except for public interests stories such as car accidents. It was really difficult for us to interview opposition leaders, unless one got clearance from the Director or it was something instigated from the higher offices for reporters to make a find out. We were not editorially independent. One could initiate a story, but would at the end of the day not be aired not because it is a public interest story but has to be approved that it does not to offend the government (reporter (b), interview, September 2004).

The ex-reporters however, have a feeling that things are gradually changing since the democratic rule in the country. They maintain that although the government used to be sensitive on the airing of oppositions opinions, this attitude is changing. They pointed out that unlike in the past when journalists were expected to interview certain members of parliament today they can interview any member of parliament regardless of his or her political party:

> I think at the moment things have changed a lot as views from the opposition parties are aired. The government is also tolerant and do not necessarily blame reporters at LTV but rather respond positively to sensitive issues. A recent example is an issue about an Interim Political Authority (IPA) where the opposition showed their dissatisfaction concerning the terms of reference of the commission. People who covered the stories were not victimised but instead the government took an initiative of addressing the issue. The Prime Minister himself made a statement in parliament that was broadcast (reporter (b), interview, September 2004).

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[18] The Lesotho National Assembly library however, does not have a copy of the Hansard relating to this matter. The compilation of Hansards started in 1998 while the matter was raised in 1993/94.

Although the ex-reporters have a feeling that things have changed the present reporters have a different feeling. They pointed out that there are some stories that they are not allowed to cover. They pointed out that there are regulations that prohibit them from covering certain stories. The editor and reporters evidently pointed out that the huge imbalances of the known and unknown sources in the bulletins are a result of the biased coverage's that are mostly dominated by government officials:

> Most of the stories that I give them are in line with or related to the government activities, which the government wants the public to know. Government stories take priority so to say but we still have stories from non-governmental organisations (editor, interview, September 2004).

Reiterating the above statement reporter (c) pointed out that:

> I was assigned coverage on a weekend, which was not government oriented but in the middle of the coverage was informed to leave the event to record the official opening speech by a certain minister. I informed the said officer that I am in the middle of the event and cannot leave people just like that. I thought this would create a bad image on our side as the department. This caused me a lot a trouble, and was even suspended for three months (reporter (c), interview, September 2004).

The editor and reporters' statements show that the journalists have a limited choice in story selection. They have to prioritise stories basing themselves on the organisations needs. The contention is that the use of news values in the selection process is largely associated with the interests of powerful voices which the organisation over-represented. This was evidenced by an unequal representation of sources per organisations. The government organisations take a lead with 56.5 % of the interviewees, then NGOs with 28.2% while the community has 15.3% of the interviewees (see Figure 7). The stories from the government organisations depict the officials informing the public of the government policies. Of all the categories featured education is prominent, followed by community development, then political stories. This trend can be attributed to the fact that the government of Lesotho is at the moment engaged in a free primary education, therefore the category is given preference to the other categories. The community development stories covered during the study concentrated more on the issue of

water. The community members interviewed complained of the scarcity of water both in the rural and urban areas. The issue of water was discussed at length where officials informed the public of the government's plans, and projects in the pipeline, to help distribute water in the country, particularly in the rural areas. The last category, of politics is more on bilateral relations between Lesotho and other countries than political activities within the country. The news category preference verifies the claim by Kasoma (1992: 93) that media in Lesotho informs the public of the government affairs and enlists their support for these activities. This is against the libertarian model which encourages media to have full independence from the government and to challenge official policies.

The sentiment was echoed by non-governmental organisations. On several occasions NGOs have complained of the biasness in the coverage of their activities. The Lesotho chairperson of the Federation of Women Lawyers in Southern Africa (WLSA) Mrs Mokhibo Matela-Gwintsa states, "there is a tendency to focus attention on addresses by government ministers, senior public officials and politicians after which the media will pack up and go" (WLSA)[19]. NGOs play a key watchdog role in society. The organisations can work together with the media to either represent or protect the rights and interests of society, and help in scrutinising the activities of governments, other organisations and business interests. Media coverage of their work is therefore important in order to help them reach a wider audience which will in turn help promote accountability.

The selection of stories at LTV disapproves the claim that television news is 'the window on the world' or that it does reflect 'reality' to the audience. The news programme is a social construction. The selection process is affected by the ideology of social systems. The ideological system within which news workers exist causes them to select items that serve the purpose of the powerful elites (Hall, 1997). Thus the prominence given to the educational, political and community development stories is to maintain the status quo and to effectively muster support of the ruling class. Hall et al (1978) argue that this process of reinflecting a news topic into a variant of public language similarly serves:

> *to translate into a public idiom the statements and viewpoints of the primary*
> *definers.* This translation of official view points into a public idiom not only

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[19] http://www.wlsa.co.zw/articles/worldpressfreedomday> Accessed (31/07/04).

makes the former more 'available' to the uninitiated; it invests them with popular force and resonance, naturalising them within the horizon of understandings of the various publics (Hall et al. 1978: 61).

The biasness is not only reflected or done through selection and omission of certain stories and information but also through the placement of the stories. Of all the 13 news bulletins there are only four bulletins in which the unknowns are featured at the beginning of the bulletin:

> The news items are structured in such a way that government officials take precedence even if what they say is not so newsworthy, other peoples views will follow afterwards. We even have a tendency to cover the official opening and closing speeches of ministers at workshops or conferences which is not newsworthy. Yet the main speakers during the conference or themes are not covered (reporter (d), interview, September 2004).

One can argue that the placement of news items is designed to attract the audience and popularise the official sources stories. Commenting on the placement of stories, Howard Becker (1967) argues that the top groups are well placed to describe things, as they are considered well informed. Thus "any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable. Thus, credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system" (Becker, 1967: 241). The journalists' criteria for selection also assume that society is hierarchical, with some newsworthy events. On the same note Jakubowicz (1998) states:

> In the media, the power to grant "communicative entitlements', that is the ability to speak publicly through the media, is concentrated in a few hands: of media editors and journalists who select the individuals or groups who will, temporarily, receive such entitlement. Usually, they choose the so-called "accredited spokespersons" (politicians, businessmen, authorities, experts), while ordinary persons usually become newsworthy only when they are victims of accidents (Jakubowicz, 1998: 21).

The above statements show that LTV culture is built by and affects the gatekeeping processes. Thus reporters at LTV have socialised themselves into a profession, they share

news values (reference to elite persons) which is apparent on how they select news. However, Gans (1979) contends that the selection is based on a number of interrelated sources considerations. Thus the government officials are considered suitable sources as they can be trusted. The information they give is assumed to be reliable, and accurate. The elite are articulate and are "able to make their point as concisely, and preferably as dramatically, as possible" (Gans, 1979: 131). Furthermore, their stories are deemed to be concisely written and they satisfy a number of news selection criteria such as proximity, resource constraints, and significance (Gant and Dimmick, 2000: 629). Gans further states that television reporters look for interviewees who speak in the standard English dialect that most of the audience is thought to understand easily. Thus the editor would prefer to select "one good solid source, --with a record of high credibility, than two, three, four, or five sources" from the unknowns who are not well informed about the subject matter (Mollenhoff, 99/2000: 122). This therefore means the choice of sources by the editor will be in line with these considerations. Moreover, as indicated by the editor/news director the government official stories take priority and the journalists at LTV have to give more attention to the government related stories.

Journalists as professionals seek to be fair and objective, but organisational requirements affect their perception of what constitutes fairness, of which stories are important, whose views are legitimate enough to include in the debate. This is evident in bulletin 12 story 2 (see Appendix 2). After the discussion/review of a Bill that grants Principal Secretaries authority to discipline employees which can lead to dismissal depending on their performance and conduct, one of the Principal Chiefs, Mrs 'Mantoetse Lesaoana-Peete was interviewed by LTV news crew to find out her opinions. In an interview she pointed out that members of Senate were against the Bill. She argued that Principal Secretaries are political appointees and might have favourites within the staff, and employees might not be treated equally. She however, stated that Senators do understand the terms and conditions of the Bill which were clearly elaborated by the Prime Minister and the minister of justice, human rights and rehabilitation, and of law and constitutional affairs at a meeting with delegated members of Senate. She stated that Senators were assured that all respective measures will be taken into consideration to ensure fairness in the application of the Bill therefore they let it pass in the Senate. In an interview she argued that personally she was against the Bill and still not happy but she said "I have a belief that the Prime Minister and the minister as people in authority

meant what they said and should be respected for that" (translated interview, bulletin 12, story 2).

What one gathers from the Principal Chief's story is that although she personally was against the Bill she was convinced by the authorities that everything will go smoothly. She even stipulated that what the authorities said should be respected. Thus the authorities should not be disputed and what they say should be honoured. This brings one to another point which is the use of language in news. The language of the news is important in terms of the desired effect. Language plays a pivotal role in the social process of constructing the subjectivity of the individual. John Hartley (1982: 13) states, "the world is received, or realized (in both senses of the word-made real and understood as such) in language." Thus news is defined through language. This therefore means that news is not a mirror but a frame as it is made of words, and pictures comprising a specially differentiated sub-system within language (Hartley, 1882: 7). Thus the world is not just sitting "out there" ready made and waiting to be discovered (Windschuttle, 1997) rather the reality observed depends on how it is received. An example of how language is used at LTV is reference to the known sources of news particularly the ministers as 'honourables'. The word serves to reinforce the dominant ideology. According to Larry Strelitz and Lynette Steenveld (1998: 105) "ideology operates through language, mediating the reality it wishes to represent, and in the process helping to sustain (often unconsciously) particular political positions." Thus, what the 'honourables'' say should not be disputed but should be highly regarded. The Principal Chief's story as a known source can be assumed to have indirectly dictated what was newsworthy. This being that other opinions against the Prime Minister's and the minister (the honourables) are invalid. This assumption was clearly manifested in the failure of the assigned reporter to seek opinions from public servants whom the Bill is intended for. On the one hand, one might argue that the reporter assigned to that story being the news director/editor knows exactly the policy of his organisation. As he stated in an interview with this author that he assigns reporters to government activities and ensures that whatever they report is not against the government the editor also did the same. Opinions from the public servants might have been different from those of the cabinet members and could have offended the authorities and this might have impacted on their daily activities. He also did not offer interpretations of his own, preferring instead to rely on his news sources (knowns) so as not to allow his opinions to seep in the news text adhering to journalistic professional rule of objectivity. The journalistic practice of

objectivity is criticised on being biased against the journalist assumption of responsibility of what is being reported as well as their independent thinking (Cohen, 1992).

The failure to air the public servants opinions is well elaborated by Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller (1987: 28) who state "the shaping process is primarily a response to pressures placed on the journalist by the bureaucratic structure of the firm". That is LTV news editor as a gatekeeper relied on the officials as known sources and decided to close the gate for the public servants' opinions basing himself on his organisation's surroundings. Interviewing public servants could have been regarded as acting out of bounds and questioning the authorities' decisions as the Parliament has already passed the Bill. This contention is clearly elaborated by Tomaselli, Tomaselli and Muller (1987: 28) who argue that "[j]ournalists who question the dominant discourse find that they are deprived of the support mechanisms which would otherwise be available to them". Moreover they argue that a journalist who violates the dominant discourse "becomes subject to discursive sanctions". This was clearly articulated by reporter (c) in an interview with this author, who pointed out that by failing to cover an official opening speech of a minister, she was suspended for three months. Measures like this taken against reporters who violate the organisation's policies make it difficult for journalists to work outside of those constraints. As gatekeepers they are forced to represent the interests of the organisation, which has the power to fire, and hire news workers. This violates one of the libertarian model obligations which require journalists to claim a considerable degree of professional autonomy within their organisation (McQuail, 1987: 116). ⎯

The argument goes further stating that the comment from the Senator is insufficient as the story is about the employees (civil servants). As objects of policy they need to be involved, the decisions of the Parliament affects them, and importantly, their views were not heard. The Senator was interviewed as a credible or known source. This shows that the unknowns are not considered newsworthy by the decision–makers in their newsgathering and selection processes. The failure to allow unknown sources of news equal access in the media is against the tenets of public sphere which requires equal participation of both the elite and ordinary citizens. Drawing on Robert White's (1991) discussion of communication as a tool for development, "all people must contribute to the pool of information that provides a basis for national decision-making and allocation of resources. This role should not be the exclusive right of professional elites" (White, 1991: 151). The role of LTV is to facilitate, empower and offer a forum for proposals and serve as a reality check for governing elites. To nurture

democracy, media must acquire a capacity to anticipate and analyse not only actions of politicians but policies and their implications (Ngugi, 1995: 51 in Tomaselli and Dunn, 2001: 117). However, LTV failed to perform its obligation of empowering its audience in terms of helping them understand their contexts and democratic rights, by not allowing airtime to the general public and NGO, and members of opposition parties to criticise and question government policies. This failure has been described by Zakes Mda (1993) who states that mass media in Lesotho works within a context in which policies are determined and defined by the political elite without the participation of the intended beneficiaries. Thus the public servants are being spoken about, but do not get to speak themselves. The failure to incorporate public servants opinion is against the social responsibility model. The model encourages the responsibility of the media in political and social life thus "providing a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning" (McQuail, 1994: 124). The principles of the social responsibility model recommend that media, in this case LTV, has responsibilities to society in which it operates. LTV as a nation-builder has the responsibility of being pluralist and allowing for diversity of opinion from the society it serves, to nurture democracy and foster development. Stuart Allan (1999: 49) argues that "the responsibility for giving expression to the richly pluralistic spectrum of information sources places the journalist at the centre of public life". The news media, to the extent of being able to facilitate the formation of the public opinion, makes democratic control over governing relations possible (Allan, 1999). Thus the station has to provide space for members of society to voice their opinions on development plans initiated by the government.

Moreover, the fundamental nature of the public sphere is to promote open lines of communication among citizens and all interest groups. Public service television should be an arena for a whole range of freedom of expression and allow access to any information so that the electorate can have information they need to make informed decisions. However, the public sphere has become an arena in which known sources, in this case the officials struggle for dominance instead of being a forum where citizens can deal with their own problems. Commenting on the minimal presentation of the masses in a public sphere Thompson (1995) argues:

> The mass of the population is excluded from public discussion and decision-making processes and is treated as managed resources from which political

leaders can elicit, with the aid of media techniques, sufficient assent to legitimate their political programmes (Thompson, 1995: 74).

Instead of playing the role of being a mediator between the knowns most of whom are decision makers and the public, LTV is used to benefit the knowns while the rest of the unknowns feel no real involvement in the running of the public affairs. The lack of interest in watching LTV stipulated by media practitioners during interviews with this author can be associated with the fact that the station is more concerned in reflecting views from the elite than the ordinary citizens.

From the discussion above it is evident that reporters at LTV are not editorially independent but there is a lot of self-censorship by reporters. The notion of editorial independence is at the core of anti-censorship regulations aimed at ensuring that the media can research, investigate and publish without interference from the state. However, the editor at LTV stated that:

> There are times that the management can tell me not to air certain stories despite their newsworthiness but this is on rare cases. As a news director I also do not allow reporters to cover certain stories I think will cause a problem on our side. I consult my authorities for such stories. If they happen to be aired a lot of caution and editing is required (news director/editor, interview, September 2004)

The issue of editorial independence was clearly explained by the management who stated that every organisation has its rules and regulations that employees have to abide by. These, he stipulated, are the guidelines. He said the question of editorial independence is highly controversial; it depends on the interests of those who run the station. He further pointed out that as freedom is not absolutely free there is also no absolute independence:

> I do not think LTV reporters are editorially independent. They abide by the public service regulations. Although as journalists they might like to air certain stories but it is not that easy. They could not air stories that will allow the opposition to oppose the government. You cannot bite the hand that feeds you (management, interview, September 2004).

The management statement is clearly articulated in the Lesotho Public Service Act (1995: 149) which stipulates that civil servants are not expected to "engage in conduct that brings the public service into discredit, disrepute or contempt or brings the authorities of government or any minister of government into discredit, disrepute or contempt". The treatment of reporters at LTV as civil servants denies them freedom to criticise the government of the day as advocated by the libertarian theory and this questions their credibility. The role of a media in democracy is to become a watchdog. The media has to expose the malpractices and abuses of a state authority and hence defend the democratic rights of citizens (Curran, 1991). This role can only be fulfilled if the media is independent from the state. The assumption is that if the watchdog is subject to state regulation, then it will become the state's mouthpiece. Thus LTV also cannot fulfil its role of criticizing the state authority for fear of provoking restrictive legislation. However, this role as stipulated by the Management is difficult to fulfil as journalists are subjected to the same rules and regulations governing all civil servants which require them to be loyal to the government of the day. The lack of editorial independence experienced by LTV reporters is not only against the fundamental human rights of freedom of expression but also against the country's media policy document which recognises and underscores the need for government to accord the public broadcaster the editorial and operational independence they need to effectively fulfil their public functions:

> At a minimum this requires a statutory guarantee of independence and a clear prohibition of government interference in any aspect of operation. [It] should be governed by board which [is] independent of government. Government officials, members of parliament and political party representatives should not be eligible to serve on the governing boards (Lesotho Draft Media Policy, 1997: 14).

True democracy also allows conflicting ideas to contend, and provides for full participation in reaching consensus on socio-cultural, economic and political goals. However, lack of editorial independence to reporters and editors at LTV denies the public participation in public discussion and thereby restricts free flow of information. This contention was revealed by one of the reporters who stated that:

> LTV news does not allow for dissenting voices. To give an example I produced two news items, which were not aired. I was informed that the

people I had interviewed are 'noisy'. I happened to have interviewed members of the opposition party. My belief as a journalist is that views from members of other political parties in the country are to be aired as they represent a portion of the Basotho nation who elected them (reporter (d), interview, September 2004).

LTV as a nation-builder is to play a significant democratic-nurturing role by granting access to opposition political parties and others in civil society. However, alternative perspectives are often not represented; information is distorted in favour of the ruling class ideologies "if ever they are presented a lot of editing is required, so that they could not offend the authority and impact in our daily activities" (editor, interviews, September, 2004). The contention that LTV news is partisan was also echoed by a journalist from Catholic Radio who stated that:

> Their stories are not balanced, but biased. To give an example we have a multiparty parliament but the views of the ruling party members dominate the news bulletins. Activities by the opposition parties rarely make it to the news. I strongly believe that as a national station it has to serve the public equally irrespective of their party politics (CR FM reporter, interview, September 2004).

This situation forced the opposition parties in the Interim Political Authority (IPA) in March 2001 to take legal action to force the ruling LCD to provide them with access ahead of 2002 elections. The court action received wide support from all of the opposition parties. The opposition leaders claimed that they were not given fair access at Radio Lesotho and Lesotho Television (World Press Freedom Review, 2001)

The problem of not allowing opposition parties air-time contradicts the tenets of public sphere which suggest the importance of a sphere of social communication that is neither wholly nor controlled by the state nor concentrated in the hands of corporate organisations. In a multi-party democracy all the political parties must have their issues represented fairly and impartially. The denial of access to the national media is a violation of human rights. The Lesotho Constitution 14 (1) states that:

Every person shall be entitled to, and (except with his own consent) shall not be hindered in his enjoyment of, freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference (whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons) and freedom from interference with his correspondence (Lesotho Constitution, 1993: 28).

Furthermore as stated in Chapter 3 television as a public sphere is to promote open lines of communication among the citizens and all interest groups. A public service broadcaster should be an arena of a whole range of freedom of expression and allow access to any information. McNair (2000) suggests that the political media are said to be important as a mature democracy depends on having an educated electorate, informed and connected through parliament. The contention is that:

It is principally through the media that such an electorate can be formed. That the actions of government and the state, and the efforts of competing parties and interests to exercise political power, should be underpinned and legitimised by scrutiny and informed debate facilitated by the institutions of the media is a normative assumption uniting the political spectrum from left to right" (McNair, 2000: 1).

MILES personnel also echoed the general feeling that reporters at LTV are not editorially independent. The officer however indicated that reporters have not formally lodged their complaints with MILES but "some just tell us as individuals not an office to handle such situations" (interview MILES, September 2004). He, however, questioned their credibility.

Allocation of time

The study shows that LTV news also allocated more time to the known sources. The reporters stated that the imbalance is in line with the station's requirements:

I have to specifically point out that as reporters we had a meeting with the authority where we were directly told that the officials more especially those

in power, like ministers have to be given ample time to address the public as they are there as per government mandate. We are to paraphrase a bit of their speeches. This is really unprofessional. We know that a news item has to take a specific time but this is actually not the case (reporter (d), interview, September 2004).

The management confirmed the statement pointing out that:

Sources of news are not allocated equal time. This depends on their prominence. The Prime Minister to give an example will be allocated more time due to his position, strictly prominent people are given more time (Management, interview, September 2004).

The statement is supported by the data collected from the LTV news bulletins. The known sources of news through the entire period of study were allocated more time. Within the known sources of news the ministers were allocated more time as compared to the other knowns. In bulletin 1 story 1 the minister of natural resources sound bite is 3.08 minutes. The same minister in bulletin 3 story 2 is allocated 3.11 minutes. The minister was officiating the launching of the Lesotho water project and the Lesotho Kellogg foundation respectively. The two projects are mainly geared towards the development of the rural areas. However, the beneficiaries to these projects were not featured. This confirms the statement by Zock and Turk (1998: 765) who argue that "[t]he reporter's use of sources creates a representation to the [audience] of who has information important enough to cite in the news story. In this way news is a representation of power and authority within the society". However the contention is that sources in official positions of authority and responsibility are "assumed to be more trustworthy if only because they cannot afford to lie openly; they are also more persuasive because their facts and opinions are official" (Gans, 1979: 130-131). Thus the ministers as well as other known sources of news are cited more often in the news bulletins compared to the unknowns.

Although reporters as professionals are guided by their profession's standards of impartiality, objectivity and fairness they are also guided by the organisation's regulations. Thus the issue of newsworthiness depends on the organisation's interests. The pressure from the authority

forces them to compromise their journalistic standards and allocate more time to official sources:

> One of us went for coverage where a certain minister delivered an official speech. During the occasion children presented a song that summed the occasion's theme more clearly than the ministers' speech. The reporter decided to allocate more time on the song than to the minister's speech. This caused the reporter a lot of trouble (reporter (c), interview, September 2004).

The news editor however disputed the claim that allocation of time is biased. He pointed out that time "given for news sources are equal, but this depends on what the sources themselves have" (interview news editor, September 2004). This means that sources are judged by their ability to supply a lot of information without undue expenditure of staff time and effort (Gans, 1979: 129). Thus more emphasis will be placed on government plans and policies in the news; obtained from announcement made by the officials while stories about the implementation and effects of policies require a lot interviews with many sources (Gans, 1979: 129). Although the news director disputed that there is biasness in terms of allocation of time, in almost all the bulletins during the period of study known sources of news were allocated more time. An example is in Bulletins 5 and 8, stories 1 and Bulletin 12 story 2. The known sources of news being Speaker of the National Assembly, minister of foreign affairs, and the Principal Chief are allocated 2.42 minutes, 2.46 minutes and 2.58 minutes respectively. This confirms a claim by reporter (d) in an interview with this author that they are to give more time to the prominent people within the country particularly the ministers and their speeches are also not to be paraphrased. The issue of covering the ministers' speeches was also specified by the media practitioners from other media houses who state, "Lesotho Television attended occasions when there were Ministers present but when Ministers left, they packed up their cameras and left" (*Public Eye*)[20]. The ministers are also said to be reluctant to deliver their speeches in the absence of LTV crew even when reporters from other media houses are present:

> One of my colleagues was recently at the Ministry of Health where staff members were doing VCT. The minister was there, but could he start

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[20]Mokhethi, M. (2004) 'Is Radio Lesotho serving the public?' In *Public Eye,* September 17, 2004: 7.

http://www.trc.org.ls/reports_about_us/report_17092004_publiceye.htm
Accessed (07/01/05)

his speech without the TELEVISION? Of course he could NOT! The TV crew arrived an hour later, my colleague's time was being wasted and the minister apparently couldn't give a fig!" (Public Eye, December 2004-January 2005: 5).

Universal Accessibility

Another aspect investigated by the research is the origin of the stories. Tuchman (1978) argues that the news of powerful regions and the voices of the powerful people tend to dominate, while the news of the periphery regions and the voice of "unknowns" remain largely unrepresented. "The news net imposes order on the social world because it enables news events to occur at some locations but not at others" (Tuchman, 1978: 23). This practice helps in perpetuating the views of the dominant structures and institutions in society. This was clearly shown in Figure 5 where within the total of 41 stories, 37 are from urban areas while four are from the rural. Amongst the 37 stories from the urban areas 35 are from Maseru, this means that 95 % of the stories are from the national capital city. Maseru as a capital city has more significance regarding the general state of the nation than any district in the country. Thus Maseru is regarded as a core where great socio-political and economic activities, which affect the country, take place. This practice does not only create a skewed coverage but also shape the way reporters view certain geographic areas as being important while others are neglected.

The contention is that coverage of the stories within the urban areas eases the reporters work, however, this does not mean reporters have to rely mostly on official sources within the urban confines. There is a big number of people within the city who make up the nation in Maseru who can be interviewed. It has to be noted that the practice of covering elite persons or known sources in news bulletins has been evidenced in most of the Lesotho media. The coverage of high ranking officials within the capital Maseru has also been significant in the print media, both the private as well as the state-owned. The view was supported by Foko (2000) in an interview with Lawrence Keketso the manager of *Mopheme* newspaper. Keketso stipulated that "our target is the elite, the academics, the politicians, government officials and you don't really find an ordinary saying I am going to buy *Mopheme* unless they have been told that there is something interesting inside *Mopheme*" (Foko, 2000). This tendency can be attributed to the concentration of the media institutions and/or houses in the capital Maseru (see

Appendix 7). Thus supporting Hall's (1977: 66) contention that "the media----tend faithfully and impartially to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order".

From the data collected I found a tendency of reporters following known sources of the news in their activities throughout the country. Of the four stories from the rural areas featured during the period of study, only one story in bulletin 4 (see Appendix 2) is concentrated by the unknown sources, who are mostly students performing during a cultural ceremony. The other stories featured known sources who are mostly government officials. An example of bulletin 2 the known source is a government official commenting on the government's plan to issue pension fund to the elderly, the plan which kicked off at the end of 2004. The other two unknown sources are the elderly expressing their gratitude on the government's plan. The remaining two bulletins (5 and 9) featured the authoritative sources from the government organisations. Bulletin 5 featured the director of Early Childhood Care Centres (ECCC) officiating at the launching of a centre as well as the Principal Chief of Matsieng. Bulletin 9 featured all prominent figures within the country, His Majesty the King, minister of local government as well the Principal Chief of Phamong. This story was about an inauguration of the new Principal Chief of Phamong. Like the previous stories as indicated, only speeches for the known sources were captured. However, looking at the visuals for the two stories there were members of the community invited to honour the two occasions by performing cultural dances who were not interviewed. The inauguration of a Principal Chief within the Basotho nation is highly important as chiefs are still highly respected. Such an occasion reminds them of their founder Moshoeshoe I who united the Basotho nation. The occasion promotes national identity and unity since the chiefs, like the king, symbolise unity and oneness of the nation. The celebration is well elaborated by Teer-Tomaselli (1999: 93) who states "[i]n a culturally diverse environment, a public service broadcaster should act as a powerful means of social unity, binding together groups, regions and classes through the live relaying of national events" (Teer-Tomaselli, 1999: 93). LTV as a nation-builder is therefore not expected to reveal only the speeches of the officials in such occasions but also the other members of the community. They have to feel that they are part of the nation not only participating in cultural performances but also say what their expectations on their new Principal Chief are. The community members as well as viewers who are not within the official circles should feel that they are also part of the celebrations, that their presence is recognised. The denial to give access to members of the community is against the development model which advocates for

the involvement of society, mainly local community in the organisation and structure of information disseminating from communication sources to receivers.

It is also important to note that the launching of an ECC centre in rural areas where many children do not have an opportunity to go to such centres is an important occasion. It was also necessary to invite members of the community, in particular parents, to find out their views. This is one of the development projects to be sustained with the participation of the local community who are the beneficiaries but who were neglected. The failure to give citizens a more vital place to communicate is well elaborated by Graham Murdock and Peter Golding (1989) who state that many liberal democratic governments' policies are crippling the resources necessary for effective citizenship. They recognize three fundamental concepts for effective communications and citizenship. That is people should have access to information. They must also have access to debates, criticise, oppose and propose on the range of political choices. They are also supposed "to recognize themselves and their aspirations in the range of representations offered within the central communications sector and be able to contribute to developing those representations (Murdock and Golding, 1989: 183). They argue that this can be achieved only if the communication system has essential features at the level of production and consumption. Thus diversity of provision and a system that allows for a feedback and participation as well as universal access to the information to the citizens irrespective of income and location as advocated by both soviet media and democratic-participant models.

From the discussion and the data collected it is evident that LTV is mostly accessible in the urban areas. The issues in the rural areas make news only when there are government officials. This is against one of the tenets of a public service broadcasting which requires the broadcaster to be accessible to the entire country irrespective of geographic location. Despite this, LTV news coverage is biased as news from the rural areas is hardly covered. The rural areas, which are mostly located in the mountains and foothills, constitute 75% of the country's total area with 25% the urban areas. The democratic basis for universal access is the right of citizens to reliable, accurate and timely information, to allow them to participate meaningfully in society. Lesotho is also a poor country and most people who live in the rural areas are below the poverty lines.

This statement is supported by Julian May et al (2002) who state:

> Almost 63 percent of households in rural areas [of Lesotho] were poor in 1986 and by 1994 the incidence of poverty had increased to 72 percent. In addition to a greater proportion of households in rural areas being categorised as poor, the depth and severity of poverty is worse in these areas, and had also increased. In contrast, the incidence, depth and severity of poverty in both the Maseru urban areas, and in other urban areas had declined over this same period (May, et al 2002: 13)[21].

The above statistics indicate that these are the people whose concerns are supposed to be taken into consideration, however, these are the most neglected people. For LTV as a nation-builder to effectively transmit ideas and information needs among the national population it has to be geographically accessible and extend its services to the rural areas where the majority of Basotho live. This process will also allow for a wider participation from the rural population. Given that more than 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas but the same population hardly makes it to the news, it can be concluded that LTV is elitist in nature. Also the nation-building concept, which is expected to lead to development, is highly questionable due to the station's limited geographical reach. The station's skewed coverage has even led to viewers labeling it "Maseru Television not Lesotho Television" (Management and reporters interview, September 2004).

However, the choice and selection of stories is elaborated in Tuchman's (1978) concept of 'news net' on how a news organisation disperses a news net that entwines time and space in such a way as to allow for the identification of 'news-worthy' events. "The bureaucratic threads of the news net are knitted together so as to frame certain occurrences as news events while, concurrently, ensuring that others slip through unremarked" (Allan, 1999: 66). This imbalance leads to under-representation of the majority of the population while the elite who constitute a small number of the population are over-represented. LTV, serving a newly democratic country like Lesotho, should extend access to rural areas. It has to be accessible to the entire population within the country irrespective of geographical location.

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[21] May et al. (2002) 'Poverty and inequality in Lesotho'. CSDS Working Paper No. 36
http://www.ukzn.ac.za/csds/Publications/wp36.pdf. Accessed (31/03/05)

Gans (1979) however, argues that:

> Sources may be eager, powerful, and ready to supply suitable information, but in order to gain access and overcome the isolation within which story selectors normally function, they must be geographically and socially close to journalists (Gans, 1979: 124).

The LTV reporters are aware of the unbalanced coverage of news stories and the general feeling from the newsroom staffers is that they would like to cover stories in the rural areas but shortage of vehicles and staffers have impacted on the station's operations:

> We cover more of the urban stories, as we do not have enough vehicles; we are even labelled as the "Maseru television". We are running short of the equipment and staff, there are at the moment 9 reporters (reporter (e), interview, September 2004).

The senior engineer pointed out that the main constraint is shortage of money:

> The five cameras that we have at the moment are used to do the entire job, which is really very difficult. Edit suites and the editors are also few hence news and programming departments share equipment. Television equipment is very expensive and maintenance is also costly. The budget allocated for LTV is so little that it is mostly used for the payment of the staff. This also restricts us in terms of buying international programmes (interview, Senior Engineer, September 2004).

The lack of resources and shortage of staff have impacted on the news production. The time for doing research with regard to situating a story in proper context is therefore also restricted. It happens quite often that one camera may double up for general news and sport or a particular programme. Consequently, the shortage of vehicles, cameras and staff has led to reporters covering ceremonies, meetings and workshops in the capital Maseru.

While these are considered the main problems that compel journalists to select certain stories, the contention from the management is that the selection is also restricted by regulations governing the organisation:

> The civil service regulations stipulate that organisations' vehicles should not be seen around after hours, unless, granted a permit by the authorised Principal Secretary. This is a problem as some newsbreaks happen during awkward times and our reporters cannot cover them (interview, management, September 2004).

There are mixed feelings on lack of adequate staff and equipment. Some reporters have a feeling that the main problem lies on how they prioritise items. They also pointed out that there is low morale from the staff due to lack of incentives. This sentiment was also articulated by reporter (b) who states that:

> Television is about glamour and people would expect to see someone working for a national television also glamorous, but this is not a case. Our celebrities look like ordinary people as there are no incentives at work despite the hard work they do (interview, reporter (b), September 2004).

However, the Senior Engineer had a different opinion:

> It is true that we have shortage of staff and equipment but I think the main problem is lack of professional staff to do the work. Viewers complain of the poor quality pictures and there is no improvement. The fact that the station is under the ministry poses a lot of problems (interview, Senior Engineer, September 2004).

The findings on how news is selected confirmed the researcher's assumption that a news organisation determines the selection process and production of news. The selection as stated by Gans (1979) is based on organisational requirements. LTV requirements are based on policy, social as well as economic factors. The economic problems and policy of the station

therefore compel LTV reporters to rely more on accredited sources (knowns) within the capital Maseru. Thus time pressure, the organisational aspects of the institution, as well as the economical constraint result in a situation where most of the work within the news stories seems to follow a routine schedule.

Diverse sources of news

Despite the government's efforts to grant females access to media, women are still minimally represented in the media. Women are rarely seen in the news, women still remain among the marginalized members of the society, and more men than women speak on issues of politics, economics and other related hard beats (Molokomme, 2003)[22]. Marginalisation of women is not just in the media but also in all sectors of society. Lesotho is not an exception in this case. This view was echoed by Speaker of the National Assembly Miss Ntlhoi Motsamai (Bulletin 5, story 1). She indicated that despite tremendous strides Lesotho has made in the consolidation of democracy, it is still lagging behind on matters of representation of women in decision-making positions thereby making it difficult to achieve a gender balance. She strongly urged members of the national assembly to re-visit their strategies, and move out of the current mindset about women. She stated that they have to "draw inspiration from the understanding that the concept of democracy will only bear true significance when policies and legislation are jointly decided by women and men with equitable regard for interests and attitudes of both halves of the population" (LTV news bulletin, September, 2004).

Normatively LTV as a nation-builder has a social responsibility to empower and enlighten its audience with relevant information. The reporters pointed out that they try to interview both female and male sources. "LTV news allows for all opinions from other organisations such as those of women and youth. They are given a slot if they have rallies, campaigns and the like" (reporter (e), interview, September 2004). They however, indicated that most officials are middle-aged men and are the ones who are mostly interviewed. Despite the fact that female reporters outnumber the male reporters as indicated by LTV news director, news is still

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[22] Molokomme, A. (2003) 'What, in the end, could be more central to free speech than that every segment of society should have a voice?' www.genderlinks.org.za/docs/2003/GMbaselinestudy/countryreps/lesotho-Brochure-sm.pdf Accessed (31/07/04).

dominated by men. The news director indicated that they are gender sensitive and female reporters are assigned similar stories to their counterparts. Regardless of the number of female reporters expected to change the shape of LTV news bulletin there is still a significant number of males as sources of news. This is evident in Table 7 where the number of male-known sources is 29 and 23 female-known sources while the number of unknowns is 18 and 15 respectively. The figures confirm the study conducted by the Lesotho gender and media baseline study initiated by MISA in collaboration with Gender Links, which shows that women's views and voices are under-represented in Lesotho's media. The study further illustrated that there was no significant difference in the performance of public and private media with regard to giving a voice to women and men, and that women in the media still carried their private identity more than men[23]. Commenting on this issue Zock and Turk (1998: 764) argue that "[i]t is an unreal image of society that is presented when women, who represent a [large] percent of our population, are relatively absent as news sources. And it is an unreal image presented when women are rarely quoted on issues of national or international importance".

The gender imbalance contradicts public service broadcasters' obligations of enhancing the quality of life and empowering individuals and social groups to participate equitably (Raboy, 1995). Media should acknowledge that the voices of men and women are equally heard, on all subjects, in the news and that they have opinions on all issues. MISA's gender policy stipulates that giving voice to all segments of society is intrinsic to participation, citizenship and in turn to democracy (Mufune, 2003)[24]. From the data collected female voices dominate in finance, law and constitution and education stories, while male voices dominate in political, community development stories, sports, communications, crime and accidents. Some of the categories like health, and culture had an almost equal presence of both men and women as sources of news. The middle-aged men and women are the ones who have access to the media while the elderly and the youth are also marginalised.

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[23]Thakalekoala, T. (2003) 'Women under-represented in Lesotho's media, says MISA's study'. http://www.africapulse.org.za/index.php?action=viewarticle&articleid=1234 Accessed (06/01/05)

[24] Mufune, J. (2003) 'Media & Gender Monitor'. *Gender and media baseline study: Monitoring the media in Southern Africa.* http://www.wacc.org.uk Accessed (19/11/04).

The over-presentation of men in the above categories as main sources of news can be attributed to the stereotypes that men dominate in hard news stories. The minimal presentation of women as sources in political news instills the masculine dominance by not presenting women as sources of news. Media has a crucial role of correcting the imbalances in the participation of men and women in politics:

> The media can help to instill among the public the idea that women's participation in political life is an essential part of democracy (and) can also take care to avoid giving negative or minimizing images of women and their determination and capacity to participate in politics, stressing the importance of women's role in economic and social life and in the development process in general (IPU)[25].

However the absence of women as sources of news in politics is not suprising as women are generally considered as the peacemakers and nurturers of society. According to FIDA chairperson Lindiwe Sephomolo (2002) women in Lesotho play a predominant role as heads of households. This has led to a small number of women in Lesotho entering the political arena and other decision-making bodies. Commenting on the 2002 general elections in Lesotho, Sephomolo states that:

> Statistics from the Independent Electoral Commission show that 117 women stood for election and only 10 have succeeded in obtaining the 120 parliamentary seats. This means that Lesotho has still not achieved the SADC goal of 30% representation of women in politics and decision-making authority (FIDA)[26].

Democracy can only be achieved if there is equality between men and women in conducting societal affairs. The equal presentation of both women and men as sources of news will develop and be consistent with one of the requirements of democracy, freedom of expression. The balanced and diverse portrayals of women by the media as sources of news would increase participation of both women and men in production and decision-making.

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[25] 'Women politicians in the media' http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/media.htm. Accessed (18/11/04)

[26] Sephomolo, L. (2002) 'Lesotho elections 2002: Efforts towards women empowerment'. http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/lesotho2c.htm Accessed (07/01/05)

The repeated dominance of men over women as sources of news is also evident in the sports category. The dominance of male sources in sports news reinforces patriarchal ideology that sports is masculine. As indicated by Margaret Duncan and Michael Messner (1998):

> By excluding women from this arena and by making athleticism virtually synonymous with masculinity, sport provides opportunities for men to assert their dominance at a time when male hegemony is continuously being challenged and opposed in everyday life (Duncan and Messner, 1998: 170).

The above statement contravenes the social responsibility model which urges the media to avoid "causing offence to the minorities" and giving a "representative picture of constituent groups in society" (McQuail, 1994: 124). That is, men and women irrespective of age have to be equally and positively represented in the media. The imbalance between male and female sources is an indicator that democracy in Lesotho is far from being truly participatory. However, as indicated earlier in this chapter there is a relatively good number of women presented in top positions as known sources of news. These are Principal Chief, Speaker of the National Assembly, ministers, directors and business leaders. The dominance of women in business is borne out of the increasing number of women in business affairs. There are many women who are entering in the business world as managers of companies both in the government as well as NGOs. It should however, be noted that the increase in the number of women as known sources does not encourage the presentation of women as known sources only. Stories of women at the grassroots as sources are of most importance.

In the case of youth and the elderly, reporters said that they are less featured as they are not involved in the decision-making process. Youth featured in the news bulletins during the period of study are mostly students in a science fair, sports or cultural activities. There are no youth featured in health and political news categories. Youth are the future nation and their views should be included in all the news categories. LTV as a nation-builder has to cultivate a culture of democratic citizenship where the opinions and perspectives of other citizens are acknowledged. "The cultivation of one's moral imagination flourishes in such a culture in which the self-centred perspective of the individual is constantly challenged by the multiplicity and diversity of perspectives that contribute public life" (d' Entrèves, 1989: 18-19). The denial to give access to youth and the elderly in media contravenes the soviet media theory which assumes a common ground across all ages.

In light of the discussion the only way to ensure fair and balanced coverage of the news is to strive for true diversity not just diversity of gender, age, or class but diversity of opinion.

Diversity of opinion and nation building at LTV

As already indicated in Chapter 2, nation-building and broadcasting has to be understood in three levels:

> In the first level the electronic media is expected to disseminate symbolic messages and representations of unification and reconciliation. Secondly, it is to enhance in the process of economic development and reconstruction. Thirdly, is has to play a vital role in the extension of deepening of democratic participation in [Lesotho] (Barnett, 1998: 78).

This study is premised on the concept of democracy. True democracy results when diversity of opinion is exercised in the development of unity of purpose. Without diversity of opinion democracy cannot exist. Despite a homogenous culture and language and the absence of tribal diverse groupings Lesotho society is divided along political lines. Media in such a country is to facilitate the process of unity and reconciliation by providing an arena of public debate and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion. This view is echoed by Maurizio d' Entrèves (1989) who states that unity can be achieved by sharing a public space and a set of political institutions and not necessarily some set of common values.

However, the limited dissenting and alternative voices from the general public, the opposition parties as stipulated by reporters' questions the role of LTV as a nation-builder. It is argued by Teer-Tomaselli and Tomaselli (2001) that if a public service broadcaster is to act as nation-builder, it has to cater for the needs of diverse groups in the nation. "It is through this that development in all sectors of life can be promoted as people in different contexts become empowered with the responsibility of taking charge of their lives" (Bechan, 1996: 13). The government sets policies and development plans which are delivered by its spokesperson such as the government officials, which the beneficiaries have to examine and say whether they meet their needs or not and how the plans can be modified to address those needs. However, the station's denial to give access to such voices questions the station's role in the process of development and economic reconstruction.

The issue of diversity of opinion in nation building has been highly criticised by most African leaders and governments as dividing the nation instead of uniting it. The reporters and management at LTV also stipulated that the denial of the station to grant dissenting and alternative views from the general public and political parties is said will create tensions within the society rather that to unite it. Thus nation-building discourse as understood by the leaders tends to suggest that the responsibilities of the press and the government are ultimately the same (Skjerdal, 2001). The two institutions work together towards the same goal, and are seen as cooperatives rather than competitors. Media as a nation-builder is not expected to criticize those in power but to support them. However, this claim is against the watchdog role of media in democracy, which views media as a guard against the malpractices of those in power.

Summary

LTV as a nation-builder was expected to play a vital role in uniting the nation into a single unison of voices by reflecting all views equitably. Instead the station reflects more of the known sources of news, most of which are government officials while ordinary people, non-governmental as well the opposition parties are not adequately presented. The failure of the station to present and allocate equal time to the known and unknown sources contradicts the democratic ideal of equal participation. The elderly, the youth and women, are not equitably represented in the news broadcasts. This is also against the public service obligation of paying particular attention to minorities. The role of LTV in a democratic institution is to empower people to make decisions within that society and to be represented fairly and equitably. This role can only be achieved if the governed have the ability to assert opinions without restraint (Takirambudde, 1995, in Paul, R. van der Veur, 2003:81). However, LTV failed due to authoritative controls which inhibit public discussion.

Through their structure and content the news at 21.00 privileges the nation's political and economic elites ignoring oppositional voices or those outside of the high ranking officials. Government policies and plans announced by officials remained unchallenged. The viewer is left with the impression that either the known sources (elites) represent the views or interests of Basotho while the latter's positions are simply irrelevant. Either way, voices of dissent or alternatives are silenced.

The pattern of information flow observed between "centre" and "periphery" can also be found within the LTV news bulletins. There is more information about and from the urban areas more especially the capital Maseru. Rural areas are hardly covered and people in those areas know virtually nothing about events in their areas. The unknowns know more about what happens in the city and less and less about themselves.

Time, organisational requirements and budget limits, as stipulated by reporters, compel them to rely more on known sources within the capital Maseru. This therefore created a skewed coverage, as rural areas and the unknowns were neglected.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

The primary objective of the research was to evaluate through critical analysis the presentation of diverse sources in the news bulletins at LTV. The main interest was to examine the extent to which LTV plays the role of a nation-builder in enhancing the democratic rule by promoting equal access to both 'known' and 'unknown' sources of news. Through reference to the theories of media the study highlighted the extent to which LTV as a nation-builder in a democratic country functions. The interest was borne out of the changes in the political system and in the broadcasting media. The contention of the study was that LTV as a nation-builder is to reflect diverse sources of public opinion in its news broadcasts. This particular argument is notwithstanding the notion that news is influenced by the organisational requirements. The study therefore was premised on the hypothesis that news selection and coverage at LTV favours the 'knowns' (elites) and does not adequately cover the 'unknowns' (ordinary/average people). Another contention was that stories are urban-based while the rural areas are neglected.

Normative models of the media in LTV context

From the research one realises that although the Lesotho press argues for a libertarian model which sets the media free from government intervention, this is hard to fulfil. Given the six theories of the media, LTV can be positioned within both social responsibility and development model, although it fails to fulfil some of the model's obligations.

As indicated in the early chapters of this dissertation, LTV is supposed to serve the nation. It is to contribute to the nation-building process. This suggests that there is consensus between LTV and the government. This has led to some uncritical reporting of government policies and the provision of ample time to the officials to publicise the government policies, even though the model states that the media has obligations to society of ensuring that the public understand their rights and respond effectively to society's issues. However, the journalists' lack of professional autonomy as suggested by the libertarian theory prohibited them from engaging in a kind of reporting that might seem to be critical of the government.

The theory also advocates for high degree of professionalism. This becomes rather exclusive as the majority of the voiceless in Lesotho are without profession. This was evidenced by the numbers of known sources (most of whom are professionals) while the unknowns (most of whom are unprofessional) were left out of the mainstream media. Although the model is based on diversity, access to various points of view and feedback, all of which recommend a dialogue rather than vertical sender-receiver communication, this is hardly practised as criticism is considered a threat to nation-building initiatives.

There is also high degree of professionalism, advocated by objectivity, impartiality and truth which require the reporters to keep their beliefs, opinions or feelings separate from the story. This was evidenced in a number of stories where the assigned reporters did not interpret the implications of the government policies but instead relied on statements from the known sources. However, the reliance on known sources is against the democratic participant theory which requires participation of ordinary citizens as much as those in prominent positions.

Objective reporting is also criticised by McNair (1998: 71) where he states that "objectivity is a mantra chanted by journalists when they wish to signal their privileged status as society truth tellers". His contention is that there is no neutral, value free perspective from which the journalist could observe or report. He believes that all perspectives reflect the world view of a class and the question relates to whose/ which side/ which class the journalist privileged. One of the ideals of objectivity is that the reporter does not make claims on her personal observation, but instead attributes them to sources. Sources in this case must be credible to perform the required role therefore government officials as well as other important decision-makers in society are contacted (McNair, 1998: 75). This has led to exclusion of other voices in society, particularly that of the minority (women, youth and the elderly) and the unknowns.

As advocated by the development model, media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy. In the interests of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in media operations (McQuail, 1987: 121). LTV also, as indicated earlier, gives the government officials more time to publicise the government policies.

This is in line with the ministry's mission which reads:

> To ensure timeous dissemination of [g]overnment policy as well as to ensure sustainable provision of affordable, reliable and high-quality info-communications services so as to achieve universal access and to facilitate investment promotion for the ultimate achievement of socio-economic development and cultivation of an info-communications society[27].

However, the station fails to involve society, mainly local community in the organisation and structure of information disseminating from communication sources to receivers. This therefore means the station failed to live up to its obligation of creating an enabling social environment that can play a pivotal role in empowering citizens and entrenching democracy.

Nation-builder or State broadcaster?

Nation-building advocates for a fair representation of every group in the society. This demand falls in line with one of the fundamental tenets of democracy that promotes freedom of expression and representation.

The director of the department of Information at the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology, Mr. Thabiso Makintane pointed out that LTV was established to inform, entertain as well as to educate the Basotho nation, thus following the basic tenets of a public service broadcaster. The intentions of this aspirant public service broadcaster were also confirmed by Tau (2001) where he stipulated that the military government agenda during the establishment of LTV was to unite the nation divided along political as well as religious lines.

The study investigated whether LTV still operates as a nation-builder by presenting diverse sources of news as a process towards sustainable democracy or a state broadcaster by reflecting more of elite voices especially from the government organisation. The study confirmed the hypothesis that news at LTV highly favours the 'known' sources and is therefore, elitist in nature. It has to be acknowledged that most of the known sources are government officials thus the station is used to publicise the government policies. The ruling

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[27] 'Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology'. http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/mninfor.htm Accessed (04/05/05).

class uses the station in maintaining the status quo. This has resulted in the station failing to critically examine the government policies.

The study has also shown that although there are diverse sources of news in terms of gender and age, these sources are not frequently presented and allocated equal time. Democracy requires equality in the allocation of time for all sources of news. The journalists at LTV also indicated that although it is their intention to allocate almost equal time to all the sources of news and to keep to the international standards of journalism they have to abide by the organisation's regulations. The study confirmed that the journalists at LTV are not editorially independent as claimed. They have to compromise their journalistic standards of impartiality, and biasness by having more voices from the knowns. Moreover, dissenting or alternative voices are not also given adequate time while at times they are totally not aired. This is actually against the concept of nation-building which requires the media to be an arena of public debate. Media as a public sphere in democracy has to advocate for greater diversity, serve the public interest, minority and reflect dissenting viewpoints. The criteria used for selection of news stories at LTV revealed that the selection does not keep with the priorities of public service broadcasting rather news routine namely beats and values are followed. This was revealed by the high number of stories from the government organisations and reference to elite persons respectively and mostly from the capital Maseru.

While the liberalisation of airwaves took place in Lesotho in 1998, with the hope that LTV will benefit the ordinary or average Mosotho, the station is benefiting the elite more particularly government officials. The station was expected to become a public sphere, a space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over state (Jakubowicz, 1998: 13). However, the station is used as the mouthpiece of the government.

Given the changes in political systems the assumption was that LTV operations would also adapt to these changes. However, it is expected that greater media freedom in Lesotho lies perhaps in the Access and Receipt of Information Bill 2000 which is expected to grant media practitioners a right of freedom of expression and access to information which has not been promulgated during the writing of the study.

The study therefore concludes that LTV is a state broadcaster and not a nation-builder. Nation-building advocates for local content programming for promotion of social identity as well as diversity of opinion. As concluded by Tau (2001), the station thus contributes to national identity however, this author concludes that LTV discourages alternative views from being expressed. The station has failed to allow for alternative and contending voices to air their views, thus there is limited diversity of opinion from different groups in the country and hence lack of editorial independence. Nation-building and democracy advocate for diversity of opinion from different groups in the country. The contention is that diversity of opinion would lead to unity in a country since Independence in 1966 has endured a number of trials in civil unrest in its political arena (1970, 1986, 1994, 1998) that resulted in *coups* brought on by the use of the armed forces (Gumbi, 1995). All the incidents were either a form of resistance against political change or an attempt to depose democratically elected governments.

The study has shown that there is a difficult transition of media from authoritarian rule to democracy. This is evident by the lack of media laws, policies, editorial independence of journalists and others. Drawing on Goran Hyden and Charles Okigbo (2003), the study therefore concludes that, Lesotho like other African countries, still has a long way to go before it attains true democracy. Hyden and Okigbo (2003) state:

> The media, whether print, audio or visual, in Africa today are still going through a process of learning. They have not yet acquired the sensibilities that are necessary for making a lasting contribution to democratisation. For instance, whether state-owned or private, these media have a long way to go before they can serve as partial dispensers of information that allow them play the vital role of "fourth estate" in political governance. As they operate now, they are often too partisan and parochial to serve the public interest (Hyden and Okigbo, 2003: 49-50).

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APPENDIX 1

Interview questions   (The questions were not asked in order)

When was LTV established and by whom?

What was the purpose of its establishment?

How many people started the station?

How were they recruited?

How was news selected during the military regime?

What criteria did you use to select news on a daily basis?

How independent were you in terms of choosing your own stories?

Can you trace the development of news bulletins at LTV since its establishment?

Is there a change in news broadcasts since 1988 – in which areas are changes?

In a democratic situation how do you think is LTV supposed to operate?

What is the role of LTV as a national station?

What is the role of LTV as a nation-builder?

What is the role of LTV station in democracy?

Is LTV a state or public service broadcaster/ or both/ provide a reason for your answer?

Can you briefly tell how the newsroom is controlled?

Can you briefly explain how you start your day at LTV?

Who assigns news stories for coverage?

How free are reporters in selecting their own stories?

Is there a systematic pattern in the selection of news (aired) and rejection (unaired) of potential news content?

Are there particular aspects of the news selection process that lead some kinds of news stories being chosen over others (story topics, news values)?

Is there a newsroom policy which guides you in your daily activities?

How do you learn the policy of the station?

How to you ensure compliance to media statutes and codes of conduct?

What is the editorial policy of LTV on news coverage?

What is the editorial policy of Lesotho Media on news coverage?

Do you strive for objectivity, impartiality and fairness in your news reporting?

Do you allocate equal time for the prominent sources of news as well as the ordinary sources of news?

How do you ensure that there is balance in your news coverage in terms of gender and age?

Do news stories allow for the expression of alternative viewpoints and dissenting voices from the general public?

How is your normal day at LTV?

What is your opinion of the daily coverage of news at LTV?

What do other media practitioners outside LTV view LTV news stories? i.e. from your conversations, during news coverage's, conferences etc.

What is the number of staff in the newsroom?

What is your opinion on newsroom staffing and equipment?

Is LTV accessible to the entire country?

Are there plans in the pipeline to improve transmission network to ensure universal access of LTV?

What are the problems facing the station?

How often do reporters go training?

Do you experience any form of interference from management in the course of your work?

Do you receive complaints from the opposition parties/ what about the general public? / Non-governmental organisations?

How do you deal with such complaints?

In your opinion how should LTV approach news coverage's be in order to give a fair balanced coverage to the entire Basotho nation?

What should be done to transform LTV as an institution so that it responds to the democratic ideals?

Are there complaints you received from LTV reporters of intimidation by the authority?

Do you have any information of interest in relation to our discussion?

APPENDIX 2

KEY:

K = Known
UK = Unknown
U = Urban
R = Rural
Gov = Government
NGO = Non- Governmental organisation
Com= Community
Comm/Dev= Community development
Comms= Communication
Bus/finance=Business and finance
Law/Cons= Law and Constitution
Space= Total time for each news story
Sound bite= time allocated a news source
Rep. = Representative
Univ. = University
NEPAD= New Partnership for African Development
Dep= Deputy
NFE=Non-Formal Education
MISA= Media Institute for Southern Africa
IT=Information Technology
H.M. = His Majesty

Bulletin 1

Monday, 30/08/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	5.49	3.08	U	Comm/Dev	Gov	Minister	Male
	K		1.17			NGO	Rep. NGO	Male
2	K	2.19	0.58	U	Education	Gov	Univ. Secretariat	Female
3	K	2.57	0.59	U	Comm/Dev	Gov	Prime Minister	Male
	K		0.37			Gov	Chief Executive NEPAD	Male
Total time		11.05 mins						

Bulletin 2

Tuesday 31/08/04								
Story	Source	Space	Soundbite	Origin	Category	Organisation	Position	Gender
1	K	3.16	0.44	R	Finance	Gov	Gov. Official	Male
	UK		0.58			Com	Com. Member	Female
	UK		0.48			Com	Com. Member	Female
2	UK	3.53	0.51	U	Comm/Dev	Gov	Health Worker	Female
	UK		0. 05			Com	Com. Member	Male
	UK		1.01			Com	Com. Member	Male
	UK		0.11			Com	Com. Member	Female
3	K	2.12	1.07	U	Sport	Gov	Colonel	Male
	Total time	9.21mins						

Bulletin 3

Wednesday, 01/09/04								
Story	Source	Space	Soundbite	Origin	Category	Organisation	Position	Gender
1	UK	1.51	0.1	U	Sport	NGO	Student	Male
	UK		0.19			NGO	Student	Male
	UK		0.45			NGO	Nun	Female
2	K	5.19	3.11	U	Comm/Dev	Gov	Minister	Male
	K		1.29			NGO	Director Kellogg	Male
3	K	2.31	0.53	U	Education	Gov	Principal Secretary	Female
	K		0.45			Gov	Director	Male
4	UK	2.24	0.22	U	Crime	NGO	Student	Female
	K		0.54			NGO	Reverend	Female
	Total time	12.05 mins						

Bulletin 4

Thursday, 02/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	4.02	1.09	U	Comm/Dev	Gov	Minister	Male
	K		1.57			Gov	Minister	Male
2	K	1. 1	0.28	U	Defence	Gov	Leutenant General	Male
3	K	3.08	1.16	U	Comms	Gov	Dep. Principal Secretary	Male
	K		1.19			Gov	Director	Female
4	K	2.18	0.48	U	Comm/Dev	NGO	Reverend	Female
	K		0.25			Gov	District Secretariat	Male
5	UK	4.22	0.48	U	Cultural	Com	Com. Member	Female
	UK		1.06			Com	Student	Male
	UK		0.39			Com	Student	Male
	UK		0.26			Com	Student	Male
	Total time	**15.00 mins**						

Bulletin 5

Friday, 03/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	4.00	2.42	U	Law/ constitution	Gov	Speaker of National Assembly	Female
2	K	1.43	0.45	U	Education	NGO	Executive Secretary	Male
3	K	2.59	1.26	R	Education	Gov	Principal Chief	Male
	K		1.04			Gov	Director	Female
4	UK	1.05	0.3	U	Accidents	Com	Taxi Driver	Male
	Total time	**9.47 mins**						

Bulletin 6

Saturday, 04/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	3.13	2.31	U	Health	NGO	Public Relations Officer	Female
2	UK	2.39	0.35	U	Education	NGO	Nun	Female
	UK		0.09			NGO	Student	Male
	K		0.54			NGO	Lecturer	Male
3	K	2.35	1.11	U	Education	Gov	Assistant Minister	Female
	UK		0.39			Gov	Student	Male
4	UK	1.48	1.02	U	Education	Com	Teacher	Female
	Total time	**10.15 mins**						

Bulletin 7

Sunday, 05/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	UK	3.13	1.34	U	Education	NGO	Teacher	Female
	UK		0.08			NGO	Teacher	Female
2	K	3.54	1.08	U	Bus/ Finance	NGO	Director Global IT	Female
	K		0.17			NGO	Business Leader	Female
	K		0.2			NGO	Business Leader	Female
	K		0.51			NGO	Business Leader	Female
	Total time	**7.07 mins**						

Bulletin 8

Monday, 06/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	4.19	2.46	U	Politics	Gov	Minister	Male
	K		1.02			Gov	Director Wales Link	Female
2	K	2.19	1.17	U	Education	NGO	Director NFE	Female
	Total time	**6.38 mins**						

Bulletin 9

Tuesday, 07/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	3.06	1.1	U	Bus/ Finance	Gov	Ombudsman	Male
	UK		0.3			NGO	Street Vendor	Male
	UK		0.37			NGO	Street Vendor	Female
2	K	4.33	2.19	U	Crime	Gov	Superintendent Police	Male
	UK		0.26			Gov	Taxi Inspector	Male
	UK		0.4			Gov	Taxi Inspector	Male
	UK		0.08			Gov	Taxi Inspector	Male
3	K	2.47	0.15	R	Law/Cons	Gov	Minister	Female
	K		1.06			Gov	H.M. King	Male
	K		0.52			Gov	Principal Chief	Female
4	UK	4.22	1.26	U	Education	Gov	Student	Male
	K		0.57			Gov	Minister	Male
	UK		0.3			Gov	Teacher	Female
	Total time	**14.48 mins**						

Bulletin 10

Wednesday, 08/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	UK	1.06	0.1	U	Education	NGO	Student	Female
2	K	3.17	1.3	U	Politics	Gov	H.M. King	Male
	K		0.57			Gov	Ambassador	Male
	Total time	**4.23 mins**						

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Bulletin 11

Thursday, 09/09/04								
Story	Source	Space	Soundbite	Origin	Category	Organisation	Position	Gender
1	UK	3.56	0.59	U	Comm/dev	Com	Beggar	Male
	UK		0.59			Com	Beggar	Male
2	K	3.4	1.53	U	Comms	NGO	Chairperson MISA	Male
	K		0.56			Gov	Principal Secretary	Male
3	K	3.35	2.16	U	Politics	Gov	Prime Minister	Male
	Total time	11.11 mins						

Bulletin 12

Friday, 10/09/04								
Story	Source	Space	Soundbite	Origin	Category	Organisation	Position	Gender
1	K	2.35	2.35	U	Politics	Gov	Ambassador	Female
2	K	4.45	1.17	U	Politics	Gov	President of Senate	Male
	K		2.58			Gov	Principal Chief	Female
3	K	1.29	0.06	R	Education	Gov	Assistant Minister	Female
	UK		0.12			Gov	Teacher	Male
	Total time	8.49 mins						

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Bulletin 13

Saturday, 11/09/04								
Story	**Source**	**Space**	**Soundbite**	**Origin**	**Category**	**Organisation**	**Position**	**Gender**
1	K	3.5	2.08	U	Health	Gov	Principal Secretary	Female
	K		1.00			Gov	Counsellor	Male
2	K	4.44	2.43	U	Education	Gov	President/ Lecturer	Male
	UK		0.06			Gov	Student	Male
	UK		1.52			Gov	Student	Female
Total		**8.34**						
Grand total		**129.03**						

Appendix 3

Summary of the total time allocated to sources per week

Week one			Known						
			Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Time in seconds			419	111	432	442	357	276	156
Time in minutes			6.59	1.51	7.12	7.22	5.57	4.36	2.36
Week two									
Time in seconds			305	399	147	309	416	351	
Time in minutes			5.5	6.39	2.27	5.9	6.59	5.51	
Average time slot for	Sec		362	255	289.5	375.5	386.5	313.5	78
Known per day	Min		6.02	4.15	4.5	6.15	6.26	5.14	1.18

Week one			Unknown						
		Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Time in seconds		0	279	96	179	30	145	102
Time in minutes		0	4min39sec	1.36	2.59	half(1/2) minute	2.25	1.42
Week two								
Time in seconds		0	257	10	118	12	118	
Time in minutes		0	4.17	1/6of minute	1.58	1/5of minute	1.58	
Average time slot for	Sec	0	268	53	148.5	21	131.5	51
Unknown per day	Min	0	4.28	53sec	2.29	21sec	2.12	51

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Known	6.02	4.15	4.5	6.15	6.26	5.14	1.18
Unknown	0	4.28	53sec	2.29	21sec	2.12	51
Share of time slot	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Known	6.02	4.15	4.5	6.15	6.26	5.14	1.18
Unknown	0	4.28	0.88	2.29	0.35	2.12	0.85

APPENDIX 4

Percentage measurement of time per source and reporter

Shared time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Unknown	0%	50%	13%	20%	5%	24%	24%	0%	29%	4%	18%	2%	23%	
Known	63%	20%	60%	49%	61%	45%	36%	77%	45%	56%	46%	79%	68%	
Reporter	37%	30%	27%	31%	34%	32%	40%	23%	26%	40%	36%	19%	9%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Shared time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Total
Unknown	0.00	0.50	0.13	0.20	0.05	0.24	0.24	0.00	0.29	0.04	0.18	0.02	0.23	2.11
Known	0.63	0.20	0.60	0.49	0.61	0.45	0.36	0.77	0.45	0.56	0.46	0.79	0.68	7.04
Reporter	0.37	0.30	0.27	0.31	0.34	0.32	0.40	0.23	0.26	0.40	0.36	0.19	0.09	3.84
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	

Appendix 5

Summary Table

Gender / Source / Age Categories	Male Known			Male Unknown			Female Known			Female Unknown		
	Youth	Adult	elderly	Youth	Adult	elderly	Youth	Adult	elderly	Youth	Adult	elderly
Health		1						1				
Education		8		2	3			7		2	4	
Business/finance		2			1			5			1	2
Comm./develop		10			2				2		2	
Crime/accidents		1			4				1	1		
political		5						3				
sports		1		2							1	
Law and constitutional affairs	1						3					
Defence	1											
cultural				2						1	1	
communications		3						1				

Appendix 6

List of Interviewees

Dyke Sehlooho – Senior Engineer, LTV.

'Mamolise Falatsa- News Producer/Reporter, LTV.

'Maphatsoane Molefi- News Producer/Reporter, LTV.

Montśi Mothibeli-News Producer/Reporter, LTV.

Motlatsi Nkhasi – Ex-News Producer/Reporter/Presenter, LTV.

               - Broadcasting Manager -LTA

Nthakoana Ngatane – Ex-News Producer/Reporter/Presenter, LTV.

               - Marketing Officer – Lesotho Bank.

Ntsane Molemohi- News Director/ Editor, LTV.

Thabiso Makintane- Director of Information/ Ex-Acting Controller of Television and Programming Director, LTV.

Tom Mapesela – Information and Research Officer, MISA/MILES- Lesotho.

Valeria Lesofe – Reporter, Catholic Radio FM.

Appendix 7

List of people who are frequently featured in the Lesotho Print media

Ministers

Government officials

Non-government officials

Diplomats

Professionals

Politicians

Sports veterans

Celebrities

Students

Community leaders

Community members