LGE 2K

An Analysis of Media Coverage of the 2000 Local Government Elections

Media Monitoring Project

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Chapter 1. Introduction

On the 5th of December 2000 South Africans voted for the second time in the Local Government Elections. Unlike the 1995 LGE which were preceded by the euphoria of the first national democratic elections and doubt as to whether the LGE would take place, the 2000 LGE, although delayed against the background of the opposition parties uniting to oppose the ANC took place uneventfully. There were a variety of candidates who stood as independents. In addition to this it was expected that as people had already voted for local government in 1995 that there would be greater knowledge of the process and consequently greater capacity for change at local levels. Overall the coverage by the media was low compared to previous elections, this was in line with the general attitude of political parties who appeared to express minimal interest in the process. While it was true that people had greater knowledge of the system the IEC had to deal with the number of municipalities being reduced from over 800 to around 224. The concomitant changes in the voting system as well as the complexities involved were poorly represented in the media.

The 2000 LGE presented a new challenge for the media precisely because they had to deal with the issues on a local level. In the 1995 elections the MMP found that,

> "Local Government Elections were to be about local issues and credible candidates who would represent people properly unlike in the apartheid era. It was disappointing that the media, in the main, followed the agenda of political parties by covering elections issues at a national level"
> (MMP Local Government Elections Report 1995: 20)

Coverage of the 2000 LGE, unfortunately mirrored several aspects of the coverage of the 1995 LGE.

1.1 Aims

The aim of monitoring the LGE was to determine whether the media fulfilled their obligations in covering the elections in a free, fair, balanced and informative manner, with special attention being given to the degree in which local issues were dealt with by the media.

1.2 Objectives

- Ensure the media reporting of the 2000 Local Government Elections was fair
- Assess the degree to which media coverage dealt with local government issues
- Reveal the issues, policies and debates which arose during the election period
- Educate the media about their role in election reporting
- Inform public bodies about the performance of the media
- Cultivate a human rights culture within election reporting

1.3 Methodology

The project monitored and evaluated the LGE in three ways:

- Daily Monitoring and Analysis: Each day of the election period the various media being monitored were analysed, the information entered into a database and a daily report was then issued to stakeholders and the media.
- Weekly Evaluation and Statistical Analysis: On a weekly basis the data derived from the monitoring, as well as a critical analysis of media coverage, was compiled into a weekly report.
- Special Issues Monitoring: Certain issues relating to the LGE were monitored, as well as issues central to the development and maintenance of a democratic society, to determine the degree to which they were reported on during the election period.

The following mediums were monitored.
(For Television the headline news bulletins were monitored on **SABC1**, **2** & **3**, as well as **e-tv's** headline bulletin. For radio, three bulletins were monitored each day, one in the morning, towards midday and one in the late afternoon.

The following Mediums were monitored:

Mediums Monitored	
SABC TV	Sunday Independent
e-tv	Weekend Argus
Cape Talk	Die Beeld
Zibonele	**Rapport**
Yfm	Business Day
SAfm	Sunday Times
Ukhozi	Cape Times
East Wave	The Citizen
Radio Today	Sunday World
Ilanga	Daily News
Sowetan	Sunday Tribune
City Press	Mail & Guardian
Star	**Independent on Saturday**

Regional press and radio were monitored at source with monitoring teams in Cape Town and Durban. Their monitoring was sent to the Johannesburg office on a daily basis. Overall, most monitoring was done in Gauteng to facilitate the prompt release of information.

Provincial diversity, although limited, was ensured through the selection of print and radio media in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape. For community radio **Zibonele** in the Western Cape and **East Wave** in Gauteng were selected. **East Wave** although based in Gauteng was specifically selected as they subscribed to Live Africa Network News – but just under three weeks into the

monitoring they stopped carrying any news. We therefore selected **Radio Today** which also subscribed to Live Africa Network News.

While the focus of the monitoring of the media was on local government certain other national issues, central to the development and maintenance of a democratic society were also tracked in the election monitoring to determine the degree to which they were reported on during the election period. These were:

- Women's rights, gender equality and violence against women
- Human Rights
- Racism

The monitoring period was from the 16th of October to the 5th of December. All monitoring was done using first language speakers.

The following Information was captured for each item monitored:

- The broadcaster
- The date & time
- A brief summary of the item[1]
- The overall subject or topic of the item. To ensure accuracy and reliability the following **topic codes** were used:

A. Economics and Business
B. Politics
C. Diplomacy
D. Disaster
E. Political Violence and Intimidation
F. Demonstrations, Strikes and Protests
G. Corruption-Government and Party
H. Election Fraud
I. Voter Education and Registration
J. IEC
K. Election Problems (Including Funding, Demarcation Etc)
L. Coalitions and Party Co-Operation
M. Party Defections
N. Labour/Unemployment
O. Education
P. Crime
Q. Housing
R. Land
S. Rates and Services
T. Gender Issues and Discrimination
U. Racism
V. Human Rights
W. Media

[1] Examples given in this report are referenced to the originating media, but the use of quotation marks do not necessarily indicate direct quotes.

X. Health
Y. HIV/AIDS
Z. Sport
AA. Arts and Culture
BB. Environment
CC. Death Penalty
DD. Religion
EE. Opinion Polls and Surveys
FF. Party Lists
GG. Party Campaigning and Manifesto
HH. Personalities/Profiles
II Children
JJ. Municipal Structures
KK. Other
LL. Urban Terror
MM. Poverty

- The **geographic area** to which the item applied. Here each item was attributed a geographic area code. In allocating an area, questions as to the importance and relevance of the item were asked. For example: was the item of national importance (e.g. unemployment) or was it specific to one province or area (e.g. Local councillor standing in Pimville Local Council).
  The following areas were used:

  1. Gauteng
  2. Mpumalanga
  3. Northern Province
  4. North West
  5. Western Cape
  6. Eastern Cape
  7. Kwazulu-Natal
  8. Free State
  9. Northern Cape
  10. National
  11. Local
  12. Africa
  13. International

- The **sources** and **parties** accessed.

- The **gender** of the sources, either Male, Female or Unknown. As it was often difficult to be certain of a persons gender on radio or in the print media, and in those instances where statements were not clearly attributed to a person, the number of sources where gender could not be identified was fairly high.

- Whether the item demonstrated a clear **LGE focus**. In assessing this, questions were asked as to whether the item emphasised an aspect/s of the local government elections and/or whether it localised the story/event. While all items monitored were about the LGE, previous

studies have shown that there is a tendency for the media not to localise the elections and to treat all issues on a national basis. As the issues and candidates people voted for were for local government, it was decided that it would be worthwhile to determine how the media conveyed the 'local' nature of the elections. Thus items were identified as either emphasising the LGE, or an aspect of the LGE, or not.

- The **fairness** of the item. Each item was assessed in terms of fairness and a bias test was conducted. See the section on bias for a detailed explanation of how this was determined.

- **Race**: Previous monitoring revealed a tendency for the media to represent race in stereotypical ways. For example, politicians often resorted to apartheid-style strategies for getting people to vote for them, i.e. simply because they were black, white or coloured. Or they appealed to ethnicities i.e. if they are Zulu or Afrikaans or Indian. In the past it was found that the media perpetuated this. The aim was to capture those instances where, although not the topic code, race was dealt with in an item. The debates in the latter half of 2000 between Mbeki and Leon are an example where allegations about racism were made by both. Thus each time the discourse of race was used or where race was mentioned (e.g. Leon addresses coloureds in Cape town), the item was marked accordingly.

Chapter 2. General Findings

After monitoring radio, television and print media over a seven-week period, general patterns were observed, the most significant of which are presented for brief discussion below. These trends were analysed in terms of their comparability with previous election coverage findings, at both national and local levels.

A marked similarity was, for example, noted between the previous and current local elections, in terms of the concern shown for prominent national personalities and the prioritisation of national issues to the detriment of local issues. However, while similar patterns were evident in quantitative coverage of national issues and personalities over the two elections, the qualitative differences in the nature of the coverage were striking. As will become clearer later on, the manner in which political figures were accorded attention differed to a significant extent across the two elections. Moreover, while considerable attention was devoted to national issues across the media in both elections, the issues themselves differed to a significant extent.

As will be revealed in greater detail below, the 2000 LGE coverage was conspicuous in its similarity to the coverage of the 1999 national elections, particularly in the concern for events at the expense of issues.

2.2 Crime coverage

While in 1995 and 1999, the issue of crime seemed to dominate election coverage, the 2000 elections were conspicuous in the limited interest shown on the subject within the context of the elections. Mention of crime was largely limited to elements in party manifestos. This concern for crime was most evident in the speeches of the DA, IFP, UDM, ACDP and PAC criticising the ANC led government for their failure to end crime in South Africa, and in which the parties promise to eradicate crime.

Some examples in this regard are presented below:

- "Curbing crime is ACDP's campaign ticket" (**Sowetan** 16/11/00, pg 17),
- "UDM promises to curb crime and create job opportunities" (**SABC 2** 19/10/00, item 7),
- "DA said that crime in the Western Cape has been high since the ANC government took over" (**Zibonele** 29/11/00, item 1),
- "Van Schalkwyk says crime has risen to crisis proportions" (**Cape Talk** 25/10/00,13:00, item 2),
- "Political parties courting voters with urgency. PAC blames ANC for crime and unemployment" (**SABC 3** 28/10/00, item 12),
- "Buthelezi says crime levels in the country negates freedom, during a rally at Ulundi" (**SABC 1** 02/12/00, item 2).

A notable exception in crime reporting was the extensive focus accorded to the arrest of the speaker of the Free State legislature on charges relating to the pre-1994 murders of people involved in the Taxi industry (**SABC 1,** 19/11/00, pg 11; **Sowetan** 20/11/00, pg 3; **Citizen** 20/11/00, pg 3; **Business Day** 20/11/00, pg 6; **Radio Today** 20/11/00, 11:00, item 2; **Rapport** 19/11/00, pg 1; **SABC 1**

20/11/00, item 4; **SABC 2** 20/11/00, item 4; **Beeld** 20/11/00, pg 2). While not specifically related to the local elections, the timing of the allegations against Mr Mafeka was bound to have made some impact on the public perceptions of the government and by implication the ANC.

2.3 Personalities / profiles

In contrast to previous coverage profiling prominent political actors in their personal capacity, in these elections, with the exception of coverage of President Mbeki, DA leader Tony Leon and IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as well as prominent larger than life figures such as the DA Cape Town Mayoral candidate Peter Marais and his ANC opponent Lynne Brown, coverage tended to place individuals squarely within their political party milieu. As recognisable media personalities, the coverage accorded such individuals is not surprising, but did none-the less detract from the real local election issues.

Items profiling President Thabo Mbeki tended to either foreground the "positive" changes he made in his polices and personality over the last year, or him being Africa's 'only hope'. Thus attention was paid to:

- A general discussion of such changes (**Business Day** 27/11/00, pg 9; **Sunday Independent** 03/12/00, pgs 5 and 7), with:
- The **Beeld** commenting that he has turned over a new leaf after the huge blunders made in the past year (10/11/00, pg 9),
- **e-tv** linking such changes to the local elections (27/10/00, item 2), and
- The **Sunday Tribune** referring to the launch of his "Charm offensive" (29/10/00, pg 4), as well as
- The times of London noting that Mbeki, in spite of his mistakes being Africa's only hope (**Beeld** 24/11/00, pg 2), with some critical commentary provided on this issue (**Beeld** 27/11/00, pg 12)

The attention afforded to Buthelezi was primarily the result of concern surrounding his rumoured retirement from government (**e-tv** 19/11/00, item 3; **Zibonele** 19/11/00, 18:00, item 1; **SABC 1** 19/11/00, item 11; **SABC 2** 19/11/00, item 6; **Cape Times** 20/11/00, pg 2; **Ukhozi** 20/11/00, 07:00, item1). Perhaps the best example of an item profiling Tony Leon was an article which appeared in the **Sunday Independent** on 03/12/00 (pg 4).

DA Western Cape Mayoral candidate, Peter Marais, was represented as having demagogic appeal among the poor in the coloured community **(Mail & Guardian** 01/12/00, pg 37), interviewed (**Weekend Argus** 03/12/00, pg 25), and compared to previous Cape Town Mayors (**Cape Times** 23/11/00, pg 12). His ANC counterpart Lynne Brown was also the subject of an interview (**Weekend Argus** 03/12/00,pg 25), and personality profile (**Weekend Argus** 25/11/00, pg 27). A comparison of their leadership styles and backgrounds was also undertaken (**Weekend Argus** 26/11/00, pg 27).

While extensive coverage was undertaken of various mayoral candidates around the country from the majority of the larger political parties, this concern largely failed to filter down to a similar discussion of local ward candidates. Thus while noteworthy attention was paid to amongst others, the DA's Mayoral Candidates

for Johannesburg (Mike Moriarty), the East Rand (Ernie Taylor), Durban (Lynn Ploos van Amstel), Sedibeng (Manezi Tutu) and Pretoria, and their ANC counterparts, Amos Masondo (Johannesburg), Buvanele Vilakazi (East Rand) and Peter Skosana (Vaal), this attention tended to be at the expense of ward candidates, who were expected to have received more prominent attention.

Likewise the focus on PAC Mayoral candidates for Tshwane, Durban (Dr Joe Mkhwanazi) and Johannesburg (Mosebyana Malubi) and those of the IFP for Johannesburg and Durban (Gladwin Bheka Ndlalana) as well as of the Minority Front in Durban (Reddy) and Azapo for Johannesburg, although relevant in the context of local government reporting, detracted from the importance of local candidates in the election process.

Moreover, these items tended to focus on their (mayoral candidates) promises and pledges, emanating from party manifestos, rather than on profiling them as individuals, highlighting their achievements and failures.

Furthermore, with the exception of a few notable examples, ward candidates were largely absent from the pages of the print media and the airtime of the broadcast media. While local election coverage would be expected to focus attention on local personalities, coverage of these elections was dominated by a focus on political parties. With local government generally regarded as ensuring a higher degree of accountability, and greater interaction between elected representatives and people at the grassroots, it would surely have been preferable for potential voters to know whom their candidates were and what they stood for. With financial and other constraints preventing many of the smaller parties from adequately publicising their candidates, and independent candidates unable to adequately campaign against the unlimited resources of the more powerful political parties, it was expected of the media, especially the print media, to inform the public on the promises and policies of their ward candidates.

However, the attention given to a handful of newsworthy candidates not withstanding, the media largely failed in their educative and informative role in imparting sufficient information to provide alternatives for residents in the voting process. Post-election gripes from residents unaware of who and what to vote for in their local areas would seem to lend credence to the failure of the media to adequately bring local democracy to the people. Those ward candidates, who did receive notable attention, were primarily included for their prominence or uniqueness. In this regard mention can be made of:

- An interview with prominent former ANC councillor and now independent candidate for Pimville, Trevor Ngwane (**Sowetan** 15/11/00, pg 6; **Business Day** 28/11/00, pg 2),
- A focus on Tutu Buthelezi, independent candidate for Ulundi and son of IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi (**Beeld** 23/10/00, pg 4),
- Cornelius Kekena, a traditional leader contesting the election in Tshwane as an ANC candidate (**Beeld** 21/11/00, pg 4),
- Maritz van Dyk, a Cape Town Police director, who was suspended from his police post for standing as a candidate in the election (**Cape Talk** 24/11/00,18:00, item 2),

- A Chinese immigrant who was standing as a DA candidate in JHB (**Rapport** 25/11/00, pg 6)
- Suzan Thgupane, a domestic worker and ANC candidate in Krugersdorp (**Rapport** 03/12/00, pg19),
- A 53 year old blind retiree contesting the election as a DA candidate (**Beeld** 01/11/00, pg 4), and
- Nonhlanhla Nkabinde, most often referred to as the "wife of assassinated UDM leader Sifiso Nkabinde" (**SABC 3** 29/10/00, item 4; **Sowetan** 30/10/00,pg 7; **Beeld** 30/10/00, pg 2).

An exception to the generally weak coverage of local candidates was an item in the **Business Day**, which provided an analysis of 32 candidates for the East Rand, giving some of their arguments and statements for the area (23/11/00, pg 15).

2.4 Events not issues

In keeping with previous trends of the prioritisation of events over issues in the local media over the last few years, election coverage was characterised by the virtual exclusive focus on events to the ultimate detriment of issues. As a vital element in entrenching local democracy, the media could be expected to play a crucial, even deterministic role in educating and informing the public on the issues involved. However, with the notable exception of the few days before the election, issues were largely left uncovered.

The concern for events was most evident in the coverage of party speeches, rallies and walkabouts of the major stakeholders. Although these occasions provide the ready-made opportunities for media scrutiny, it could reasonably have been expected of the media that they go beyond the mere reporting of such events, and actively engage in debating the issues involved. However in the course of our monitoring we noticed that the media largely failed to provide analytical, informative coverage, and has instead focused their attention to a large extent on the promises and pledges as presented by various party speakers at their many rallies on their campaign trail. While not disregarding the importance of campaigning and electioneering in the election process, the media is expected to tackle the promises and pledges and to debate their appropriateness and/or effectiveness for the local government elections.

Thus attention was given for example to:
* ANC rallies in:

- Uitenhage (**Weekend Argus** 25/11/00, pg 2; **SABC 3** 24/11/00, item 6),
- Transkei (**Business Day** 27/11/00, pg 4),
- Dobsonville (**e-tv** 28/11/00, item 5; **SABC 3** 29/11/00, item 7; **Citizen** 29/11/00, pg 11; **Beeld** 29/11/00, pg 2),
- East London (**Ukhozi** 03/12/00, 7:00, item 3),
- Durban (**SAfm** 03/12/00, 13:00, item 3; **SABC 3** 03/12/00, item 3; **SABC 2** 03/12/00, item 2; **Daily News** 04/12/00, pg 2),
- Soweto (**Citizen** 16/10/00, pg 4)
- Khayalithsa (**Cape Talk** 02/12/00, 17:00, item 1; **Daily News** 04/12/00, pg 2; **Cape Times** 04/12/00, pg 3; **Cape Talk** 04/12/00, 07:00, item 4);
- Kimberly (**SABC 1** & **2** 28/10/00, item 6),

- Newcastle (**Ukhozi** 19/11/00, 19:00, item 2),
- Ladysmith (**SABC 3** 25/11/00, item 4),
- Nongoma and Ulundi (**SABC 3** 25/11/00, item 4; **Ukhozi** 25/11/00, 13:00, item 6; **SABC 2** 25/11/00, item 4), and
- The East Rand (**e-tv** 28/11/00, item 5; **Beeld** 29/11/00, pg 2; **Citizen** 29/11/00, pg 4)

* IFP rallies in:
- Mpumalanga (**SABC 3** 18/11/00, item 14; **SAfm** 19/11/00, 13:00, item 5),
- Mtubatuba (**Ilanga** 23/11/00, pg 2),
- Ladysmith (**Ilanga** 20/11/00, pg 3; **Weekend Argus**, 02/12/00, pg 3) and
- Ulundi (**Cape Talk** 02/12/00, 17:00, item 2; **SABC 3** 02/12/00, item 7);

* PAC rallies in
- The Northern province and Cape Town (**SABC 3** 03/12/00, item 12; **Zibonele** 03/12/00,10:00, item 2),
- Johannesburg (**e-tv** 22/10/00, item 5),
- Tembisa (**Cape Times** 23/10/00, pg 6), and their
- Door to door campaign in Nyanga and old Crossroads (**Zibonele** 22/11/00, 08:00, item 5; 26/11/00,12:00,item 2)

* ACDP campaigning in
- Witbank (**SABC 3** 03/12/00, item 13) and
- Pretoria (**SABC 3** 02/12/00, pg 9),

* DA campaigning in:
- The East Rand (**SABC 1** 17/10/00, item 8; **SABC 2** 17/10/00, item 8, **SABC 3** 17/10/00, item 4; **Citizen** 18/10/00, pg 7),
- Soweto (**Sowetan** 18/10/00, pg 1),
- The launch of their manifesto in Soweto (**Sowetan** 23/10/00, pg 5; **Business Day** 23/10/00, pg 5; **Cape Times** 23/10/00, pg 6; **Beeld** 23/10/00, pg 4; **SABC 3** 22/10/00, item 10; **SABC 1**, 22/10/00, item 5; **SABC 2** 22/10/00, item 10),
- Calitzdorp (**SABC 2** 21/10/00, item 6; **SABC 3** 21/10/00, item 6),
- East London (**Zibonele** 18/10/00,12:00, item 3),
- The Cape Flats (**SABC 1** & **2** 28/10/00, item 7; **SABC 2** 28/10/00, item 7)
- JHB's Standard Bank Arena (**e-tv**, 03/12/00, item 4; **Cape Times** 04/12/00, pg 3),
- Valhalla (**Weekend Argus** 29/10/00, pg 3),
- Bellville South (**Ukhozi** 01/11/00, 07:00, item 4),
- Mancassar (**Cape Times** 10/11/00, pg 5),
- Chatsworth (**Sunday Tribune** 12/11/00, pg 4),
- Eldorado Park (**Rapport** 26/11/00, pg 14) and
- In KwaZulu-Natal (**Sunday Tribune** 03/12/00, pg 7).

*Azapo campaigning in
  - Gugulethu (**Zibonele** 16/10/00, 19:00, item 6), and
  - Their walkabout in Bekkersdal township in Westonaria (**Sowetan** 23/10/00, pg 4)

*UDM campaigning in

- Pretoria (**Citizen** 20/11/00, pg 6), and a
- Rally in Phillipi (**Zibonele** 22/11/00, 08:00, item 3)

As well as the:

- Launch of the Minority Front (MF) election manifesto in Durban (**Ukhozi** 02/11/00, 13:00, item 1) and
- UCDP campaign launch in NW province (**Citizen** 30/10/00, pg 6)

Recent election coverage also largely failed to provide answers to questions relating to the election process itself. Only a single item was noticed in which the large-scale disinterest of the populace was apparent. This item expressed the belief that in an election campaign with party leaders concentrating solely on trivial issues and where the candidates had generally been lacklustre, it was going to take a concerted effort to get voters to the poll (**Independent on Saturday** 02/12/00, pg 7)

Moreover, the media has a duty to encourage public participation in the voting process particularly in light of the high levels of voter apathy and disillusionment with politics in the country, particularly amongst the youth. While there were calls just before the elections by the media for people to vote, such concern would appear to be largely inadequate in changing the apathetic voting patterns evident in the country.

The mere reporting on electioneering and other events failed to elicit a positive response in the minds of the viewer/listener/reader. In fact, by merely presenting an uncritical account of party-specific election promises and pledges, the dominant views of the average South African, of politicians as 'all talk and no action' was reinforced, thereby limiting their willingness to participate. Despite the extensive coverage devoted to the elections, at the end of the day, the prospective voting public were still unsure as to the specific policies of the various parties.

A process as complicated as the LGE would appear to necessitate the utilisation of independent expert analysis to describe the process and the consequences of the election. However, such analysis was conspicuously lacking.

While event-based coverage would seem appropriate in the context of radio news, largely characterised by limited airtime, the over prioritisation of events at the expense of issues on both television and in newspapers was problematic. Television news, although somewhat constrained by considerations of space, still has sufficient room for the discussion of the issues involved. The lack of consideration of issues on **SABC** during this election was especially worrying. As the public service broadcaster, it would seem as if the **SABC** failed to present the elections in their complexity, by not providing enough analysis of the issues involved. It is perhaps in the print media that one would expect to find the greatest concern for issue-based coverage. However, with the exception of a few noteworthy examples, this too was not forthcoming.

A clear example of the failure to critically and thoroughly analyse the issues that might have emerged in the run-up to the elections, was provided by the case of 9

candidates standing for more than one party and 12 candidates standing against themselves. Instead of critically engaging with this seemingly anomalous situation, the South African media largely ignored this potentially vital issue, with only the **Business Day** (01/11/00, pg 1) and the **Beeld** (01/11/00, pg 14) expressing the view that it should have been prohibited.

Although some indication was provided on election issues for voters in the Durban Metro (**Citizen** 28/11/00, pg 8), i.e. who was contesting the elections and what their platforms were (**Rapport** 26/11/00, Gauteng Supp., pg 2), and the concerns of residents of Simonstown (**Weekend Argus** 25/11/00, pg 27) these items were the exceptions rather than the rule.

2.5 Agenda setting

Election-significant coverage was, furthermore principally characterised by an agenda set by the political parities themselves. It was indirectly the political actors rather than the organs of the media that seemed to determine the issues that were covered, although some latitude was still provided for the media to determine the precise nature of such coverage. While it is the role of the media to represent and cover events in society, this is only part of their role. It is incumbent upon the members of the media community to actively challenge the norms of society, through the independent identification and coherent investigation of relevant issues. As far as the period under consideration here was concerned, however, incidences of journalists determining and covering issues according to their own agenda, were found to be rare.

2.6 Dramatisation

Of further concern was the extent to which the election was dramatised by the media. It is generally expected for the mainstream media to cover all issues, especially those of a potentially controversial nature, as is often the case with elections, in a manner that minimises sensationalism and ensures the fairness of the coverage. However, election coverage seemed to indicate that the local media, in their attempts to add excitement to an otherwise mundane, run of the mill election process, latched on to certain dramatic incidents and accorded them a credibility they do not really deserve. While one of the primary functions of the media is to attract viewership/listenership and readership, attempts at improving circulation should not be undertaken by sacrificing credibility. Thus dramatisation, although obviously attractive to the potential audience, should be kept to the necessary minimum, and consideration given to representing the news in as fair and unbiased a manner as possible.

2.6.1 Political intimidation/violence

Through the over prioritisation of issues of political intimidation and violence, and the conflict between traditional leaders and the government, for example, a predominantly untroubled, peaceful, fair and free pre–election and election day process was given a far more dramatic outlook.

The commitment shown to condemning political violence as childish (**Citizen** 02/11/00, pg 13) or barbaric (**Ilanga** 02/11/00,pg 3), did not excuse the media

from overly dramatising the few instances of political violence that were apparent in the run-up to the election. Despite the characterisation of the elections as basically free, fair and peaceful by political parties and the IEC (**Citizen** 28/11/00, pg 4) and the stated commitment of the major stakeholders to a free and fair election (**Beeld** 11/11/00, pg 11), extensive coverage was provided of a handful of acts of alleged political violence and intimidation over the 2 months prior to the elections (October and November 2000). By repeating party expressions of outrage over rising levels of political intolerance (**Sowetan** 25/10/00, pg 5), IEC condemnation of political violence (**City Press** 12/11/00, pg 2), and efforts of parties to commit themselves to peace and tolerance (**e-tv** 10/11/00, item 4; **Beeld** 11/11/00, pg 11), the media was largely drawn into the discourse of political violence as a legitimate aspect of the election process.

Calls for killings not to be used for political gain (**Sowetan** 25/10/00, pg12) and hopes that the deaths of IFP and UDM members were not politically motivated (**Citizen** 25/10/00, pg 12), notwithstanding, the media accorded aspects of supposed political violence a dramatic value whilst the incidents were often not followed up.

Thus:

- Threats of poll boycotts by vigilante group Mapoga a Mathamaga (**Beeld** 16/10/00, pg 6), East Rand (**Citizen** 27/11/00, pg 7), and Kyalami residents (**Beeld** 29/11/00, pg 4),
- The apparently politically-motivated murder of UDM Crossroads candidate Victor Sam (**Cape Talk** 17/10/00, 13:00, item 3; 18:00, item 5; **Ukhozi** 17/10/00, 07:00, item 2; **Cape Times** 18/10/00, pg 3; **Business Day** 18/10/00, pg 4; **Zibonele** 18/10/00,13:00, item1; 03/11/00,18:00, item 1; **Beeld** 18/10/00, pg 1; **SABC 1** 17/10/00, item 7; **SABC 2** 17/10/00, item 7; **SABC 3** 17/10/00, item 7; **Cape Talk** 18/10/00, 07:00, item 4, **Independent on Saturday** 21/10/00, pg 6) and

The bomb blast near the DA offices in Kenilworth Cape Town also tended to be covered in a very dramatic fashion. By paying attention to the supposed security threat posed to the DA and other parties in the area and the possible destabilising effect of the blast on the elections, an isolated incident was given undue political credibility by the repetition of allegations without the provision of the necessary proof.

By including items foregrounding:

- The provincial Safety and Security MEC 's belief in the blast as an attempt to destabilise the LGEs (**SABC 3** 18/10/00, item 1; **Zibonele** 18/10/00, 12:00, item 2),
- The increased security consciousness of all parties, especially the DA (**SAfm** 18/10/00, item 2; **Citizen** 19/10/00, pg 6; **Ukhozi** 18/10/00, 13:00, item 2; **Cape Talk** 19/10/00, 13:00, item 2),
- The DA's linking of the bomb to Tony Leon's Jewishness, and their calls for a state of emergency (**SAfm** 19/10/00,18:00, item 1; 13:00, item 2),
- The condemnation of the blast by political leaders as an attack on democracy (**SAfm** 19/10/00, 13:00, item 2; **e-tv** 19/10/00, item 3), and
- The speculation that the bomb was somehow linked to the Middle- East crisis (**Daily News** 19/10/00, pg 1)

A clear large-scale dramatisation was evident.

The extensive coverage of the trials and conviction of 6 ANC members responsible for the murder of former UDM Secretary-General Sifiso Nkabinde, including councillor Joel Mkhize and those implicated in the Richmond Tavern murders, including the same Sifiso Nkabinde (**Daily News** 27/10/00, pg 6; 01/11/00, pg 2; 06/11/00, pgs 1 and 3; **Ukhozi** 30/10/00, item 5; **SAfm** 31/10/00, 07:00, item 4; **SABC 3** 31/10/00, item 12; **SABC 1** 23/11/00, item 2; 23/11/00, item 1; **SABC 3** 23/11/00, item 2; **SABC 3** 01/11/00, item 7; **Daily News** 02/11/00 , pg 6; 01/11/00 pg 3; 24/11/00, pg 3; 23/11/00, pg 5), tended to place election coverage squarely within the discourse of KZN as a province plagued by political violence especially during an election period.

By revealing the deployment of additional SANDF troops from Bloemfontein to apparent KZN flash points, Nongoma and Richmond for the elections (**City Press** 03/12/00, pg 2), and characterising the region as a conflict area exhibiting encouraging signs ahead of the polls (**Sunday Times** 05/11/00, pg 20), a political war zone showing signs of peace a day ahead of elections (**Sowetan** 05/12/00, pg 1) or as a war torn area expecting a low voter turnout, due to voters being tired of fighting and politics (**Sunday Times** 26/11/00, pg 21), pre-election coverage tended to focus on the dramatic.

Election coverage of the East Rand was likewise undertaken within the dominant discourse of dramatised violence. There was extensive coverage of:

- The apparent politically–motivated murder of IFP East Rand candidate Justice Radebe in his shop (**Cape Talk** 23/10/00, 18:00, item 2; **SABC 1** 23/10/00, item 5; **SABC 2** 23/10/00, item 1; **Sowetan** 24/10/00, pg 3; **Citizen** 24/10/00, pg 4; **Cape Times** 24/10/00, pg 2; **Yfm** 24/10/00, 18:00, item 6; **SAfm** 23/10/00, 18:00, item 2; **Beeld** 24/10/00, pg 4; 25/10/00, pg 9),
- Items commenting on the East Rand's violent past coming back to haunt the main parties (**Star** 30/10/00, pg 6),
- Inter-party meetings to discuss election-time peace initiatives (**Citizen** 25/10/00, pg 1; **Sowetan** 01/11/00, pg 7),
- Inter-party pledges to maintain stability in the area (**Sowetan** 26/10/00, pg 4),
- The establishment of joint task teams to ensure peaceful elections on the East Rand by the IFP and ANC (**Citizen** 26/10/00, pg 2), and the Gauteng Government (**Citizen** 04/11/00, pg 4),
- The murder of another IFP member on the East Rand (**Beeld** 31/11/00, pg 7), and
- The stabilisation of political tension in the East Rand before local elections (**Yfm** 27/11/00, 17:00, pg 2).

Further dramatisation of alleged political intolerance was evidenced in coverage of:

- The clashes between the ANC and DA at Hout Bay the day before the elections (**Zibonele** 05/12/00,11:00, item 2; **Star** 05/12/00, pg 5; **Ukhozi** 05/12/00, 07:00,item 2),

- The accusations levelled against Free State Premier Winkie Direko (**Beeld** 25/11/00, pg 4; **SABC 2** 04/11/00, item 7; **Business Day** 28/11/00, pg 5; **Cape Times** 28/11/00,pg 2) and
- Northern Cape Premier Manne Dipico (**Radio Today** 30/11/00,11:00, item 4; **Business Day** 30/11/00, pg 4; **Citizen** 30/11/00, pg 4; **Sowetan** 30/11/00,pg 8) of intimidating voters to vote for the ANC, and
- The flaring of tensions between DA and ANC supporters in the West Bank outside Cape Town, hours after the drawing up of the IEC code of conduct (**e-tv** 10/11/00, item 5).

2.6.2 Traditional leaders

The nature of this extreme dramatisation was perhaps most in evidence in coverage of the alleged conflict between traditional leaders and government over their future role in local government, as is apparent from the following samples:

- "Chiefs make a mockery of democracy" (**Mail & Guardian** 20/10/00, pg 43),
- "Government attempts to defuse tension with traditional leaders fail" (**Sunday Independent** 05/11/00, pg 3),
- "Mufamadi to be tough on Traditional leaders so that they don't disrupt elections" (**SABC 1** 05/11/00, pg 5),
- "Angry Amakhosi to submit new proposals to government" (**Star** 06/11/00, pg 3),
- "Traditional leaders predicting new crisis as they reject powers given to them by government" (**Business Day** 06/11/00, pg 1),
- "The government is blamed for imposing municipalities on traditional leaders and diminishing their powers" (**Ukhozi** 06/11/00,13:00, item 1),
- "Contralesa threatened that there will be violence if the government continues to ignore them" (**Ukhozi** 06/11/00,19:00, item 2),
- "Elections suffer another setback as Traditional leaders reject amendments to the municipal structures act" (**Sowetan** 08/11/00, pg 3),
- "Government must heed Traditional leaders and take threats of violence seriously" (**Sowetan** 08/11/00, pg 8),
- "The congress of Traditional leaders of SA say they will never surrender the land of their forefathers to the municipality" (**SAfm** 12/11/00, 13:00, item 8),
- "Contralesa has started a war of words against the government" (**Ukhozi** 12/11/00, 13:00, item 1).
- "Traditional leaders threaten to be rebellious during the upcoming LGEs" (**Yfm** 13/11/00, 18 :00, item 1),
- "An attempt to placate Traditional leaders before local elections has backfired on government. Now the government has had to change their strategy, after the failure to push the Bill through parliament" (**e-tv** 17/11/00,item 7),
- "ANC chairperson Lekota says reports that there is conflict between the government and traditional leaders are untrue" (**SAfm** 17/11/00, 18:00, item 5; **Ukhozi** 17/11/00, 19:00, item 2),
- "Government bungling leads to cancellation of passing of legislation on traditional leaders say IFP and DA" (**Cape Times** 20/11/00,pg 5),

- "Buthelezi and Traditional leaders believe they've been betrayed by the ANC government" (**Citizen** 23/11/00 ,pg 3).

2.6.3 Campaign coverage

This dramatisation is also evident in campaign coverage, largely undertaken within a seemingly military framework, with constant references to the election as a 'race', 'fight' or 'battle', as is proved by items revealing that:

- "The race for JHB seats now in full swing" (**Star** 23/10/00 pg 6), and that
- "The fight for JHB is on" (**Star** 03/11/00, pg 13), in items talking about
- "The cranking up of the intensity of the DA's campaign by Leon" (**Daily News** 01/12/00, pg 2),
- The "prediction of a tightly fought battle between the ANC and DA in the upcoming municipal elections" (**Star** 30/11/00, pg 2),
- "The intensification of the battle between the ANC and DA" (**Star** 28/11/00,pg 6),
- The "ANC going ahead with 'wall to wall' election campaign ..." (**Business Day** 24/11/00, pg 4), and in articles revealing that,
- "Mbeki looms through rain to gain voters" (**Mail & Guardian** 01/12/00, pg 2),
- "ANC pulls out all the stops at Durban rally in a final bid to woo voters on the eve of elections" (**Daily News** 04/12/00, pg 2),
- "Competing political parties have already embarked on a 'dirty tricks' campaign" (**Sunday Tribune** 22/10/00, pg 1), and
- "The race for the mayoral seat for Cape Town is becoming the mother of all LGE contests." (**e-tv** 19/11, item 4)

Dramatisation was also evident in reporting on the narrow escape of the DA deputy leader and his wife from an accident in the Karoo (**East Wave**, 23/10/00, 13:00, item 2), the theft of a special car and wheelchair from a disabled ACDP candidate in KZN (**Cape Times** 27/11/00, pg 2; **Star** 27/11/00, pg 2), and the dramatic defection of a young man from the DA to the ANC during the Sunday Tribune-East Coast Radio leadership debate at the International Convention Centre (**Daily News** 30/11/00, pg 2).

2.6.4 Election Day coverage

The murders of 6 people outside a voting station in Mandela Park informal settlement and other acts of political violence on election day, although tragic, represent a sizable improvement on previous election situations. With election-day coverage being dominated by announcements in this regard, a clear dramatisation was apparent.

Thus items have been noted which referred to:

- "6 people killed in shooting incident near voting station in Gauteng–1 suspect is candidate for party" (**Cape Talk** 05/12/00,18:00, item 1),
- "2 people shot dead and 3 feared dead at the Mandela squatter camp in Kathlehong" (**Radio Today** 05/12/00, 16:00, item 13),

- "1 person shot and killed at Mandela Park squatter camp near an IEC polling station, which is now temporarily closed" (**SAfm** 05/12/00,13:00, item 1),
- "A 6th body has been found in Mandela Park. UDM claimed that all the victims were UDM supporters" (**SAfm** 05/12/00,18:00, item 1),
- "6 voters were killed on polling day. Political violence and intimidation marked an otherwise peaceful election. Gunmen opened fire at a polling station in Kathlehong" (**SABC 3** 05/12/00, item 1),
- "5 people killed in the Mandela settlement in Kathlehong, whilst waiting to vote" (**SABC 1** 05/12/00, item 1),
- "Violence erupts in Kathlehong as 5 are killed in Mandela informal settlement." (**SABC 2** 05/12/00, item 11).

2.6.5 Dramatic coverage of Peter Marais

Although much of this dramatisation was dictated by the events themselves, especially in relation to campaigning coverage, and the controversial events surrounding the DA Cape Town Mayoral candidate Peter Marais, examples of a conscious attempt at dramatising even the most mundane everyday election occurrences were forthcoming especially from the broadcast media.

Thus for example the attention given to the defamation suit of former Western Cape MEC Frieda Adams against Marais (**Cape Talk** 25/10/00, 13:00, item 4;**Star** 26/10/00, pg 2; **Zibonele** 25/10/00, 18:00, item 3; **Beeld** 25/10/00, pg 4; **Cape Times** 26/10/00, pg 3; 30/10/00, pg 2), although dictated to a large degree by the story itself, revealed a substantial amount of dramatisation. Reports on Adams' allegations that Marais had said he wanted to "lick her all night" (**Rapport** 03/12/00, pg 4) and on the "sex and corruption scandal …rocking the Western Cape government" (**e-tv** 08/11/00, item 8) provide useful examples in this regard.

Likewise his controversial comments on "Christians having to chose between the constitution and the Bible", (**Cape Times** 31/10/00, pg 3; **Beeld** 02/1/00, pg 4; **Citizen** 03/11/00, pg 13), criticised as irresponsible by a **Business Day** editorial (01/11/00, pg13), and being asked to apologise in Parliament by the ANC, reveal a degree of dramatisation as does:

- The gentle ridiculing of Marais's remarks and antics (**Beeld** 02/11/00, pg 15),
- Marais's eccentric behaviour in withdrawing from a talk show debate with his ANC opponent (**Sowetan** 06/11/00, pg 12),
- Storming out of a Cape debate (**SAfm** 12/11/00, 13:00, item 11; **Ukhozi** 12/11/00,13:00, item 3; **Zibonele** 12/11/00, 18:00, item 4; **Cape Times** 13/11/00, pg 1; **Cape Talk**, 13/11/00, 07:00, item 1; **SABC 1** 12/11/00, item 4; **SABC 2**, 12/11/00, item 4; **Weekend Argus** 26/11/00, pg 22) and
- Engaging in lively debating sessions with ANC opponent Lynne Brown on voice of Cape Radio (**Cape Times** 22/11/00, pg 5) and at the IDASA offices (**Cape Times** 23/11/00, pg 3), can also be singled out as opportunities for dramatic coverage.

2.7 Educative role

As a vital mechanism in influencing public opinion, it could be expected of the media to make adequate use of the extensive power at their disposal to educate the public on issues of vital concern. This educative and informative role accorded the media would seem to be a prerequisite for any coverage of the local elections. As was recognised by the **Daily News**, "local government elections play a far greater role than national elections in improving an individual's life" (13/11/00, pg 6). Other examples were provided by a few articles relatively early in the election process in the **Star** (07/11/00, pg 8), which provided reasons why people should vote in the elections, in the **Daily News** (08/11/00, pg 15), which devoted an entire page highlighting the major issues of each of the 6 featured political parties, in the **Independent on Saturday** (21/10/00, pg 9) which allocated space to a guide to the 12 parties contesting the LGE's and in the **Mail & Guardian** which maintained "give us a good reason not to vote" (10/11/00, pg 31) .

On the whole, however, it would appear as if the media realised too late their informative and educative role in getting voters to the polls, in explaining election day voting process to the masses and in providing the voting public with choices via summaries of the major tenants of party manifestos. Only days before the LGE did the media provide informative and educative items. Calls emanating from, especially the print media, for the public to wholeheartedly embrace the local elections as a vital life-affecting process, were only apparent in the week leading up to the elections. Although the clear endorsement of the election by the media was positive, the question that needs to be answered is why it was given so late. Similarly, the attempts at summarising the viewpoints of the major parties participating in the elections appearing across the media just prior to election day, would seem to have been too late to influence undecided voters, and in confirming the choices of other members of the public. Despite some efforts at providing voters with educative material in explaining how voting was to be undertaken, this information could best be seen as inadequately dealing with a complex issue.

Thus it is only in the final week of election coverage that items were witnessed on:

- "Elections meaning more than what people think". (**Business Day** 04/12/00, pg 11), and
- Calls to "Turn your vote into water and electricity, vote tomorrow to change the status quo, make your voice heard" (**Star** 04/12/00, pg 6), and
- To "shake off the apathy and go to vote tomorrow" (**Star** 04/12/00, pg 12), and
- An explanation of the voting procedures (**Sowetan** 04/12/00, pg 12; **Beeld** 04/12/00, pg 17;**Cape Times** 05/12/00, pg 5; **Citizen** 05/12/00, pg 5; **Star** 05/12/00, pg 1; 29/11/00, pg11; **Cape Talk** 04/12/00, 18:00, item3; **Daily News** 04/12/00, pg 3), as well as:
- On the mixed Proportional Representation and Westminister voting system which works for minority parties but not for independent candidates (**Business Day** 04/12/00, pg 10; **Weekend Argus** 02/12/00, pg 27).

Similarly, enlightening the public on the major aspects of party manifestos to ensure a well-educated voting public was largely confined to the week preceding the election.

Thus examples of:

- An examination of the various mayoral candidates of 2 parties, through a brief biography of each candidate in 8 cities, (**Sunday World** 03/12/00, pg 20),
- An examination of the "main parties", saying what they would do (**Sunday World** 03/12/00, pg 20),
- An opinion piece reflecting on the manifestos of political parties in a critical vein (**Sunday Independent** 03/12/00, pg 7),
- A summary of the major parties' election promises from their manifestos (**Sowetan** 30 /11/00, pg 28),
- An article in which 5 political parties gave reasons for Durbanites to vote for them (**Independent on Saturday** 02/12/00, pg 7),
- One in which the central policies of 6 leading parties were outlined (**Beeld** 05/12/00, pg 7) and a
- Blow by blow summary of party campaigning, opinion polls and surveys for LGE's, consisting of an up-to-date look at who's who in the elections, the main promises made, allegations between parties, parties' support bases and chances of winning (**Mail & Guardian** 01/12/00, pg 10).

Moreover, as an institution operating in the public domain, one could reasonably expect the media to fulfil their public service role by encouraging public participation in the democratic process, especially in a country still coming to grips with a democratic dispensation. However, despite calls emanating from the media for:

- "People (to)...vote to demonstrate they are fed up with the ANC 's failed promises" (**Rapport** 03/12/00, pg 4),
- "To vote as part of the duty of all South Africans" (**Daily News** 20/11/00,pg 6; **Star** 29/11/00, pg 6),
- "For all the registered voters to use the vote to uphold the ideology of government for the people and by the people" (**Daily News** 24/12/00, pg 10),
- "For all South Africans (to) go to the polls on Dec 5th despite reservations about politicians" (**Daily News**, 29/11/00, pg 14), and
- "To vote to protect our hard won freedoms even though our politicians are opportunists and think we are stupid" (**Mail & Guardian** 01/12/00, pg 28),

The limited belated concern for informing the public on the importance of such elections has tended to be too late to have a significant impact on the apathetic potential voting public.

While the media can be commended for stressing the need to vote for those candidates who were most capable of doing the job, and ensuring sustainable development, the timing of such editorial endorsement of the election process, left the undecided voter will little time to come to a well-thought out decision on whom to vote for. Thus for example while the **Sunday World** (03/12/00, pg 7),

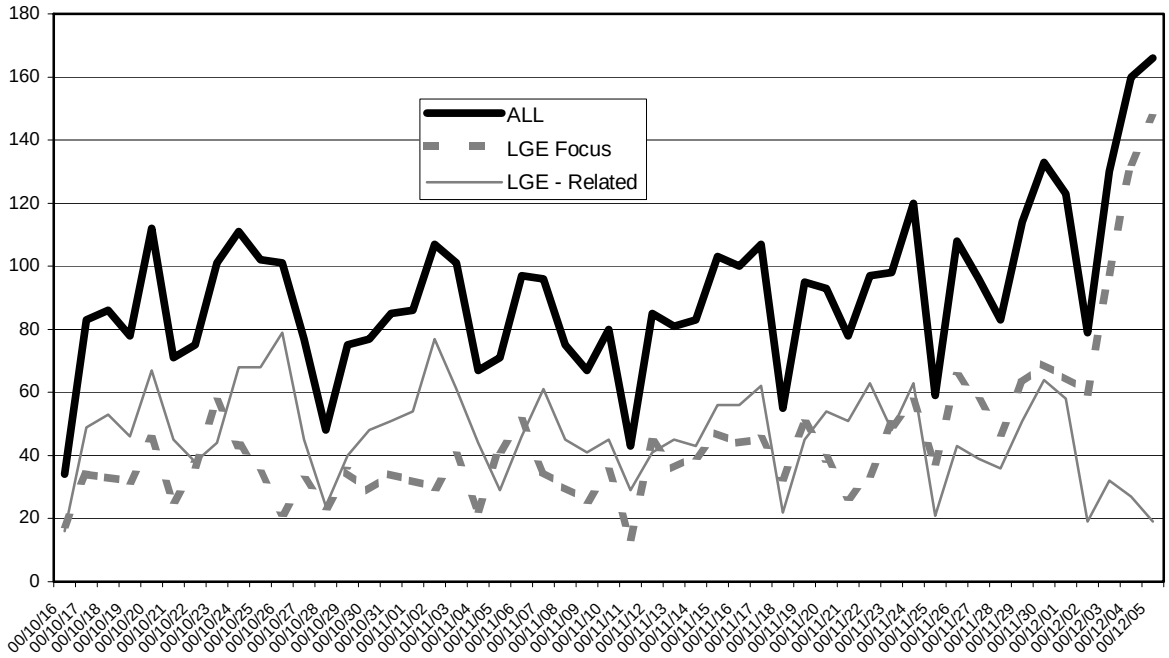
Sunday Tribune (03/12/00, pg 4), **Independent on Saturday** (02/12/00, pg 6), the **Sowetan** (16/11/00, pg 17), **Beeld** (01/12/00, pg 12) and the **Weekend Argus** (02/12/00, pg 30) all included items calling on the public to vote for candidates with integrity, ability and the will to do the job, these were all in the last week of pre-election coverage.

Chapter 3. Time/Topic Analysis

3.1 Topic coverage over time

The following graph (Graph 3.1) is a bi-daily analysis of the amount of coverage given to local government election over the period monitored.

Graph 3.1: Coverage over Time



The graph the count of local government elections items, beginning in October 2000. A prominent feature of Graph 3.1 is that it shows sporadic bursts of coverage and then sharp declines. Looking at the black line we see that the coverage started with sparse reporting on logistical matters, such as, party registration, voters' roll issues and submissions regarding unicities. There were also a few politically themed stories with marginal relevance to the elections, such as President Mbeki's call to the Commonwealth to deal with global crime (**SAfm**, 16/10/00, pg 7), Mbeki's involvement in the AIDS/HIV debate (**Star**, **SABC 1,** 17/10/00 & **Beeld**, **Business Day,** 16/10/00). The SACP's "Red October" in **Cape Talk,**17/10/00 and "Mbeki's drastic fall from the annual list of the most influential people" (**Beeld,** 16/10/00, pg 9).

The sharp rise between the dates 18th and the 21st of October was due to the launch of campaigns and party manifestos. Because of the perceived threats of political violence which often accompany elections, events that were perceived to be of that nature received high media coverage and were largely condemned by the media. Examples of this were the bomb blast outside DA's Kenilworth offices in the Western Cape, and the death of UDM's candidate, Victor Sam also in the Western Cape. There were a few stories that were not local government specific but were politically themed, and were carried over from the previous week which contributed to the relatively high coverage, that is, the proposed salary raise for parliamentarians, the strike by prosecutors for a salary raise, and the conviction of the late UDM's Secretary General, Sifiso Nkabinde.

The decline from the 21st to the 23rd was due to weekend coverage, which was often relatively low throughout the monitored period. This might have been due to the fewer weekly papers monitored, and that radio often has fewer news bulletins on weekends. Campaigning was responsible for the subsequent rise of coverage from 23rd to the 25th. The death of the presidential spokesperson also received high coverage during this week.

Responsible for the sharp rise between the dates of 1st of October and the 3rd of November was the clear focus given to the local government elections by the print media. The coverage focussed on issues surrounding service delivery, the developmental role of local government, especially in relation to financing issues, and allocation of funds and grants from national government for capacity-building and the development of appropriate infrastructure. Print media is to be commended for this.

Election campaigns gave rise to the coverage from the 2nd to the 6th of November. The Middle East conflict also received high coverage during this period with political parties accusing each other of using the situation for political opportunism. The 6th of November to the 12th saw a steady decline of items related to the LGE. The weekend of the 10th to the 12th had the sharpest decline of the whole monitoring period with some mediums carrying no election related items at all during this period. Election coverage began to pick up gradually after this period (that is, from the 12th to the 17th) with logistics featuring prominently. There were reports about the possibility of lower voter turnout as a result of the election date being set around school/university holidays. The coverage of campaigns also began to gain momentum. The issues around the powers of traditional leaders and new municipal structures also received more attention during this time. Coverage took a downturn over the weekend.

The reason for the rise from the 19th to the 24th of November as shown by the graph was due to the intensification of election campaigns by the different parties. Concern for personalities and candidates was most evident especially with regards to the Western Cape's mayoral candidates (DA's Peter Marais and ANC's Lynne Brown). East Rand and Johannesburg's mayoral candidates also received coverage during this period. The arrest of the Free State Speaker of Parliament also received considerable attention.

The coverage picks up again after the weekend of the 24th to the 26th with a sharp rise around the 27th and the 29th. The focus was still on personalities/ profiles of candidates especially for metro cities. Campaigns by high profile leaders received coverage. The issue of independent candidates also received considerable coverage.

With one week to go before elections, one could reasonably expect an increased concern for election related stories in the media. However the 30th to the 3rd of December saw another sharp decline in media coverage of election-related stories. The sharp rise between the 3rd and the 5th was coverage of last attempts by political leaders to persuade voters to vote for their respective parties.

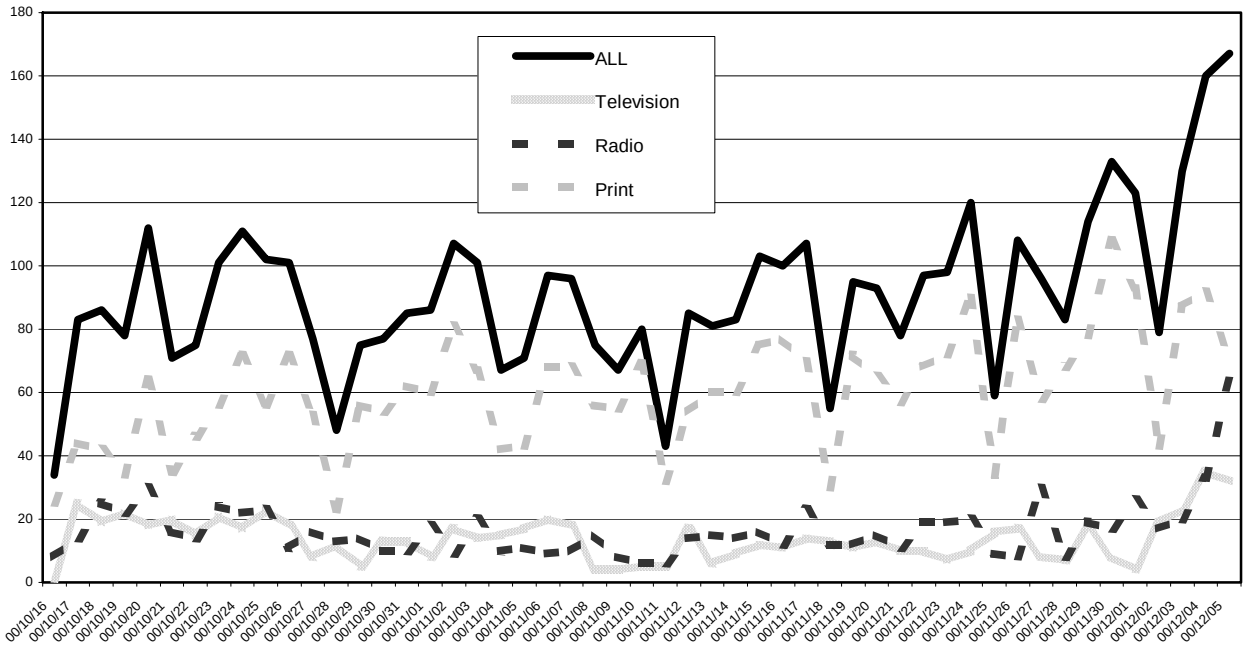
In addition to showing the overall thread of coverage in the media, Graph 3.1 also represents the coverage in time of items that were monitored as having a clear LGE focus (identified by the dashed grey line) as well as items that were

LGE related but had no clear LGE focus (identified by the thin black line). Interestingly, the shape of the LGE related item coverage almost perfectly mirrors the overall coverage breakdown. The only time its shape deviates significantly from the black line is in three days before the elections took place.

Conversely, virtually the only time LGE focused items mirror the overall trend is just three days before the elections. For most of the period there were substantially fewer LGE focused items as revealed by the dashed grey line. That the number of LGE focused items was generally lower through out the monitored period further supports the research findings of the media's general lack of issue-focused coverage. Further, that the overall shape of the LGE related items mirrors that of the overall trend, is indicative of the nature of the items as discussed in the general findings chapter (Chapter 2). As noted in that chapter, it was only a few days prior to the elections that there appeared to be a concerted media effort to deal with the elections in an in-depth manner and this is borne out by Graph 3.1.

3.2 Medium breakdown over time

Graph 3.2: Medium Breakdown over Time (Count)



This section compares print, radio, and television coverage over time. It is clear from the graph that print media had higher coverage than radio and television. Print media's coverage was very similar to the general trends demonstrated by the dashed grey line above which was discussed in the previous section. However, television and radio showed relatively moderate coverage over time. Television had the lowest declines in election coverage to the point of not carrying any election related items on some days.

Television was largely responsible for the sharpest decline of the monitoring period around the dates 9th and the 11th November and the week before the

election date. Another interesting feature of the graph is the sharp contrast between print and radio towards the end of the election period, that is, between the 3rd and the 5th of December. This was due to the low coverage of local government elections over the weekend and the fewer print mediums monitored over the weekend, as mentioned previously. Radio announcements about logistics could have also contributed to the rise in radio coverage shown in the graph towards Election Day.

As can be seen from the graph and the above analysis the coverage had spurts of coverage of local government specific and related issues. However these were rarely sustained over time. Politically themed stories that were not election-specific, such as the death of the presidential spokesperson, the Middle East conflict, and arrest of the Free State parliamentary speaker also claimed their stake in spurts in the coverage. The different mediums, print, radio, and television, had overall similar patterns of coverage over time, with radio and television having more moderate coverage over the monitoring period.

Chapter 4. Bias

One of the most important elements of media coverage in an election period is ensuring that media coverage is balanced and fair. Our first objective, and a significant element of our monitoring, was the issue of fairness in reporting of the elections. Previous experience suggested that aside from isolated incidents, there was little likelihood that there would be any major patterns of bias in the reporting.

The issue of bias and how much bias leads to unfair coverage of the elections is an important one. It would be absurd to suggest that one biased item on a TV channel would substantially alter the generally fair nature of the rest of the channels' election coverage. Substantial and democracy-threatening bias occurs as a pattern, a repeated ideological or discursive bias which over time and through repetition creates clear and distinctively unfair coverage. This does not mean that bias need be intentional, in fact very often a pattern of bias (for example in gender coverage in the media) reveals a lack of intention and rather the subconscious assumptions evident in societal discourses which influence the selection of news and information and its presentation.

Consequently our monitoring focussed on establishing obvious patterns in reporting and any bias which may arise. Bias was defined in our monitoring as being either language, presentation or omission driven. This definition is in line with that contained in the new Broadcasting Code of Conduct as proposed by ICASA. Language and presentation bias occurs where the language used in a news item, or its presentation, either on TV, radio or in print, clearly and distinctly favours one party above another, or substantially disfavours or damages the image of a party or parties. Bias of omission, occurs where a party is not given the opportunity to respond to substantial allegations or to an issue of substantial importance to that party. In these cases news stories were found to be unbalanced, where only one side of a story, or one perspective is given on an election issue. Frequently, it was found that the media balanced out these biased stories so that an anti-ANC story on one day would be balanced out by pro-ANC story on the next or by an ANC response in the following bulletin.

In establishing whether patterns of bias existed, coverage of the various media were compared. The following table shows the percentage breakdown into Fair and Biased stories by each medium monitored.

Table 4.1

Medium	Biased %	Fair %
Beeld	13.2	86.8
Business Day	7.8	92.2
Cape Talk	19.8	80.2
Cape Times	20.7	79.3
Citizen	19.1	80.9

City Press	5.9	94.1
Daily News	28.9	71.1
East Wave	26.5	73.5
e-tv	13.6	86.4
Ilanga	10.0	90.0
Independent on Saturday	27.4	72.6
Mail & Guardian	26.5	73.5
Radio Today	25.5	74.5
Rapport	18.6	81.4
SABC TV	12.6	87.4
SAfm	11.0	89.0
Sowetan	6.2	93.8
Star	16.6	83.4
Sunday Independent	8.8	91.2
Sunday Times	3.2	96.8
Sunday Tribune	39.4	60.6
Sunday World	8.3	91.7
Ukhozi	20.2	79.8
Weekend Argus	20.9	79.1
Yfm	19.4	80.6
Zibonele	11.9	88.1

The most significant feature of this table is that the majority of the media monitored had more than 80% of their coverage as Fair (Biased 17.3% to 82.7% Fair). Only the **Daily News**, **Independent on Saturday**, **Sunday Tribune**, **Mail & Guardian**, **Radio Today** and **East Wave** carried less than 75% of Fair stories.

These results compare favourably to those in the '99 General Elections and there have been additional positive improvements. In the '99 Report the MMP found that **The Citizen** newspaper had carried the highest percentage of biased items (with only 55% of their of their stories being Fair), and that the majority of the unfair items were biased against the ANC. LGE 2000 monitoring results show a clear turn around with the Citizen having over 80% of its LGE items monitored as fair. The **Sunday Tribune** has the highest level of biased items at 39.4%.

An examination of the **Sunday Tribune** items reveals the following.

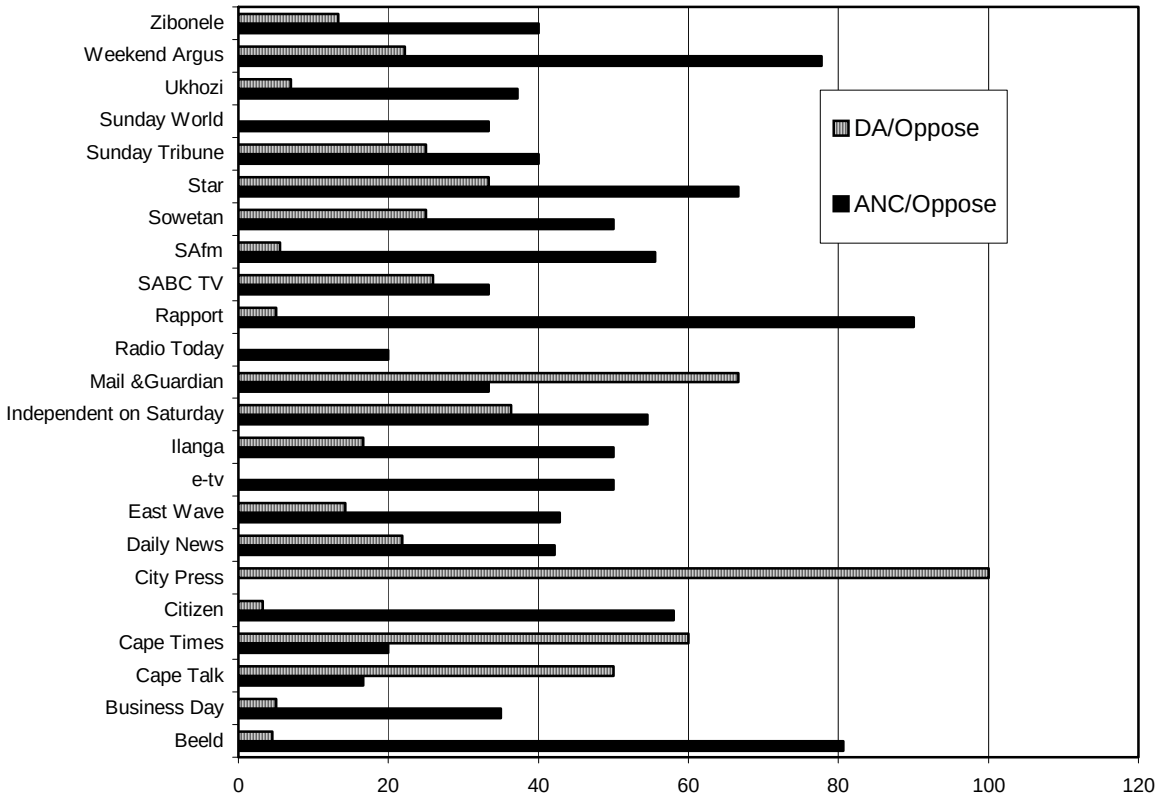
Table 4.2

Party	Fair	Oppose	Favour
ANC	72	8	2
Government	1	5	1
DA	17	5	1
IFP	22	1	1

The table reveals that the majority of biased items were items that negatively biased or opposed the particular parties. Government was the most negatively biased, with biased items outnumbering fair items. The relatively low number of items makes it difficult to argue that there is a clear trend and attempt to negatively bias government. What is clear from the breakdown is that where bias was detected it opposed the various parties. Thus rather than suggesting that there was a pattern of bias against any particular party, the pattern of bias in the Sunday Tribune may suggest a scepticism about the election and the various parties. This would be in line with some of the general tendencies of the media coverage which displayed significantly less interest in the election process.

The ANC and DA received the most biased coverage. This is to be expected on some levels as they were the two most covered parties. The following graphs give the breakdown by medium of biased items. Graph 4.3, shows the percentage breakdown of items that were biased against/opposed the ANC and the DA. (Note: the percentages given are the percentages of the number of opposing bias items. Similarly Graph 4.4 shows the percentage breakdown of the items that favourably biased the ANC and DA as a percentage of the items that favourably biased certain parties).

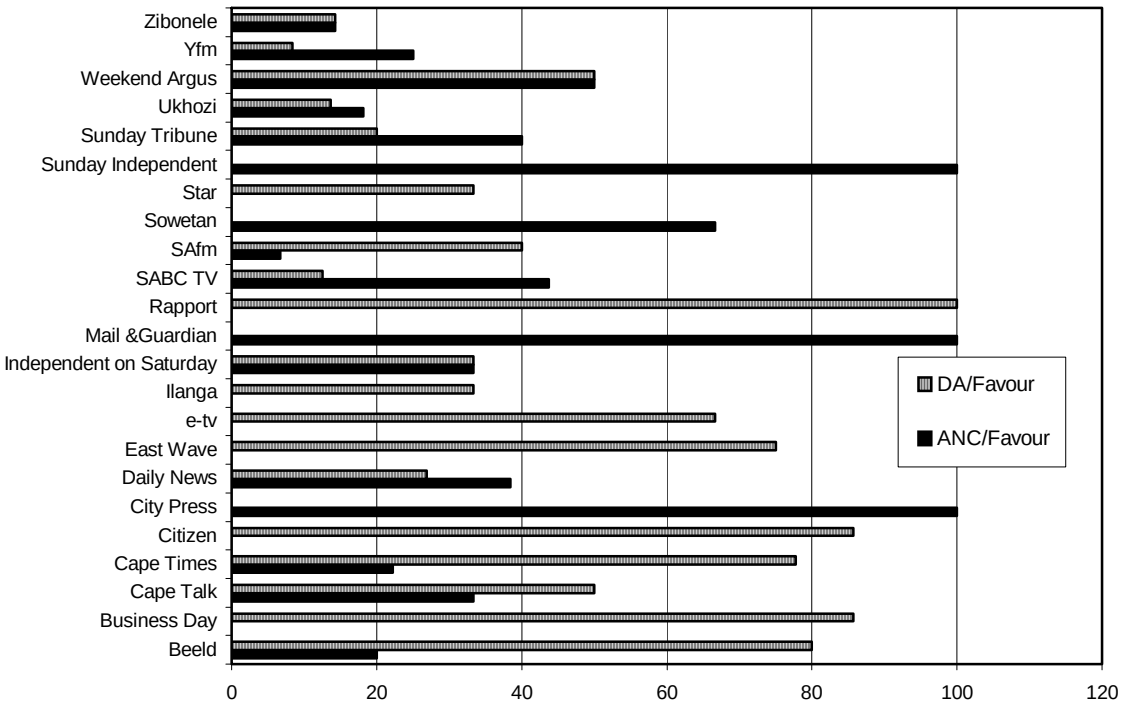
Graph 4.3: Biased Items Opposing ANC/DA (%)



The graph shows that on average just under 45% of all opposing bias items were negatively biased against the ANC. This compared to an average of 23.5% of opposing bias items against the DA. Interestingly the **Rapport** (90%), **Die Beeld** (80.7%) and **Weekend Argus** (77.8%) have a clear majority of items that negatively bias the ANC. **Die Beeld** and **Rapport** items opposing the DA are considerably lower than the media average, with around 5% each.

Only the **Mail & Guardian**, **City Press**, **Cape Times** and **Cape Talk** have greater percentages of items biased against the DA than the ANC.

Graph 4.4: Bias Favouring ANC/DA (%)

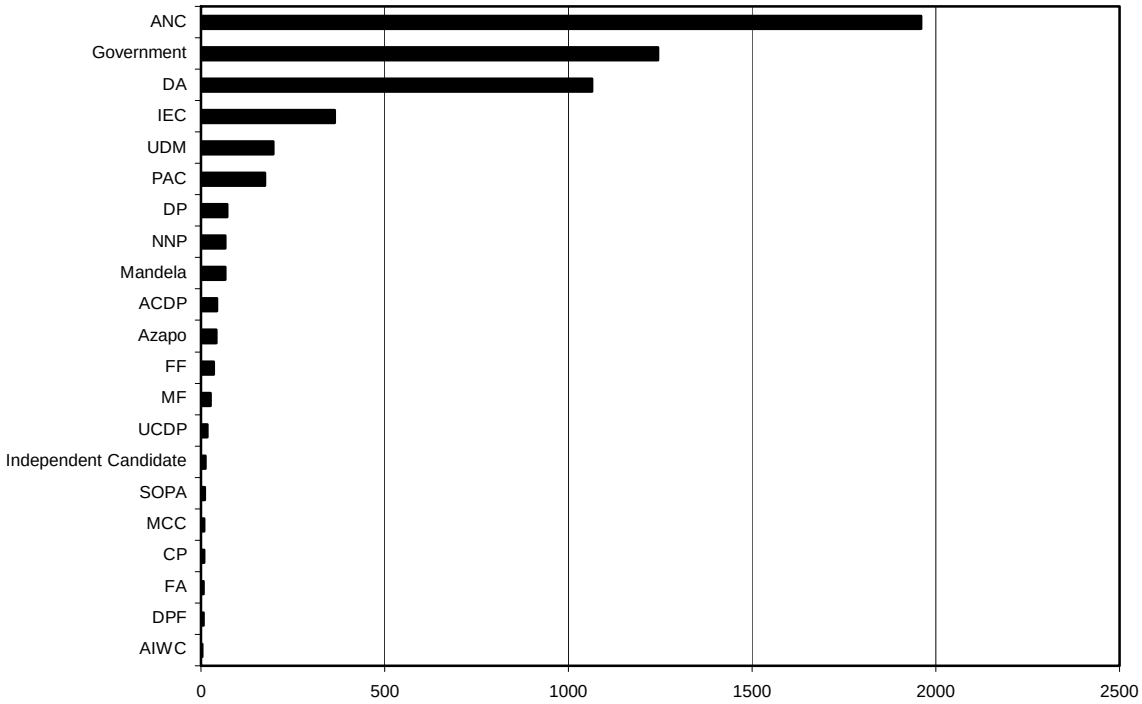


Graph 4.4 shows the percentage breakdown across media of biased items that strongly favoured the ANC and the DA. For the purposes of this graph, when referring to biased items unless otherwise specified, biased items are considered to be those items that strongly favoured either the ANC or the DA. Two trends are immediately apparent, the first is that there are a number of media that didn't have any biased items favouring the ANC. The second aspect is that only 8 of the 23 media on this graph had higher percentages of ANC biased items than the DA.

On average the media in the graph carried just under 40% of biased items favouring the DA, compared to 31% of biased items favouring the ANC. **Rapport**, **East Wave**, **The Citizen**, **Cape Times**, **Business Day** and **Die Beeld** all had over 75% of their biased items favouring the DA. Interestingly some of the media that have the highest levels of biased items that favour the DA also have among the lowest levels of items that were biased opposed the DA, such as **Rapport** and **Die Beeld**.

Both graphs (4.3 and 4.4) show that the majority of biased items (both those that favour or oppose) are almost exclusively focused on the ANC and the DA. Together they make up over 68% of the average of biased items that oppose parties and over 70% of biased items that favoured parties. To a large degree this is due to the ANC and the DA receiving the majority of coverage for political parties.

Graph 4.5: Party Coverage Count



Graph 4.5 shows in descending order, party coverage, where parties received three or more mentions. Party coverage is examined in greater detail in Chapter 7. As can be seen the ANC, Government and DA received the overwhelming majority of party coverage. The DA received just over half the number of mentions as the ANC received. In the majority of instances Government and ANC could be considered to support one another due to the ANC majority in government. While the levels of the ANC, Government and DA are high, their coverage does not suggest a clear bias by the media. The next party mentioned is the IFP with less than half the number of mentions of the DA and this is followed by the UDM and PAC, again with less than half the number of mentions of the IFP. As can be seen party coverage drops off dramatically after the PAC. Coverage of former President Mandela, has been included for purposes of comparison. It seems most unusual that in a local government election campaign that Mandela, who has resigned from South African politics, should still receive more coverage than most of the smaller political parties.

The issue of diversity in party coverage is dealt with in a later chapter, and while the media have clearly not fulfilled their responsibility to inform people about the various parties that were putting up candidates, there is no evidence to suggest that this was due to a clear effort to bias or unfairly represent the parties. Further, while coverage of the DA may be higher than their parliamentary representation this too cannot be attributed to a media attempt to promote the DA, but can instead be attributed to a concerted media strategy by the DA. Communications with journalists during the monitoring period suggested that the DA had made a consistent and clear effort to have an effective media strategy and communications centre.

Another aspect in assessing the fairness of media coverage is an analysis of the complaints received by the relevant bodies regarding media bias. Any person or party who viewed or heard a news item that was, in their view, biased may have lodged a complaint with ICASA or with the Press Ombudsman. In fact few complaints were lodged by members of the public and almost all, throughout the elections since '94 have been lodged by political parties. While this may serve as an indication of the media being fair overall it may also be an indication of the public's need to be informed of their right to complain, as well and knowing how to go about doing so. In MMP's 1999 General Elections report we found:

> "The small number of complaints by individuals is worrying and suggests the public lacked awareness of their rights as listeners and viewers. Also interesting about individual complaints was that they appeared to be poorly argued and less carefully constructed than those of the parties. This suggests a lack of understanding of the complaints process and also that this lack of knowledge handicaps their efforts."
>
> (MMP Election Report 1999: 88)

The LGE 2000 were no exception in that there were few complaints received and almost all were lodged by political parties. The Press Ombudsman received two complaints during the election period, (one was lodged by the Volksfront and the other by a local council), while ICASA received less than ten. What makes the complaints received by ICASA interesting is that all were made against the SABC, and SABC TV in particular. Further, the complaints received were from "opposition" parties with none from the ANC.

While it is clear from Table 4.1 that the overwhelming majority of items on SABC TV were Fair, the MMP noted in one of its daily Updates during the election period that the tendency to favour the ANC on the SABC was worrying (See Update of 10 November 2000). Further, as the public service broadcaster, the SABC has an even greater responsibility to inform, educate and provide news that is balanced and fair.

Table 4.6 gives the bias breakdown for SABC TV. As with the breakdown of the Sunday Tribune the table represented those items that were identified to be strongly biased, either in favour of a particular party or else opposed to a particular party.

Table 4.6

Party	Fair	Oppose	Favour
ANC	116	9	14
DA	57	7	4
Government	165	3	6
PAC	25	1	2
SACP	4	0	2

SOPA	1	2	0
UDM	26	0	2

As is expected the majority of items are Fair with the exception of those on SOPA, which received negative biased coverage. It has been noted that coverage of the smaller parties was minimal across the media, and SABC TV was no exception. In this instance while SOPA received only three mentions - two of which were negatively biased – it does not suggest a clear pattern of bias by the SABC. To negatively represent SOPA in the few instances it did receive coverage means that SOPA was unfairly represented in the election period.

While coverage of the Government and DA were extensive, and clearly different to the averages of the other media, in that Government coverage is higher than the average and DA coverage is lower, the reporting fell within an equitable distribution of party coverage. Based on the overall level of Fair items there is no indication on this data to suggest that the SABC, or any of the media monitored for this project was significantly skewed towards any political party. The conclusion we must draw is that overall the coverage was Fair and that the media did not hinder the free and fair nature of the election.

Chapter 5. Local not National Issues

It is widely acknowledged that local elections differ from national elections, in certain key respects, reflecting different priorities and interests. The media thus has the responsibility to adequately reflect this change in focus, by covering local issues in a thorough, coherent and appropriate manner. However, recent local election coverage is significant in the extent to which it has been dominated by national issues, at the expense of a consideration of issues of more immediate concern to people at the local level. While national elections are essentially about inter-party battles and national issues, local elections are more concerned with the developmental role of local government and its efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to the communities under its jurisdiction.

However, in certain key respects LGE 2000 coverage was noteworthy for its similarity to the 1999 national election coverage. With items of direct relevance to local communities few and far between, the viewer/reader/ listener could be forgiven for believing that they were in the midst of a national election process. As a process ultimately having a greater direct impact on the lives of ordinary men and women, it could be expected of the media to not only present these issues to the general public, but to actively involve them in debating these concerns.

However, it would appear that the media failed to learn from their experiences in the last local elections in 1995 where coverage was compromised by the large-scale prioritisation of national issues over local concerns. In fact the LGE 2000 election coverage bore a striking resemblance to its 1995 counterpart, in the substance of its coverage. While 1995 coverage was dominated by issues of crime at a national level, 2000 coverage was dominated by national issues such as poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS, the local ramifications of the Middle-East violence, unemployment and job creation, land restitution and housing concerns. While the above concerns were given a localised focus, through their inclusion within the parameters of local election coverage by the parties themselves, they more fully approximated the competencies of national and provincial government.

While some recognition was exhibited within the media of the differences between national and local issues, and the overshadowing of local issues by such national issues particularly on the part of the political parties involved, such challenges in the media tended to be few and far between. Thus while space was given to items focusing on "Leon challenging Mbeki to a public debate to talk about 'real local government issues'"(**Citizen** 16/10/00, pg 3; **Beeld** 16/10/00, pg 4) and on the recognition that "AIDS is overtaking development and delivery as the most contentious issue in the local government elections" (**Sunday World** 22/10/00, pg 6), as well as an opinion article reflecting on the failure to tackle service issues in Local Government Election campaigns, and the preference to rather focus on broader AIDS concerns (**Citizen** 25/10/00, pg12), the media largely failed to adequately enlighten the public on local issues.

5.2 Coverage of National Issues

5.2.1 Land restitution

The attention accorded to land restitution issues is perhaps best illustrated by the handover of land in District 6 a week before the elections. Although essentially a national issue, coverage of the handover tended to link the timing of the restitution to the LGE through reference to it as a 'vote-getting exercise'. Thus while coverage primarily relating to the handover by President Mbeki itself was prominent (**Beeld** 27/11/00, pg 2; **Zibonele** 26/11/00,18:00, item 2; 27/11, 08:00, item 4; **SABC 1** 25/11/00, item 9; **SABC 2** 26/11/00, item1, **Star** 27/11/00, pg 3), some constructive criticism was evident in questioning the timing of the handover as ANC opportunism to gain local election votes (**Beeld** 30/11/00, pg 15; **e-tv** 26/11/00, item 6; **Rapport** 26/11/00, pg 16; **Mail and Guardian** 01/12/00, pg 44; **Business Day** 28/11/00, pg 11).

5.2.2 Middle-East situation

With the run-up to the election coinciding with a fresh outbreak of violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories, tensions in the Middle East contributed to a large amount of pre-election media coverage, often to the detriment of specific local issues. Although the nature of this coverage was largely the result of political parties linking the conflict to attempts at gaining votes for the local elections, the media largely played along with this, rather than challenge its significance for local voters.

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Clear examples were evidenced of the Middle-East situation spilling over into the local political realm:

- "Political parties (DA and ANC) use parliamentary debate on the Middle-East as political points scoring exercise" (**Cape Times** 03/11/00, pg 1),
- "Local reaction to Middle-East crisis. Pahad says it must not be used for electioneering in the run-up to Local Government Elections" (**Cape Talk** 03/11/00, 07:00, item 3),
- "Parliamentary debate seen as worthwhile for the Muslim vote. Leon's actions were not his finest" (**Business Day** 06/11/00, pg 11),
- "Leon says that criticism of his position on the Middle-East crisis is an election gimmick designed to draw attention away from local issues" (**Beeld** 06/11/00, pg 4).

The spill-over of the Middle-East crisis probably reached its zenith with the controversy over posters of the Friends of Palestine equating a vote for the DA with a vote for Israel and the consequent accusations of Anti-Semitism levelled against the ANC by the DA, in accusing the ANC of being behind the posters (**e-tv** 13/11/00, item 7; **Business Day** 14/11/00, pg 1; **Zibonele** 13/11/00,18:00, item 4; **Cape Talk** 13/11/00, 13:00, item 3; **Beeld** 14/04/00, pg 4; **Cape Times** 14/10/00, pg 5; **Citizen** 14/11/00, pg 7; **Star** 14/11/00, pg 8).

5.3 Coverage of local issues

With education a prime function of the media, one could expect them to sufficiently inform the public on what constitutes local issues. Discussion of community policing, the provision of water, electricity and refuse services, the establishment and/or improvement of infrastructure as well as issues of local economic and social development and the furore surrounding the envisaged privatisation of such essential services were largely absent from local election coverage over the 7 weeks of monitoring. When such matters were included they tended to be as election promises of the main political parties, covered in an uncritical, unanalytical fashion.

The following examples provide a sample of such coverage:

- "PAC promises better services for Soweto residents" (**SABC 1**, 05/11/00, item 10),
- "Both DA and ANC promise they will provide free water and electricity" (**Sunday Tribune Herald**, 05/11/00, pg 3),
- "The IFP is a party focused on development" (**Business Day** 06/11/00, pg 4),
- "Azapo promises … good service delivery" (**SABC 1**, 12/11/00, item 6),
- "Government agrees in principle to provide 110 kilowatts /units of electricity a month per family free, from April next year" (**Daily News** 15/11/00, pg 5),
- "Sopa's manifesto…is geared towards meeting people's basic needs" (**Sowetan** 16/11/00, pg 8),
- "Leon says that clean running water for all the people must be number 1 priority for local government in KZN" (**Daily News** 24/11/00, pg 3),
- "Mbeki urges Khayelitsha residents in the Western Cape to vote for his party for better services" (**SABC 1** 02/12/00, item 1),
- "The IFP promises to make water, electricity and health services available to all communities" (**SAfm** 23/10/00,13:00, item 3),
- "Government provides free water to some in rural areas" (**Sunday Independent,** 29/10/00, pg 4),
- "UDM days that it is important to put more focus on rural development" (**SABC 1**, 25/11/00, item 6),
- "Leon promises municipal policing for rural protection during a campaign in Soutpan, Bloemfontein" (**City Press**, 19/11/00, pg 2),
- "IFP leader says policing should form an integral part of local government" (**Beeld** 04/12/00, pg 17),
- "DA promises community police in all areas should it win the LGE" (**Ukhozi** 22/10/00, 07:00, item 1).

Thus while a degree of attention was given to 'local issues', insightful, analytical and explanatory coverage was extremely limited. Such coverage also tended to reveal only glimpses of questioning the feasibility of delivering on election promises of free water, electricity and sanitation. Such analytical coverage was limited to the examples presented below:

- "ANC and DA promise to give free services, but how are they going to do this?" (**Sunday Independent** 29/10/00, pg 4),
- "Analysis of parties promises of free water–officials and analysts say it won't be easy" (**Weekend Argus** 26/11/00, pg 26),
- "ANC's promise to provide free services such as water is not necessarily the best way to achieve sustainable access" (**Mail & Guardian** 10/11/00, pg 37),
- "Analysis of whether government can provide free water and electricity, dependent on the capacity of the local municipality" (**Business Day** 01/12/00, pg 2),
- "Amos Masondo's promise of free water is workable but free electricity is not" (**Rapport Metro** 22/10/00, pg 2),
- Analytical article on how and when the ANC and DA will deliver on their election promises (**Weekend Argus** 29/10/00,pg 25),
- "Senior Academic Patrick Bond says that the allocation for infrastructure development as mentioned in the finance minister's speech is not enough to meet election promises" (**Sowetan** 01/11/00,pg 7),
- A **Rapport** op-ed giving a critical view of ANC and DA campaign manifestos (**Rapport** 22/10/00, pg 4), and
- A **Cape Times** editorial criticising election promises and wondering why past promises haven't been fulfilled (24/10/00, pg 2).

Issues of privatisation of municipal services has been limited to articles:

- Questioning the merits (**Star** 20/11/00, pg 6), and the effects of privatisation on municipalities and municipal workers (**Sunday Independent** 26/11/00, pg 8), and one highlighting
- ANC renegade Trevor Ngwane's critique of the ANC's Gear and Igoli 2002 plans amid claims that its promises for free services is unworkable and hollow (**Beeld** 23/10/00, pg 4).

Although some attention was given to community policing issues during the election period, such discussions have failed to adequately cover community policing as a local election issue. Rather the newsworthiness of such discussion was limited to the controversy surrounding Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi's dismantling of the community police set-up in the Western Cape. Thus we see:

- "Jackie Selebi gives community police officers in the Western Cape a week's notice" (**Cape Talk**, 20/11/00, 13:00, item 1),
- "Western Cape Safety and Security MEC threatens legal action against Selebi after he shut down community policing in the Western Cape" (**e-tv** 20/11/00, item 11),
- "Members of the Western Cape community patrol officers could lose their jobs if the project is dissolved" (**SABC 1**, 20/12/00, item 5; **SABC 2** 20/11/00, item 5),
- "Uproar over plan to ditch cape community patrol officers" (**Cape Times** 21/11/00, pg 1),
- "Cape Town wins battle to retain its community patrol officers" (**SABC 3**, 21/11/00, item 6),
- "Western Cape government refuses to let the row over the rent-a-cop scheme to die down" (**Radio Today** 22/11/00, 16:00, item 1),

- "Tshwete accuses Morkel of politicising community policing issue" (**Business Day**, 23/11/00, pg 3).

Monitoring of radio, television, and print media also revealed minimal coverage enlightening the general public on the new municipal structures to come into effect, as a result of the December 5th elections. Little evidence was forthcoming of the media realising the relevance of providing information on the feasibility of the new executive mayoral system, and the new mega-cities, as well as on the differences between categories of municipalities. As distinctly issues of local governance, a coherent attempt to unpack these new municipal structures, and their consequences, as well as the reasons for their establishment would seem to have been in order. However, with the notable exceptions of a few praiseworthy efforts at engaging with this central local government issue, the media largely failed to adequately address this issue of possible concern to the majority of South Africa's people.

This limited coverage of the new municipal structures was essentially limited to a presentation of 7 broad stories:

1) Government efforts at enabling the new municipalities to perform their developmental function. A good example was uncovered in the **Daily News** (01/11/00,pg 2) "Government prepares various support measures to give capacity to municipalities and councillors".

2) Possible problems to be faced by the new municipal structures post 5th December (**Business Day** 02/11/00, pg 13; 30/11/00, pg 15; 28/11/00, pg 11; **Sowetan** 05/12/00, pg 10).

3) The financial viability (vulnerability) of the new municipalities, for example:

- "Demarcation might worsen municipalities' finances according to the centre for development" (**Beeld** 01/12/00,pg 4) and
- "Pooling of resources is at the heart of the new government dispensation that will come into affect after Dec 5th elections" (**Daily News** 23/10/00, pg 2).

4) The new municipal structures as part of the overall transformation of South Africa to a truly democratic society. A useful example in this regard is provided by an item in the Sunday Times: "Restructuring of local government means the end of the transitional power-sharing arrangements and 'true democracy' emerges" (**Sunday Times** 19/11/00, pg 22).

5) The changing face of municipalities, in light of new boundary demarcations; as is evidenced in the following examples:

- "Durban metro council will take new shape after the elections when it establishes its unicity" (**SABC 3** 22/10/00, item 12),
- "New local government structure analysed and discussed. Talks about new councils" (**Business Day** 26/10/00, item 13),
- "What Durban would look like after elections?" (**Sunday Tribune** 12/11/00, pg 3)

6) The capacity of municipalities to improve service delivery. A sample of such coverage is included here:

- "President Mbeki says the new metro structures are meant to respond to the challenges of delivery" (**SAfm** 28/11/00, 18:00, item 4),
- An opinion piece arguing that "reducing the number of municipalities will not necessarily improve effectiveness as many are too poor" (**Business Day** 29/11/00, pg 13),
- "Lack of government capacity may hurt delivery" (**Business Day** 01/11/00, pg 1),
- "Service delivery is a crucial barometer in local government elections, but just how far has it come and what have been the results" (**Sunday Independent** 03/12/00, pg 12),
- "New local governments will have strategic plans for effective service delivery" (**Sowetan** 01/11/00, pg 3).

7) The SAMWU and IMATU strikes in Johannesburg and Cape Town against envisaged job losses in the advent of the privatisation of municipal services after the election. Such coverage moreover tended to add to the general pattern of dramatisation.

Discussion of the different categories of new local government structures was limited to a single informative piece describing the 3 types of municipalities (**Sunday Tribune** 03/12/00, pg 8), and a useful indication of the powers and functions of local government was only apparent in a single item reporting on the areas that come under local government control (**Independent on Saturday** 28/10/00, pg 11).

While the nationalisation of coverage was primarily the result of the setting of the agenda of coverage by the parties themselves, this does not explain the media's complicity in giving credence to the overemphasis of national issues by the parties.

While the campaigns themselves were nationalised by the parties involved through the use of national political figures to woo voters at various localities around the country, by merely reporting on these in an uncritical event-based manner, without the accompaniment of any analysis or debating of the issues involved, the South African media was largely incorporated into a national discourse established by the political leaders. Instances in this regard include:

- "IFP and DA national leaders being used to woo voters in JHB" (**Star**, 15/11/00, pg 10),
- An opinion piece believing that the "DA has used Leon to head their campaign aggressively while the ANC's Mbeki has only launched into electioneering with a week to go" (**Citizen** 30/11/00, pg 4),
- "Big guns prepare for the highly contested Western Cape poll" (**Cape Times** 29/11/00, pg 1),
- "IFP and ANC draft their top leaders to campaign in KZN" (**Daily News** 20/11/00, pg 1).

The nationalisation of the elections by the parties would seem to provide a significant opportunity for the media to engage in critical analysis of the issues

and question why national issues predominate over local issues in election manifestos and party pledges and promises. However, such questioning was largely limited to an item on SABC questioning HIV/AIDS as a local government election issue. In the item it was pointed out that the provision of Anti-AIDS medication is a national and/or provincial competency, thereby nullifying the possibility of any local councils being able to provide such medication to its constituents without having control over the provincial legislature. The failure of the local media to question this nationalisation of local elections largely resulted in a skewed focus of attention, prioritising national as opposed to local issues.

Election coverage also showed the attention given to inter-party conflict and battles. With such coverage characterised by allegation and mudslinging at the party level, the local nature of the elections was largely ignored. This was particularly true of the ongoing criticisms levelled against one another by the DA and the ANC. A large-scale criticism by the DA of the ANC, as government was exhibited in many an article, radio report or news item. Instead of debating local issues with opposing candidates at an individual local level, criticism tended to be undertaken at national party level, thereby placing coverage within the national political milieu.

Local election coverage tended furthermore to be overshadowed by coverage of political matters, which were of no direct local election concern. Thus widespread coverage was for example given to issues of government and /or party corruption, within the context of the lavish lifestyles of KZN politicians, foregrounding their excessive housing and travel arrangements and the probe into the R43 billion government arms deal. To Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's budget speech, the visit of the high powered IMF and World Bank delegation to the country, the police dog unit incident and the outbreak of Cholera in KZN.

Chapter 6. Public Service Broadcasters and Private Broadcasters

6.1 Radio

This section examines the differences between the Public Service radio (PSB) stations monitored with the private and community radio media monitored. The broadcasters include:

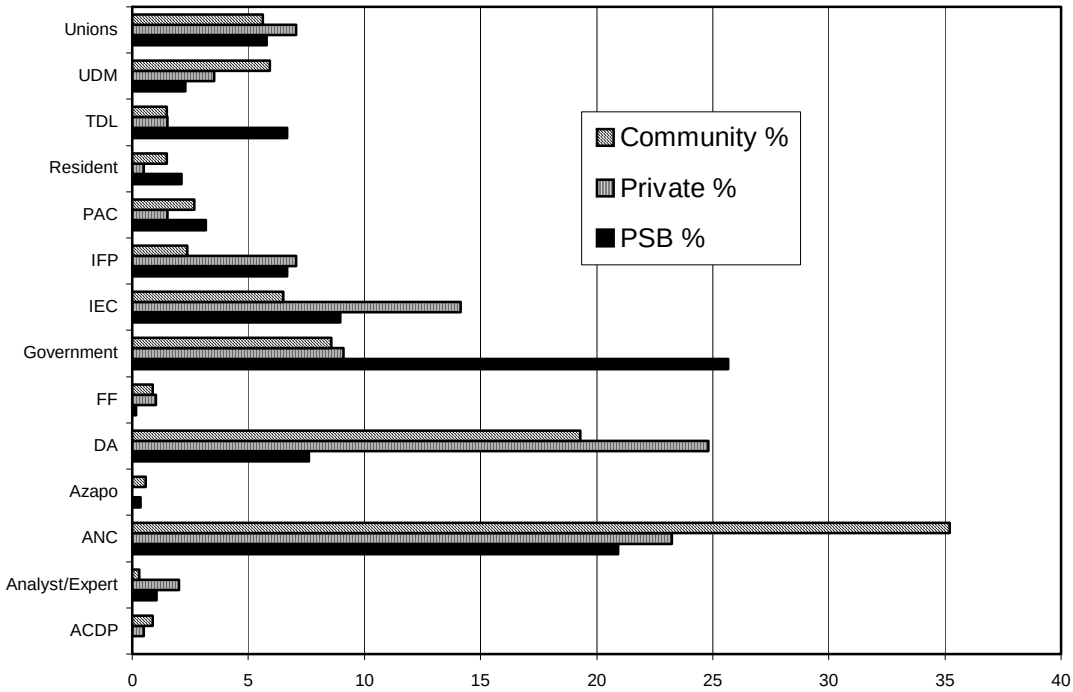
- Public Service:
  - SAfm
  - Ukhozi
- Private:
  - Cape Talk
  - Y-fm
- Community:
  - East Wave/Radio Today
  - Zibonele

The following graphs have for the purposes of comparison been calculated as percentages; in examining them it must be noted that the public service broadcasters (SABC) carried more than double the number of items on the elections and more than double the number of sources compared to private broadcasters. Community radio, with their limited resources carried approximately half the number of items and approximately half the number of sources of the public service broadcasters.

Graph 6.1.1 represents the party/organisation coverage breakdown in percent, where a party/organisation received more than 0.5% of the medium's coverage.

The graph indicates clear differences in party and organisation coverage. Most strikingly the coverage of the ANC by community radio, which makes up just over 35% of the overall party coverage. However Government coverage on community radio was a little over 8.5% resulting in combined Government and ANC coverage of just under 44%. This is very similar to the public service broadcaster which had 46% of all coverage devoted to Government and ANC. For community radio the second most covered party – in line with other media and private broadcasters (PSB) is the DA, this is followed by coverage of the IEC the UDM and various unions. Together this coverage makes up over 80% of all party/organisation coverage for community radio. The remaining coverage is spread mostly over the PAC, IFP, traditional leaders and residents.

Graph 6.1.1: Party Coverage Breakdown (>0.5%)

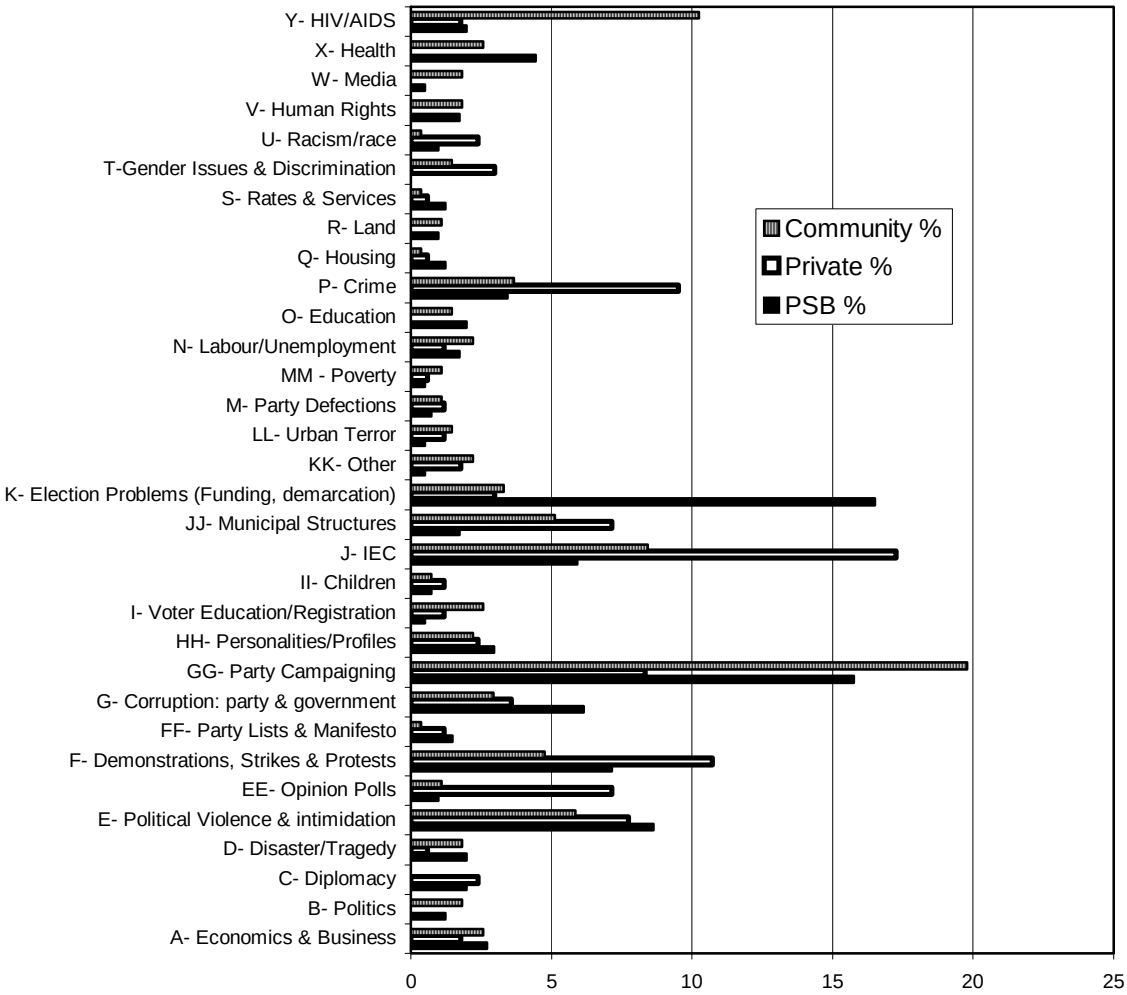


Private radio is most notable for its high levels of coverage of the DA and the IEC. It also has the highest levels of coverage of the IFP (7.1%) and Unions (7.1%). The high coverage of Unions can be attributed to the various stories on strike actions and union dissatisfaction with the proposed Unicity schemes.

In addition to the high coverage of government and the ANC, PSBs are notable for relatively high levels of coverage of traditional leaders. This coverage can be attributed to the various problems surrounding demarcation as well as complaints by traditional leaders regarding their powers and the subsequent talks held with government.

While coverage by the three types of broadcasters varied to some degree, all were similar in that the overwhelming majority of coverage was distributed over only five parties/organisations.

Graph 6.1.2: Topic Code Boreakdown (>0.9%)



Graph 6.1.2 shows the topic code breakdown for the broadcasters. While there are some clear differences over the topic codes, the overall trends in topic code coverage appears to be similar.

As expected Party campaigning (GG) coverage was high on community radio and the PSBs. As has been noted, items were only attributed as party campaigning where they could not be allocated under any more specific topic code, and in most instances these items were merely factual reports of parties campaigning which, while of some practical relevance, had little information and educational value for potential voters. Private broadcasters carried surprisingly low levels of party campaigning items with half the number of items of the other broadcasters. Issues relating to the IEC (J) received the most coverage on private broadcasters and this was followed by items of a dramatic nature on demonstrations (F), strikes and protests (at 10.7% most of which can be attributed to the strike action by SAMWU), as well as a relatively high level of crime (P) items (9.5%). This was followed by similar levels of items on political violence (E) and intimidation (7.7%) and municipal structures (JJ) (7.1%). Private broadcasters also gave fairly considerable attention to opinion polls (EE) and surveys (7.1%). Private stations

are also notable for having the highest level of gender coverage (T) at 3%, which, while still extremely low is better than the PSB's coverage.

Community radio coverage is most notable for the low levels of voter education (I) and coverage on issues relating to the IEC (J). Considering the commitment of community radio to informing and educating the community this is disappointing. Community radio is exceptional however in the high level of coverage given to HIV/AIDS of 10.3%. Surprisingly, local issues such as rates and services (S) and items about unemployment (N) and poverty (MM) received low coverage on community radio stations.

As expected, based on the party coverage graph, PSBs covered demarcation issues (K) and election problems relating to traditional leaders extensively with the topic receiving the most coverage on PSBs at 16.5%. PSBs also covered the topics of political violence (E) and intimidation (8.6%) demonstrations (F) and strikes (7.1%) and corruption (G) (6.2%) fairly extensively. Health issues (X) received just over 4% coverage on PSBs which was positive, although their low coverage of issues such as poverty (MM) and no coverage of gender (T) issues was disappointing. The poor coverage and attention afforded to gender issues is reflected in the following table.

Table 6.1.3 represents the gender breakdown of the three types of broadcasters. Unspecified sources were fairly high, due largely to the increased difficulty in being able to clearly identify the gender of a source.

Table 6.1.3

Gender	PSB %	Private %	Community%
Female	7.0	3.0	8.8
Male	64.6	56.1	49.2
Unspecified	28.4	40.9	42.0

Gender issues will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 12. What needs to be noted in this instance however is that the radio broadcasters are, with the exception of community radio, well below the average of 9% found in the rest of the media.

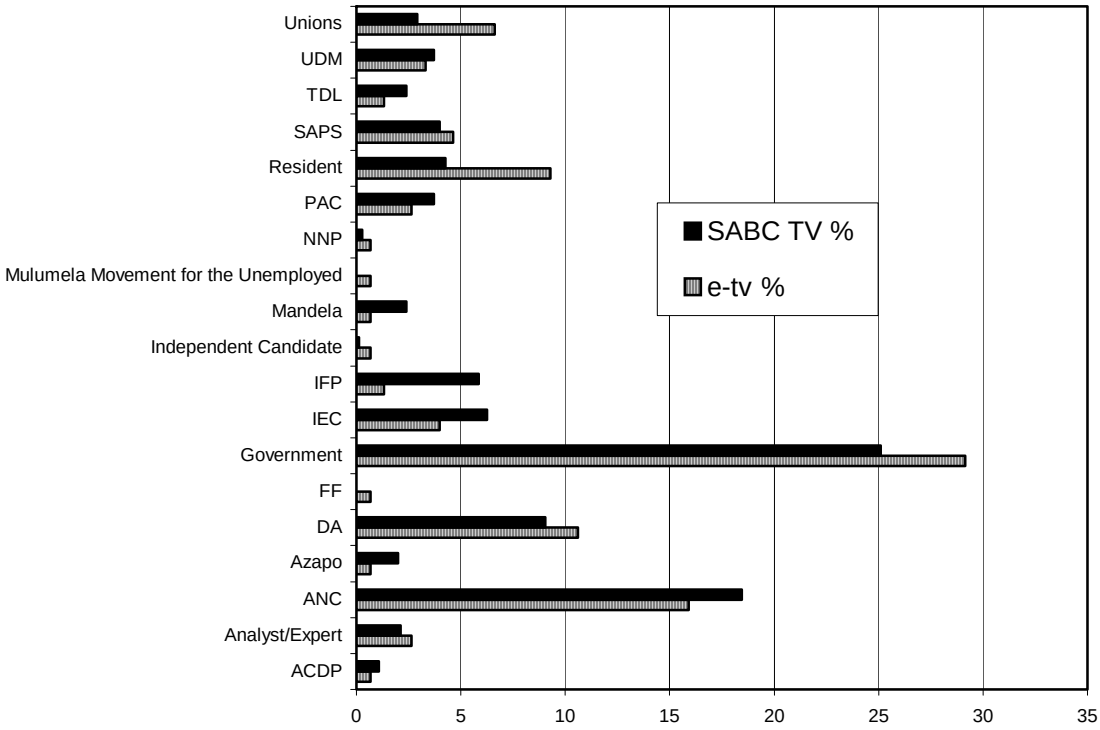
6.2 Television

The 2000 LGE represented only the second opportunity for **e-tv** to cover an elections process. It was noted in the MMP's report of the '99 General Elections that in spite of **e-tv**'s considerably lower levels of resources they covered the elections in a comparable fashion to the **SABC**. In some ways, coverage of the LGE on **e-tv** was even better than **SABC**, as evidenced by their bi-weekly election programmes on voter education.

In the '99 General Elections it was found that **e-tv** carried just under half the number of election items compared to each of the **SABC** TV channels, the same was found in the 2000 LGE. The higher level of election items on **SABC** TV as well

as their function as a public service broadcaster should have lead to an increase in the diversity of sources accessed. As the gender table (Table 6.2.3) reveals, however, the greater number of items did not necessarily mean better coverage.

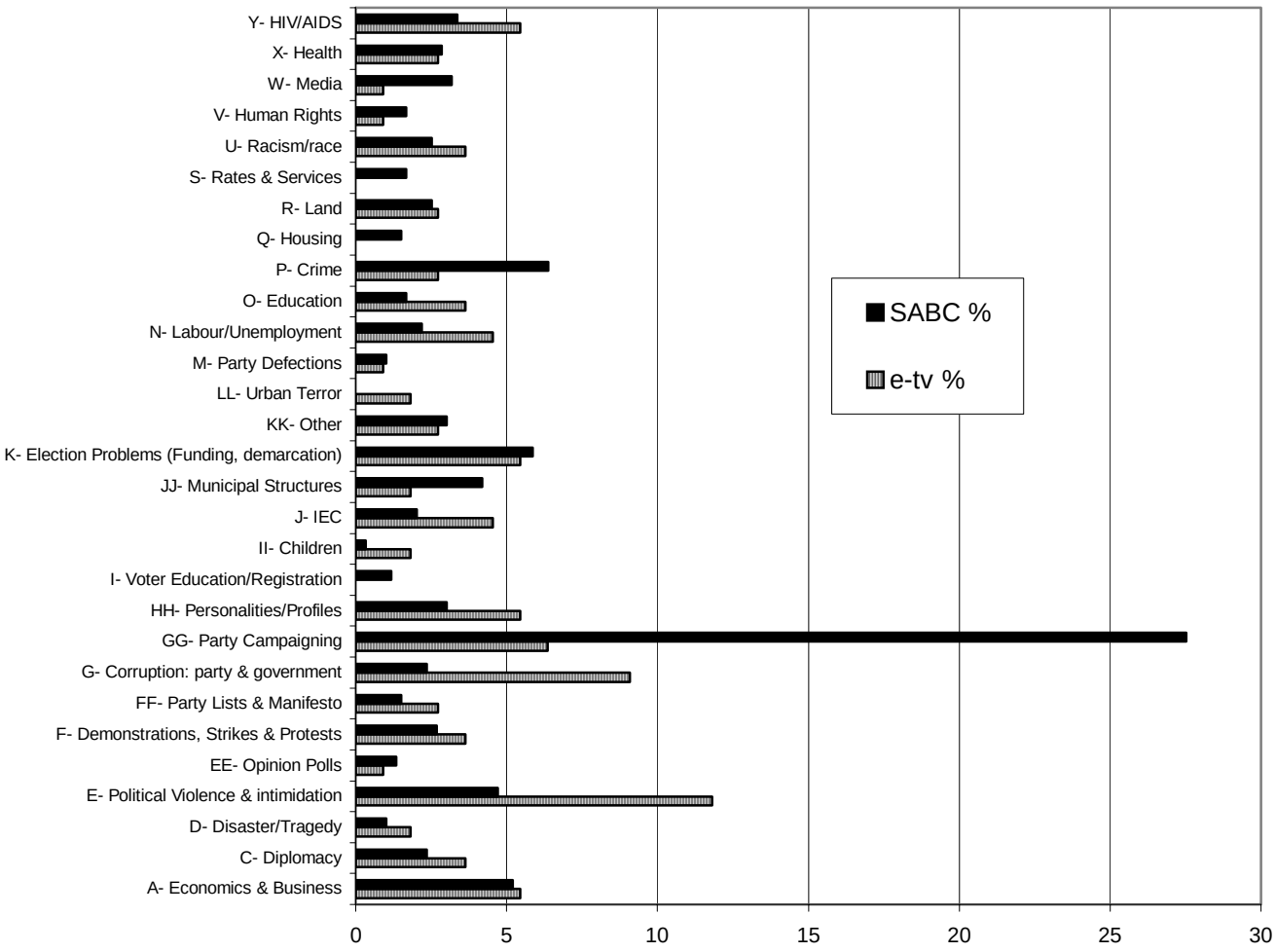
Graph 6.2.1: Party Coverage SABC vs. e-tv (>0.7%)



The graph above shows the breakdown in party/organisations coverage on **SABC** TV and **e-tv**, where parties/organisations received more than 0.7% coverage. The most surprising aspect of the graph is the similar levels of coverage given to the ANC, Government and the DA. Combined Government and ANC coverage on **SABC** amounts to 43.6% while on **e-tv** combined coverage amounts to 45%. It must be noted however that many of **e-tv**'s Government items were about the Western Cape government which, in terms of party alignment means that not all Government coverage on **e-tv** could be linked directly to ANC coverage.

The only real differences can be seen in coverage of Residents and Unions where **e-tv** afforded them more than double the coverage of the **SABC**. Against that, **SABC** had double the coverage of the IFP and significantly more coverage of the IEC. As with the rest of the media, coverage of smaller parties was very low.

Graph 6.2.2: Topic Code Coverage: SABC vs e-tv (>0.9%)



Graph 6.2.2 represents the topic code breakdown of **SABC** TV against **e-tv** where topic codes received more than 0.9% coverage. **SABC** displays a staggeringly high level of party campaigning (GG) coverage of 27.5% of all their election related items. Considering the added responsibilities of the **SABC** as the public service broadcaster it is not only disappointing but suggests a failure to meet their responsibilities in educating and informing the public about the elections. The next highest level of topic coverage is crime (P) at 6.4% followed by items on demarcation issues (K) and problems relating to traditional leaders. In most other topics levels of coverage were very similar to those of **e-tv**.

While **e-tv**'s coverage of party campaigning (GG) was relatively low and while their election coverage was spread over more topics, there was a clear tendency for items to be about dramatic events. Hence relatively high levels of coverage were afforded to items on political violence (E) and intimidation (11.8%) which, considering the relatively peaceful nature of the run up to the elections, seems high. Corruption (G) (9.1%), election problems (K) (5.5%) and HIV/AIDS (V) (5.5%) also received high coverage. As discussed in the section on HIV/AIDS, (see Chapter 10) while a critical issue, coverage generally tended to be poor and focused on dramatic statements being made by various parties.

Again, as with the majority of the media the television broadcasters afforded little coverage to local government related issues. The topic of gender (T) and discrimination received less than 0.9% coverage across the television broadcasters. Race and racism (U) interestingly received comparably high coverage in relation to other issues such as housing (Q) and health (X).

While coverage of gender issues on both SABC and e-tv was negligible the table of gender sources has some positive aspects.

Table 6.2.3

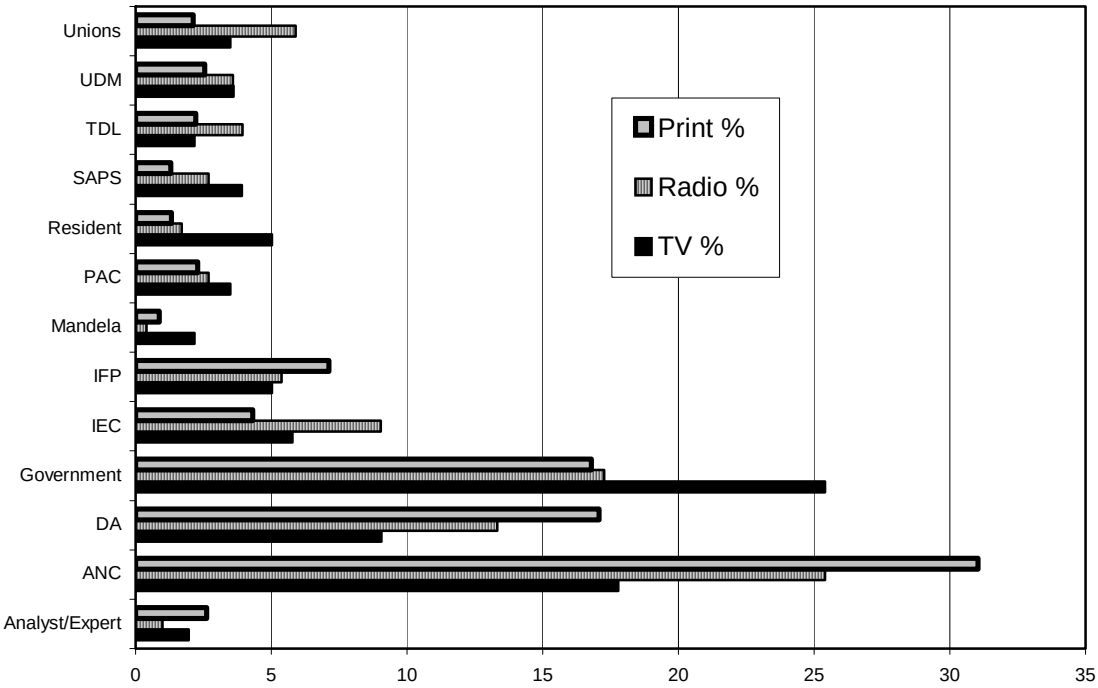
Gender	SABC %	e-tv %
Female	11.1	20.2
Male	67.4	76.3
Unspecified	21.4	3.5

As can be seen, both broadcasters have a higher than average percentage of female sources, which is positive. Most striking however is the 20.2% of female sources on e-tv, which should be commended. By the same token, although higher than the average of the other media, SABC TV's female sources is disappointing especially considering their role as a public broadcaster.

An analysis of the party coverage, topic code coverage and gender breakdown of the three types of broadcasters has revealed the following: While there are certain clear differences in emphasis on topics covered by private as opposed to public service media, in many instances the coverage displayed similar trends with similar issues receiving the majority of coverage. Community radio once again with minimal resources was able to provide comparable coverage to the major broadcasters and this is to their credit. Overall the similarity in coverage across the broadcasters does not so much suggest a clear commitment to public broadcasting principles and duties, rather the monitoring suggests that the SABC is not fulfilling their role as the public broadcasting service.

Chapter 7. Party Coverage

Graph 7.1: Party/Organisation Coverage Breakdown (>2%)



Graph 7.1 illustrates the coverage of various political parties and organisations. The graph represents parties covered in percentages where those parties received more than 2% of the total coverage for print, broadcast and radio. The graph shows that the ANC received the most coverage of all parties in print (31.0%) and on radio (17.3%), the exception being TV, where they received 17.8%. Second to the ANC, was Government which received a substantial amount of coverage in the media (59.5%). 16.8% of coverage in print dealt with Government, and 17.3% of items on radio news bulletins. Notable is that Government received the highest amount of coverage on television with 25.4%. The high levels of coverage of the ANC and the government were expected.

The DA also received a substantial amount of coverage in print (17.1%), radio (13.3%) and television (9.1%). The ANC and the DA received a vast amount of coverage, which was expected as the ANC is the ruling party while the DA is the largest rival to the ANC. The media's focus on the ANC and the DA, however, was to the exclusion of smaller political parties. Parties such as the UDM and the PAC received approximately four times less coverage than the ANC and the Government and approximately half the coverage received by the DA. According to the graph, the UDM received the same amount of coverage on both radio and television (3.6%), while 2.5% of items in print dealt with the UDM. The PAC on the other hand received slightly less coverage than the UDM, with 2.3% of items in print dealt with the PAC with 2.7% on radio and 3.5% on television. The only other party that received more than 2% coverage was the IFP.

Other parties such as AZAPO, UCDP, SOPA, MF, ACDP and the FF did not even appear on the graph as they received less than 2% coverage across all mediums. While limited attention has been given to AZAPO, UCDP, SOPA, MF and the ACDP across the media, the FF has been conspicuous by its virtual absence by print, radio and television election coverage. Former President Nelson Mandela received more coverage than the above-mentioned parties. The lack of coverage accorded to smaller political parties is of concern; it is interesting to note that the small parties that did receive some coverage were parties to the left of the political spectrum. The media has a responsibility to represent all parties across the political spectrum. There have been some exceptions, but generally the media failed to give equitable coverage to the multitude of parties.

While mainstream political parties received a substantial amount of coverage, reports on these parties were limited to their campaigning activities. Reports focussed on discussions about voter turn out and the area of the campaign. The content of the reports were lacking in terms of discussing parties manifestos and party lists. There was little or no focus on local candidates and reports tended to focus on party leaders rather than the local candidates. The majority of party coverage focussed on Thabo Mbeki and Tony Leon.

The graph shows that traditional leaders received a fair amount of coverage due largely to the demarcation issues and the determination of their powers and functions. The issue of traditional leaders constituted 2.2% of items in both the mediums of print and radio with 3.9% of items on television. Whilst this coverage is commendable, the issues surrounding traditional leaders were rarely covered in an in-depth manner, creating an impression that the issues were too complicated to deal with. For example "New row between government and traditional leaders looms over the proposed amendment to municipal legislation gazetted on Friday" (**Daily News**, 06/11/00 pg 1) or "Elections suffer another setback as traditional leaders reject amendments to the Municipal Structures Act" (**Sowetan**, 08/11/00 pg 3). In addition, traditional leaders were almost always represented as an hindrance and a problem to the election because of the subsequent postponement of the election date.

The IEC received considerable coverage in print (4.3%), radio (9.0%) and on television (5.8%). This however is expected during an election in which an electoral commission is bound to play a major role. The lack of the utilisation of independent expert analysis as reflected on the graph, reveals the extent to which election coverage was characterised as lacking in analysis, information and critical coverage. The use of analyst/expert opinion was limited to 2.6% in print, 1% on radio and 2% on television. The surprising concern shown for unions was primarily the result of municipal worker's strikes in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and the perceived conflict within the ruling tripartite alliance, between COSATU, the SACP and the ANC.

Table 7.1.1

Medium	Range	Total Count	Ratio
Print	62	4875	1:78.6
Radio	37	1118	1:30.2
TV	40	917	1:22.9

Table 7.1.1 contains figures representing the range of sources and the total count of sources for print, radio and television (i.e. the variety of different parties and organisations accessed). The table shows that the total number of sources monitored for print was 4875 and the range of sources monitored was 62. The range of sources monitored for radio was 37 out of a total of 1118 sources accessed, while the range of sources for television was 40 out of a total of 917 sources accessed for that medium.

Table 7.1.1 reveals that although print had approximately 3 times more sources than television and 4 times more sources than radio, a comparison by ratio indicates a greater diversity of sources relative to the number of sources accessed for the mediums of radio and television. The greater number of sources accessed in print is expected and due largely to the print media having more coverage of the LGE. The ratio for television, although low i.e. 1:22.9 indicates a greater diversity of sources. While the count of sources for print may be greater, the high ratio suggests a lower diversity of sources accessed.

The content of reports were limited across the media. Often there was little analysis of election issues and little discussion of party policies. Not even the ANC and DA who received extensive coverage, had their policies analysed and explained. In addition there was a lack of diversity (again across all mediums) in terms of the number of parties that received coverage. Mainstream political parties received the bulk of attention to the exclusion of smaller political parties.

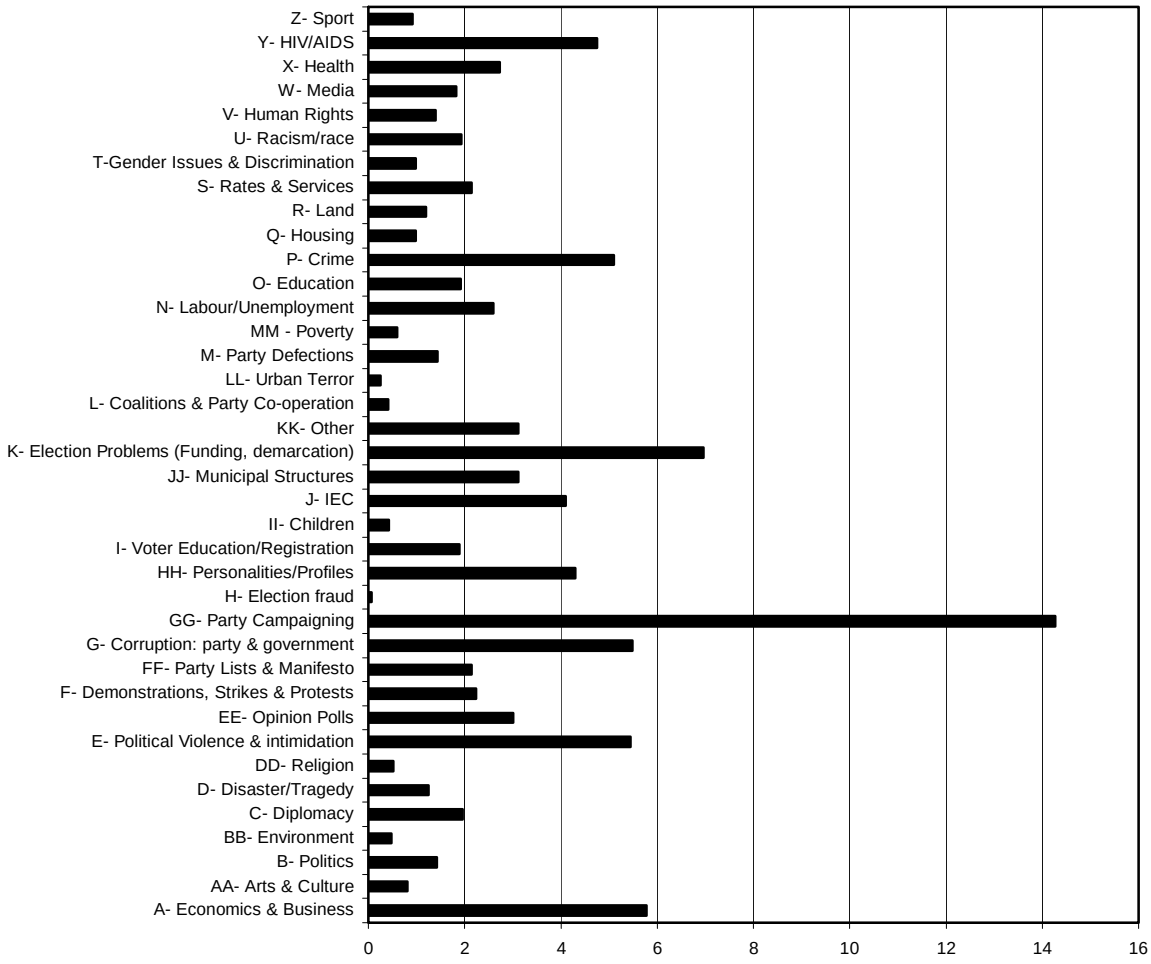
The only notable difference in the way in which the different mediums covered certain parties was that print media accorded smaller parties more coverage than radio and TV. This is evident on an item-by-item basis and cannot be seen in percentage terms as on Graph 7.1. According to our database, print has a higher count of items than radio or television. The results for the representation of Government, the ANC and the DA between the three mediums however are not significantly different.

Chapter 8. Topic Coverage

8.1 Topic coverage analysis

The diversity and range of stories dealing with different topics was an essential part of our monitoring. By their nature the local government elections requires that the media deal with as many diverse topics as possible, as the issues of concern to diverse communities requires this. The following graph (Graph 8.1) illustrates the topics that were dealt with by all the media.

Graph 8.1: Topic Codes All Media (%)



Election campaigns (GG) clearly received the highest election coverage in the media, accounting for 14.3% of all news items monitored. This is to be expected during elections; however even the coverage of campaigns lacked an evaluative dimension. Coverage of the campaigns focussed more on personalities rather than the places where the campaign took place and issues of concern to those particular places. For disadvantaged communities, it was mostly national leaders of political parties who did campaigning in these communities, limiting the opportunities to deal with local issues even further.

The second highest topic dealt with in the local government election coverage was the topic code K, election problems. These included the demarcation process and the role of traditional leaders, floods that could possibly hamper the voting process, areas that resisted the introduction of the new structures, (for example, the Orania case), poster wars and candidates who had passed away during the process of elections or were disqualified for various reasons. However, most of the stories in this topic code concerned the role of traditional leaders in the new municipal structures.

The media closely followed the negotiation process between government and traditional leaders on the possibility of the synthesis between traditional and modern democratic rule. The articles ranged from dealing with the traditional leaders' request for amendment of existing legislation relating to their authorities (**Sowetan,** 18/10/00, pg 5) to dealing with the alleged animosity between traditional leaders and government (**Business Day,** 06/11/00, pg 1), "Traditional leaders predicting new crisis as they reject power given to them". The **Daily News** (11/06/00, pg 1), reported that there was a new row between government and traditional leaders over proposed amendments to municipal government legislation.

Another interesting trend in relation to this issue is that a very high percentage of items that dealt with the possible synthesis of traditional rule and modern rule came from outsiders of the different mediums in the form of op-eds. Such items ranged from arguments that there was a convergence between traditional leadership and the present order (**Sowetan,** 02/11/00) to those that were condemnatory towards government's approach to traditional leadership. It is also worth noting that government's approach was seldom explained to viewers and readers. Examples of such items were, "The PAC supports traditional leaders and says government approach is too Eurocentric" (**Citizen**, 07/11/00, pg 12), "South Africa unable to seek viable synthesis between traditional and modern democratic rule" (**Daily News**, 17/10/00, pg 6) and "Government blamed for imposing municipalities on traditional leaders thus reducing their powers" (**Ukhozi**, 06/11/00, item 1).

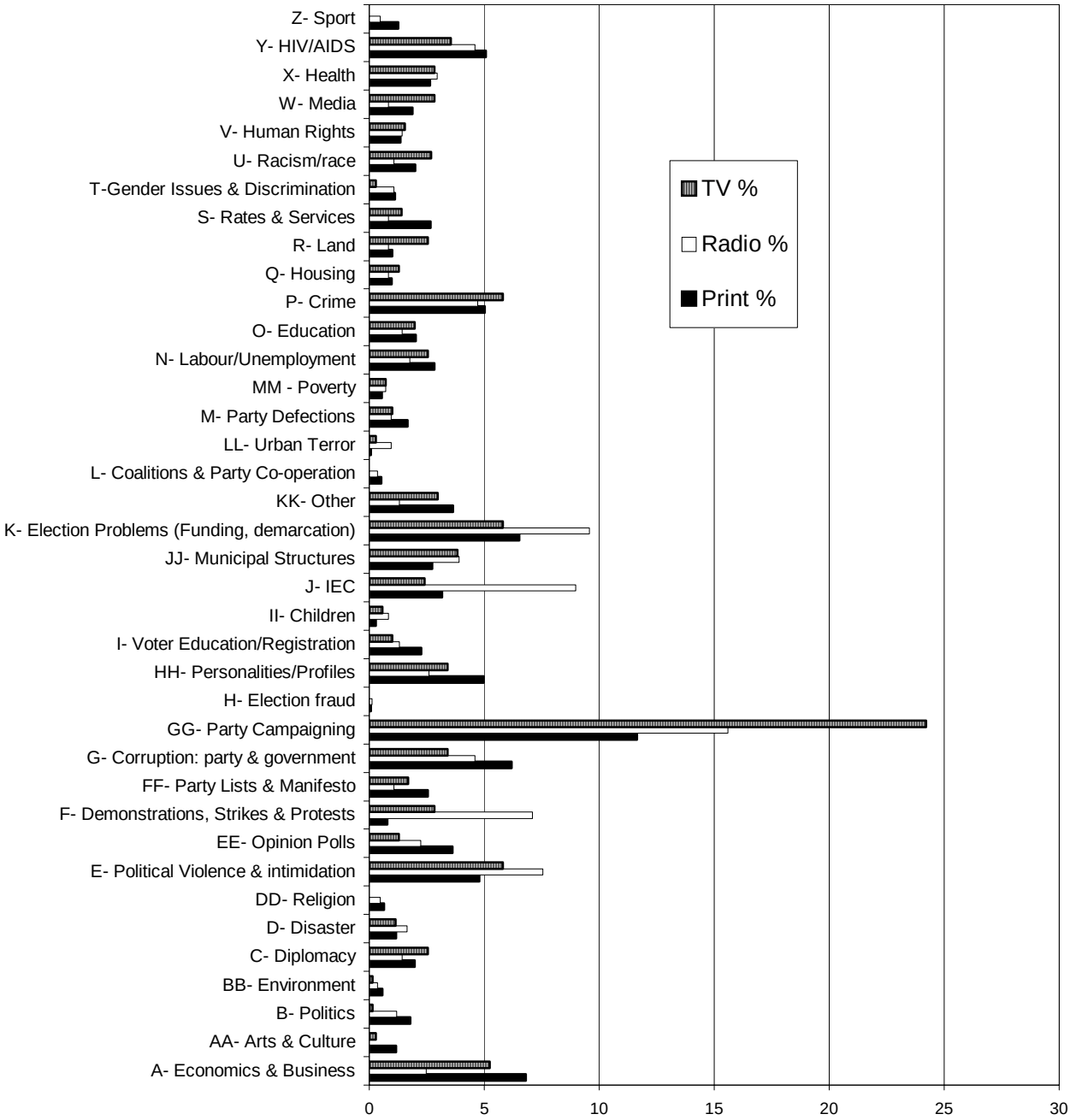
Other topics that were relatively high were those that are dramatic in nature, such as crime (P), political violence (E), party and government corruption (G), and coverage and/or profiling of prominent political figures (HH) received relatively high coverage. Interestingly the graph shows that business and economics (A) received relatively high coverage; this was largely due to a focus by various parties on improving the economy of the country. President Mbeki's speech to SACOB during the election period also received high coverage, as well as his talks with the IMF and World Bank around the same period. Trevor Manuel, the Minister of Finance also delivered his mid-term budget speech around this time.

HIV/AIDS (Y) received relatively high coverage with many of the reports focussing on the provision of AZT to pregnant mothers infected with HIV. Many of these reports were bland and lacked depth - this will be further discussed in Chapter 10. It was disappointing to see that topics that could have had a local focus received very low coverage, these were; housing (Q), education (O), rates & services (S), land (R), health (X), and poverty (MM).

8.2 Topic code breakdown by media

The following graph (Graph 8.2) illustrates the breakdown of topic coverage, comparing print, television, and radio.

Graph 8.2: Topic Code Breakdown (%)



The most prominent feature of the graph is the very high coverage of campaigns (GG) on television. Van Ginneken (1998) wrote that what holds for still pictures holds even more for moving pictures on television. This statement characterises the event-based nature of television. Thus action-oriented clips like campaigns combined with the high profile personalities in them receive high coverage on television. The dramatic items mentioned in the previous section, such as crime (P), political violence (E), and economics & business (A) also got relatively high

coverage on television. It must be noted however that what might have contributed to the relatively high coverage of business and economics were the personalities involved in those items. For example, the call by political leaders during campaigns for the improvement of the country's economy, president Mbeki's address to SACOB, and the mid-term budget speech by the Finance Minister.

Radio seemed to follow television closely with relatively high coverage of event-based news items. However, an interesting aspect of radio coverage is that it had the highest coverage of topic code K, which dealt with election related problems, such as the concerns of the traditional leaders, problems related to the voting process such as floods that could hamper the election process, and others. Whilst the frequency of news bulletins on radio might be partly responsible for the high coverage of this topic, the fact that some radio stations are regionally-oriented and issues of traditional rule are regionally-based, might have contributed to the high coverage of this topic. For example, **Ukhozi** had a relatively higher coverage of the issues concerning traditional leaders.

Print media had similar patterns of covering dramatic topics as mentioned above, however print had a relatively equal spread of other topics that were issue-based. It also covered topics such as environment (BB), arts & culture (AA), party lists and manifestos (FF), which rarely featured in other media. Whilst print media attempted to deal with topics that were barely covered on broadcast media, given its space and analytical nature, could have performed better than it did. The graph shows that on the whole the patterns of topic coverage on print media were similar to those of broadcast media.

The high coverage of party campaigns that were at a national level at the expense of issues that face different communities was disappointing. Coverage of diverse topics would have provided an opportunity for the media to deal with various issues of concern in communities. The similar pattern of coverage in the different media, despite the different and unique ways in which they operate (which could have provided an opportunity for diversity), was also a disappointment. Overall, the media allowed their coverage to be dictated by agendas of political parties.

Chapter 9. Regional Coverage Analysis

9.1 Area coverage analysis

The crucial element of local government elections is service delivery at a community level by government. By virtue of this media coverage of diverse and specific areas is a significant element of election coverage.

Media reporting of local government often proves to be a challenge because it demands attention to local detail and issues, which can vary from ward to ward and area to area. It is however the responsibility of the media to educate and inform voters about the voting process and the policies and promises of candidates and parties in their specific areas. For this reason one of the pieces of information captured during the monitoring process was the area of significance to which an election news item pertained. For example, a campaign in a specific rural area in the Eastern Cape would be considered to be of local significance whereas a story about a pending closure of community police forums in the Western Cape would be of provincial significance. Whereas a story about the future influence of traditional leaders in the new municipal structures would be of national significance. International stories that were linked to the local elections were also monitored, for example, there were stories about the Palestinian/ Israeli conflict being used for politicking. There were also a few Africa news stories that were related to the elections, for example stories about the President's diplomatic meetings with African leaders (such as the Zimbabwean President), would sometimes be linked to local support for the President.

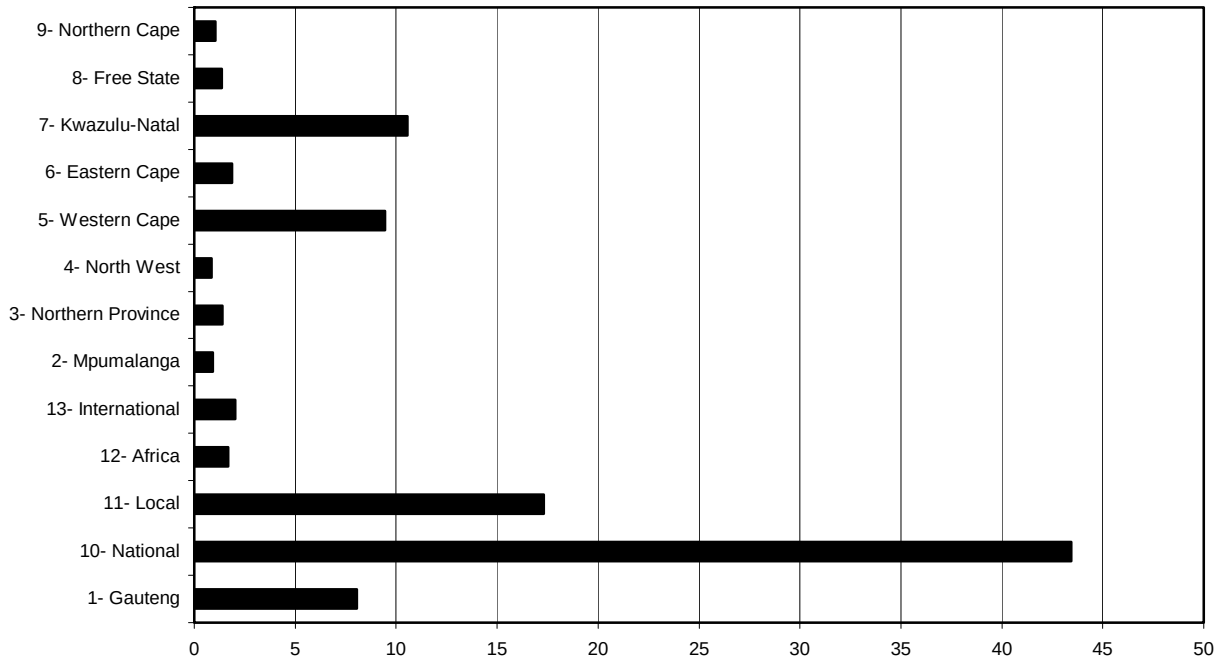
9.2 Area breakdown of all media

Graph 9.2 illustrates the area breakdown of the local government elections across all media.

It is clear from the graph that coverage of issues of national significance dominated all other areas. To some extent this is to be expected as most of the media monitored was national. The coverage of national leaders of political parties could also account for the prominence of national stories. Examples of such stories would be whether people still had faith in President Mbeki as national leader of the ANC, whether Buthelezi's party, the IFP could go beyond its regional identity, and whether Leon, leader of the DA, could convince voters that his party was not a party that only looks after minority interests. The high coverage of issues of national concern such as the demarcation process, the concerns of traditional leaders, crime, and HIV/AIDS also contributed to the prominence of national coverage. Despite these factors however, the prominence of national issues relating to elections that are meant to be locally focussed and based is problematic.

It is commendable that the coverage of local issues follows national coverage in terms of prominence, being 17.3% of the total coverage. This is largely due to coverage of election campaigns taking place in specific communities. Such reports would focus more on the party personalities campaigning rather than issues of concern to those specific areas (this has been further discussed in the

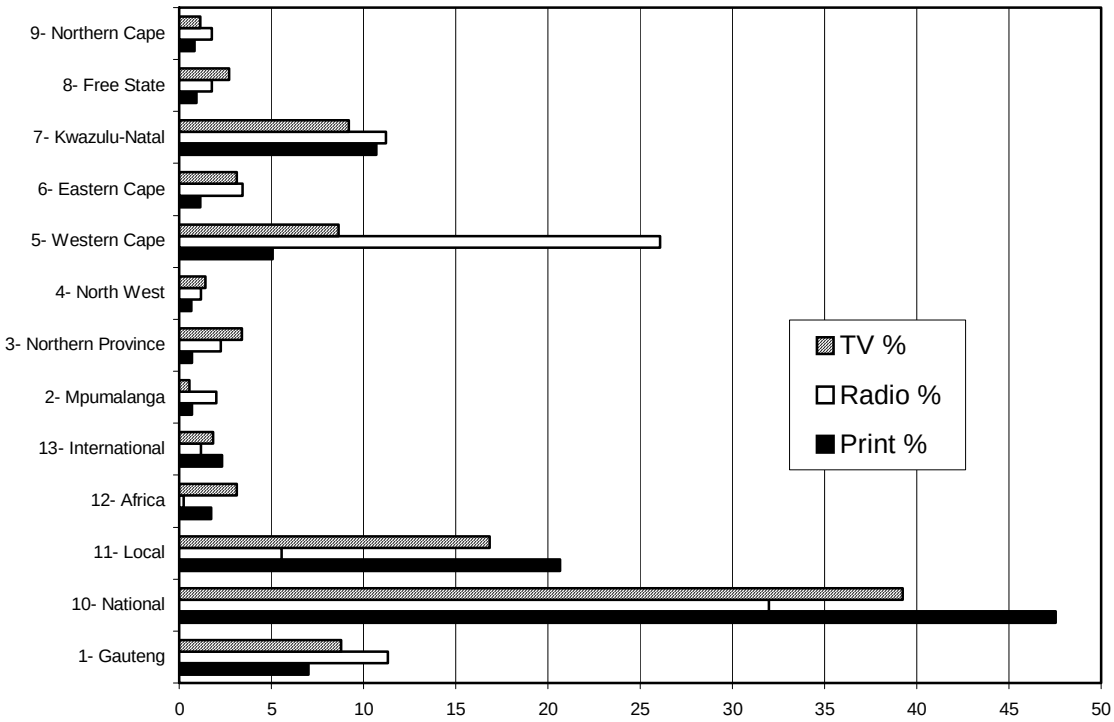
Graph 9.2: Area breakdown of All Media %



Topic coverage chapter, Chapter 8). However the print media did make efforts to cover issues of concern to specific areas.

The urban bias with regards to provincial coverage seems to be a norm. This has been the case in the past elections that the MMP has monitored. Graph 9.2 clearly indicates the dominance of the more developed metropolitan areas, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Gauteng. It is interesting to note that the remaining 7 provinces received the same amount of coverage, which was lower than International coverage.

Graph 9.3: Area Breakdown (%)



9.3 Area breakdown per media

The previous graph (Graph 9.3) represents the breakdown of area coverage per media.

Some of the characteristics of news items on radio and television are brevity and simplicity. News bulletins are often short and fast paced. Items are therefore compressed as much as possible, covered in a minimum of time, and prioritised. This means that a newspaper could fit comparatively more stories onto their pages than bulletins are able to. Thus the different formats of print, radio, and television have been taken into consideration in our analysis.

It is clear from Graph 9.3 that the print media had the highest coverage of national issues, accounting for 47% of the items monitored. This could be attributed to the space and time that the print media has as compared to the broadcast media as discussed above. Radio follows print media quite closely, accounting for 39.2% of items monitored. This is due to the fact that there were 5 radio stations monitored and that radio has more frequent news bulletins than television.

Another prominent feature of the graph is the high coverage of the Western Cape province by radio. Not only did it receive coverage on national stations but was also the focus of the two stations monitored in that province, **Zibonele** and **Cape Talk**, which had relatively high election coverage.

The print media also had the highest coverage of local issues. This is due to the fact that the newspapers monitored dedicated certain sections to local government elections, and some had focus articles on specific communities regularly. For example, the **Sowetan Sunday World**, a weekly paper, had a weekly focus on specific communities. The **Business Day**'s column "The Voice of the People" also provided space for issues of concern to specific communities. Other papers occasionally did the same, for example, the **Cape Times** occasionally profiled ward candidates and also explored issues of concern to those specific communities.

The provincial coverage in all the media had similar patterns. This is clearly indicated by the graph. The coverage of KwaZulu-Natal looked very similar in all the three media that is; print, radio, and television. Gauteng also does not show major differences and low coverage of the other provinces in all media shows these similarities.

9.4 Media coverage per mediums

It is to be expected that regional mediums would have high coverage of their particular regions and where they are based, and national media would not be limited to one region or another. From the sample of mediums monitored this pattern seemed fairly stark, and media "poor" regions were compensated for by national mediums. The following table shows regional coverage per medium looking at which medium had the highest and the lowest coverage of particular regions. It is grouped by dailies, weeklies, radio and then television.

Table 9.4

Medium	Gtng	Mpum	NProv	NWest	WCape	ECape	KZN	FS	NCape	Nat'l	Local	Africa	Int'l
Beeld	41	8	1	4	9	3	24	5		392	208	22	25
Business Day	21	3	4	2	24	9	28	9	3	151	22	1	5
Cape Times	2				37		2	2	3	47	17		1
Citizen	67	2	3	7	20	3	11	3	8	108	3		1
Daily News	23			1	12	6	115	3	3	186	89	22	24
City Press	1	1	1		5	2	4	1		13	6		
Sowetan	16			4	8		4	2	2	78	31		
Star	18	2	4		9		13	1	3	167	133	4	8
Ilanga	2	1				1	47			19			
Independent on Saturday	1				6	1	34		2	32	15	1	3
Mail & Guardian		4	3		4	5	8	1		53	20		
Rapport	11				2		3	1		82	27	2	1
Sunday Independent	5		3		2	1			1	41	2		1
Sunday Times	2				4	2	7			15	1		
Sunday Tribune	1				3		30			38	34	1	2
Sunday World	5	1	3	2	1	1		1	1	23	9	1	
Weekend Argus	1				11	2	1			28	23		1
Cape Talk	5				41		1			31	15		3
East Wave	2		1	1	6	1	3	2	1	28	4		
Radio Today	3				5		2	2	2	24	9		
SAfm	27	9	3	1	19	2	25	6	1	65			6
Ukhozi	27	8	15	8	29	15	59	3	10	59	6	2	1
Yfm	30				2		2	2		32	4		
Zibonele	2				119	11	3		1	32	9		
e-tv	5	1	3		19	3	4		2	59	10	1	3
SABC TV	57	3	21	10	42	19	61	19	6	218	109	21	10

Table 9.4.shows that **The Citizen**, a national paper based in Gauteng, had the highest coverage of Gauteng with 67 items over the period monitored. Mediums that had the lowest coverage of Gauteng were **Sunday Tribune** (1 item), based in Durban; the **Weekend Argus** (1 item), a regional paper based in Cape Town; and **Zibonele** (2 items), a community radio station based in the Western Cape. Interestingly, two national mediums had the highest and the lowest national coverage. **Beeld** led with 392 news items that were related to the elections but were of national significance. **City Press**, a weekly national paper had the lowest coverage of national issues (13 items) that were related to local government elections. What was good about the **City Press** coverage, however, is that it did not nationalise local issues.

The table also shows that **Beeld** had the highest local coverage (208 items), this is largely due to the fact that **Beeld** had the highest number of news items related to the LGE. National mediums such as the **Sunday Times** (1 item) and **Sunday Independent** (2 items) had the lowest coverage of localised news items.

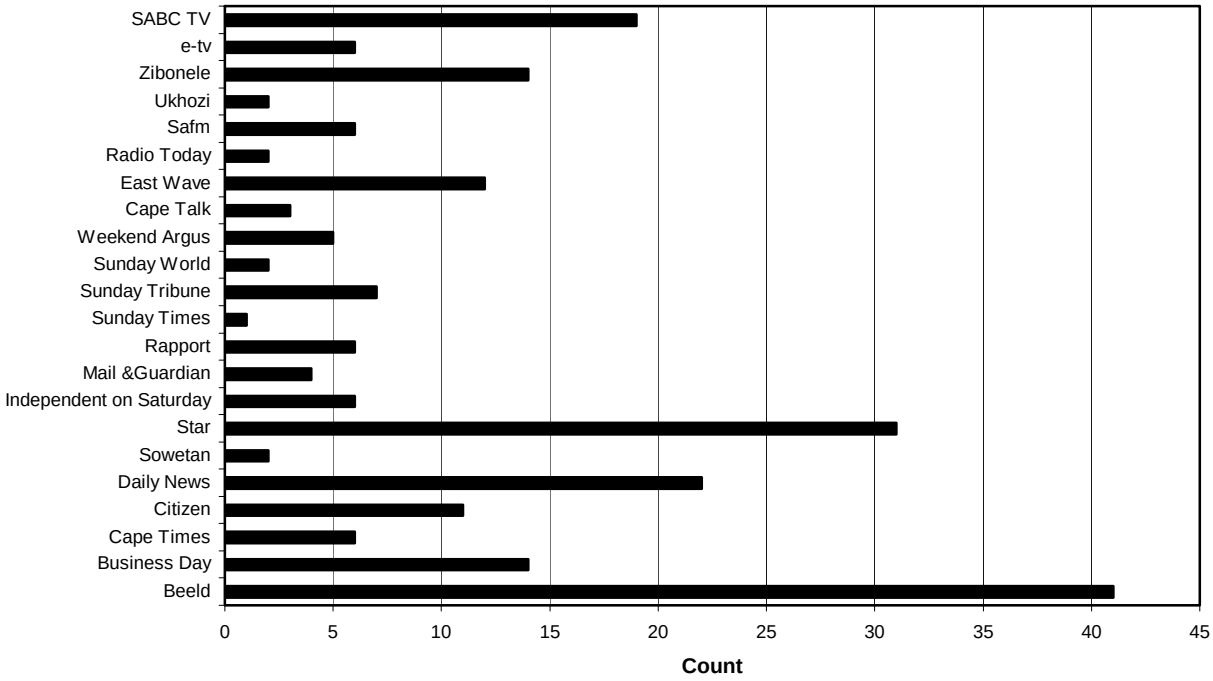
The media poor provinces such as Northern Province, North West, Northern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape received most of their coverage from national mediums.

It can be deduced from the above that national coverage dominated all other areas. Local government elections were to be about local issues, credible and accessible candidates who would represent people; it was therefore disappointing that the media covered these elections at a national level. Local candidates rarely featured and issues covered were nationalised. By nationalising these elections the media missed an opportunity to highlight the plight of the most obscure communities often bypassed in terms of development.

Chapter 10. HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS has given rise to an unprecedented amount of challenges, both social and economic. It featured consistently in media reports throughout the election period and was extensively used by political parties in their campaigning activities in a bid to win votes. While it was not the topic that received the highest amount of coverage, it did appear in the ten most frequently covered topics. In fact HIV/AIDS accounted for 4.76% of all items monitored and is undoubtedly an issue of extreme importance to all people in South Africa. The following chapter serves to assess both the quantity and quality of media reports dealing with the HIV/AIDS issue in relation to the LGE.

Graph 10.1: HIV/AIDS Topic Breakdown by Medium



Graph 10.1 represents the quantity of coverage that HIV/AIDS received by medium. The media in this graph have been clustered into daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, weekend newspapers, community radio stations, private radio stations and television stations. The graph shows the number of items per medium.

In assessing the results, it is important to bear in mind that daily newspapers because of their high news content, will tend to have more items than a weekly or television news programme. According to the graph the **Beeld's** coverage of HIV/AIDS was the highest, although the high number does not necessarily mean that the **Beeld** provided better coverage of the issue. **The Star** also carried a high number of reports on HIV/AIDS, while the **Daily News** included approximately less than half the number of items carried by the **Beeld**. The **Sowetan** on the other hand carried only two reports, and also has the lowest number of reports when compared to the other daily newspapers.

A look at the weekend papers reveals that the number of HIV/AIDS items overall was much lower. The **Sunday Tribune** had a relatively high level of coverage, with all the other weekend newspapers showing on average 4 items dealing with HIV/AIDS. The **Sunday Times** was recorded to have had the lowest coverage of HIV/AIDS, while the **Mail & Guardian**, a weekly newspaper carried four of items dealing with HIV/AIDS in relation to the LGE.

Coverage of HIV/AIDS reports on community radio stations was surprisingly high. Of all the radio stations monitored, the community radio stations i.e. **Zibonele** in the Western Cape and **East Wave Radio** broadcasting in Lenasia, carried more items than commercial radio stations which is highly commendable. The high number of items counted on community radio stations, particularly **Zibonele** was surprising especially in light of the fact that **Zibonele** did not broadcast on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A comparison of other radio stations reveals low coverage of items dealing with HIV/AIDS. The average of items dealing with HIV/AIDS was 7; however certain radio stations such as **Ukhozi, SAfm, Cape Talk,** and **Y-fm's** coverage of HIV/AIDS was below the average. Important to note on the graph is that **Y-fm** does not feature, indicating that there were no items monitored dealing with HIV/AIDS on **Y-fm**. This is disappointing as **Y-fm** is a station aimed at a youth audience and it would seem vital for them to inform their audience about HIV/AIDS and the various policies of the political parties regarding the issue.

While it must be acknowledged that various public radio stations offer different identities and focus, and considering their drive to connect with their targeted audience groups, one would assume that stations would cover election campaign issues that would be relevant to those group's needs and interests. An examination of the range of topics of each station revealed that they had similar coverage and similar focus on events, the exception being **Zibonele**.

An examination of topics covered by **Zibonele** reveals that items reported on had more relevance to the Western Cape. While **Zibonele** did report on national and international events, the news bulletins had high local content. Reports contained information about the activities of the various parties in that area as well as information relating to what political parties had promised to the people of the Western Cape. For example, "The Treatment Action Campaign brings Biozole in Belville for HIV/AIDS" (20/10/00, 12:00) or "according to the Western Cape MEC for Health, AZT will reduce the spread of AIDS by 80%" (25/11/00, 15:00) and also "DA members in Western Cape are moving trying to save unborn children from HIV positive mothers." (29/10/00, 12:00)

Also interesting to note is that the Western Cape was of central importance in the HIV/AIDS debate and particularly the campaigns of the DA and the ANC, as it was a hotly contested area and also a DA stronghold. **East Wave** on the other hand also carried a large number of items dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but these were more national reports than local and were very similar to items carried by public radio stations. Although a community radio station, it carried little or no information about local events in its news bulletins.

A look at television on the graph indicates that **SABC** covered more than double the number of items dealing with HIV/AIDS than **e-tv**. This is partly due to the

combined number of items shown by **SABC 1, 2** & **3**, therefore it is expected that the count of items for **SABC** television would be higher.

While there were more reports on **SABC TV** dealing with HIV/AIDS, the reports were event-based reporting rather than issue-based. In addition, reports focussed more on the politicians' discourses about the virus and very little information was provided about concrete moves made by various political parties and organisations to make medication available.

The graph indicates only the number of items covered by each medium; for this reason it is necessary to examine the content and quality of the coverage given to HIV/AIDS.

10.1 Quality of coverage

HIV/AIDS was exploited by politicians in a bid to win votes. This was done especially in the Western Cape region. The proliferation of HIV/AIDS throughout South Africa is a source of concern and was frequently used in criticism of the government's policies, and opposition parties used it to attack the government. There were a number of items reporting criticism of the government and its stance on HIV/AIDS. For example, "Ministry of Health's HIV/AIDS policy accused of being unethical" (**Star**, 26/10/00, pg 6), or "Political parties censor health ministry for not budging on its stance to provide anti-AIDS therapy to the public sector" (**Daily News**, 26/10/00, pg 3). In many instances these reports were attacks on government for not doing enough to help AIDS victims rather than about unpacking and discussing strategies put forward by parties. There were very few instances where the media dealt with the strategies put forward by the different parties on how to deal with the AIDS pandemic. In addition, reports provided by the media were uninformative and uncritical. There was only one instance monitored in which the media had effectively criticised, in particular the DA's promise to provide AZT to rape victims, saying that it was contrary to national health policy for the Western Cape government to provide AZT to rape victims. It was also mentioned that HIV/AIDS and the issue of providing treatment was an issue of national concern and not a local government issue.

It was commendable that the issue of HIV/AIDS and anti-retrovirals received a significant amount of coverage as it did bring to the fore and place the issue of providing treatment high on the agenda of the relevant political parties. Although the issue received a large amount of coverage, the reports were similar and limited to more about what political parties had to say about treatment, rather than about what attempts were being made to make treatment available. In addition it was noted that the issue, during the course of the election, was highly politicised to the extent that political parties used the issue as an electioneering tool. The media did note this on a few occasions for example "Parties across the board latch onto AIDS pandemic as a hot election issue" (**Cape Times**, 26/10/00, pg 9), "the controversy surrounding the cost and availability of anti-AIDS drugs is deepening and politicians have grabbed onto the issue as a voter getter for the December elections" (**e-tv**, 27/10/00, 19:00) and also "Election promises on dealing with HIV/AIDS are a farce" (**Mail & Guardian**, 03/11/00, pg 16). There was little in-depth coverage of the issue and the media did not interrogate politicians and political parties about their promises, thereby holding them

accountable to potential voters. Lastly, it was also noted that the media in their reports on what was said by the various political parties regarding the issue itself, as well as treatment, were not critical of the parties.

The issue of making treatment available to prevent mother-to-child transmission was also the focus of attention. Again reports tended to be guided more by politicians views and accusations levelled at other parties than by a clear attempt to explain the issues at stake. For example, "DA to table questions in Parliament on government stance on AIDS" and "DA-controlled Western Cape provincial government already supplies AZT to pregnant women" (**Citizen**, 27/10/00, pg 3). Other more dramatic items were "ANC accuses DA of trying to poison black people by giving them anti-AIDS drugs and further condemns the use of HIV/AIDS as an electioneering tool" (**Star**, 24/10/00, pg 1) and "ANC responds to DA campaign promise of anti-retrovirals for black people infected with HIV/AIDS in Khayelitsha by saying that it is tantamount to the biological warfare of the apartheid era" (**Beeld**, 24/10/00, pg 4).

The media failed to sufficiently analyse and interrogate politicians' discourses regarding HIV/AIDS and in particular the issue of making affordable treatment available to prevent the spread of mother-to-child transmission. The latter issue was one that was blatantly exploited by political parties. There were only a handful of instances when the media did raise questions of how political parties were going to provide treatment. For example, "The DA is using AIDS as its election ticket. The party promises to give free AZT to people with AIDS and anti-retroviral medication to rape survivors" (**e-tv**, 22/10/00, 19:00) and "Superficial comment on the debate on giving AIDS drugs to rape survivors is damaging" (**Star**, 17/10/00, pg 3).

The emphasis on the issues of HIV/AIDS by the media, placed it high on the political agenda and did help to raise levels of awareness. Many of the reports however, were highly politicised, uninformative and uncritical. The media failed to examine the complexities involved in HIV/AIDS as a national health issue, which has local government ramifications.

HIV/AIDS does not discriminate and the impact the disease has on the Sub-Saharan population has far reaching consequences. AIDS is inextricably linked to poverty and the lack of education levels, both of which are high in South Africa. Yet the media failed to raise these issues in conjunction with the AIDS pandemic. The Director of Public Affairs of the UN Development Programme said "poverty is more than just a lack of money. It is also a lack of access to opportunity and choices most basic to human development such as good health, education, food, shelter, freedom, dignity and self-esteem" (Human Development Report, 1997). Making poverty and education election issues would force political parties to disclose their strategies to reduce these problems and could have served to inspire new policies. The issue of rape could also have been reported in the context of HIV/AIDS, as opposed to the few items focussing on rape which were monitored. Parties could have been asked to explain their policies and plans in detail in relation to issues such as rape and poverty.

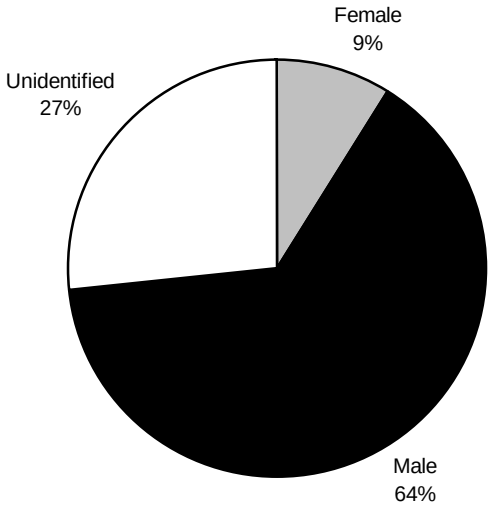
Chapter 11. Gender and the Elections

This chapter serves to assess the manner in which the media dealt with issues of direct concern to women (such as violence against women) and includes both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the representation of women. Four major findings were revealed from MMP's monitoring of the local election. Firstly, women were grossly underrepresented in the election. Secondly, no gender analysis was conducted of issues in which women would have a clear interest. Thirdly, women were rarely accessed as sources and lastly it was noted that in the rare instances when the media did cover issues specifically related to women, although well covered, they were too few in number.

11.1 Low coverage

Women make up over 50% of South Africa's population and IEC statistics reveal that 18 476 519 voters were registered for the election of which 10 081 986 were women and 8 394 533 were men. Yet in spite of the fact that the majority of registered voters were women, they and issues of concern to women were not adequately represented in the media's coverage of the election. Historically women have been marginalized and poorly represented in the media. Not only do the media have a responsibility to report on women equitably, they also need to make a positive effort to address the poor representation of women and to prevent the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Graph 11.1: Gender Breakdown All Sources



Out of a possible 4 573 items monitored, only 43 items or 0.9% monitored dealt with the topic of gender. This included gender discrimination, violence against women or gender equality. Graph 11.1 represents the gender breakdown of

sources monitored. It reveals that Male sources accounted for 65% of sources, while women comprised just 9% of all sources accessed in the election news and information. The remaining 26% of sources were not identifiable by gender. Most often this was due to the source either not being named or else the source may have been a press release or party position. The low level of Female sources indicates a severe imbalance of sources accessed.

In the 1999 General Election the percentage for female sources accessed was also 9% showing that there has been little improvement in the representation of women in the media. This stagnant level is worrying because of the implied apathy of the media and politicians to using female sources. In fairness to the media however, it is expected that they access the best and most senior person in a political party, and as in the previous years elections and this year's election coverage, the media tended to use powerful senior sources. As there are only a few women in these positions, it is to be expected that men would dominate the sources accessed. This argument was to some degree validated in coverage of the parties, where the ANC, which had the greatest number of women in senior positions (according to information in the media), also had the greatest percentage of female sources (0.2% above the total with 9% Female sources compared to just 4.3% for the DA). This does not however explain why the majority of Analysts accessed for example, tended to be Male 75%, with 13.8% being Female. Although this is significantly higher than the total, there are a number of equally excellent Women analysts and experts that could have been accessed.

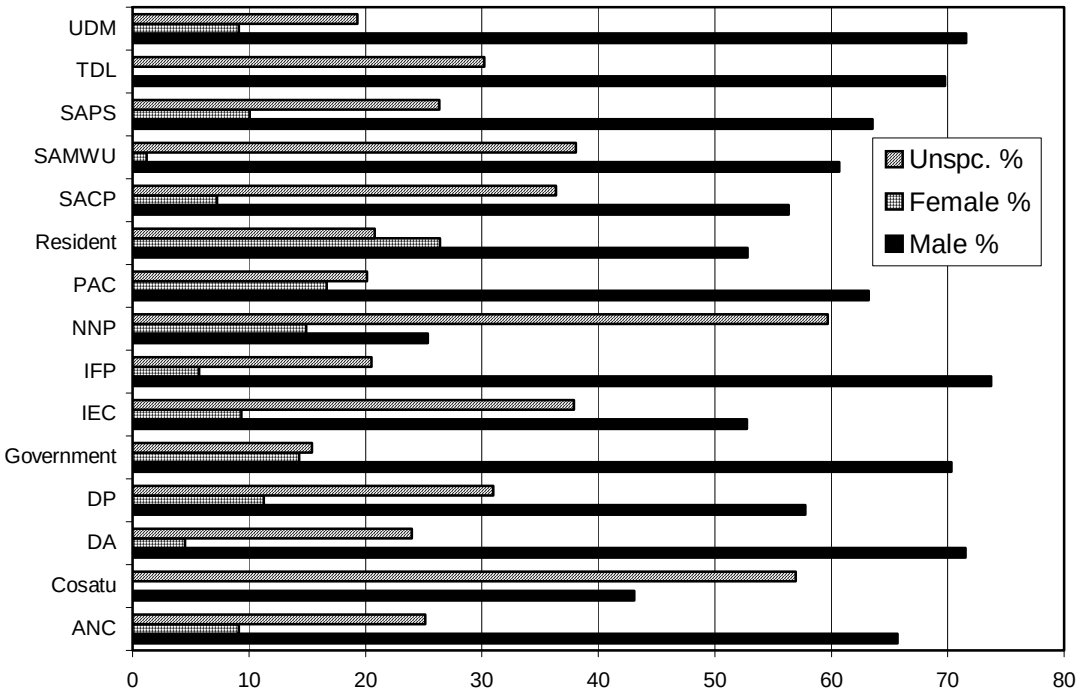
11.2 Personalities and profiles

A general trend notable in the election was that profiles and personalities tended to receive a significant amount of coverage. Of the 4573 items monitored, 186 items dealt with personalities and profiles. This constituted 4% of all items monitored. The media in their coverage of campaigns tended to focus on national leaders instead of local candidates. But most notable was the lack of profiles of female candidates. While some may argue that women did feature in the news such as the Health Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture, these women were accessed in their national capacity and not in a local government capacity. There were only a handful of instances in which women were accessed at local levels.

The ANC's mayoral candidate for Cape Town, Lynne Brown was one of the exceptions where a woman candidate was profiled. Unfortunately in the majority of instances where she was profiled, it was not exclusively but almost always reported together with Peter Marais, to the extent that they were described as the "Yin and Yang" of local government politics in the Western Cape. In addition Lynne Brown was often stereotypically represented as passive, subservient and incapable of occupying leadership positions. While Peter Marais was described as being "fiery" and able to bask in the attention of the media, Lynne Brown on the other hand was described as being more "quiet and reserved". (SABC 3, 05/12/00, 20:00)

Another woman who received some coverage in the media was Nonhlanhla Nkabinde and her bid to stand as a local candidate. Reports tended to identify her in terms of being the "wife of the late Sifiso Nkabinde", and not as her own

Graph 11.2: Gender Breakdown of 15 most mentioned parties/organisatiions



person, thereby defining her in relation to a man and her identity as 'wife', instead of as a local candidate. Freda Adams, a former NNP member who later defected to the Independent Ward Candidates Alliance also received a significant amount of coverage, however it tended to be within the context of a sexual harassment scandal in relation to Peter Marais and she was rarely the focus of the item. The bulk of reports focussed on the lawsuit she had lodged against Marais with few details given to the reason for the lawsuit. For example, "Freda Adams says sexual harassment is rife in the Western Cape legislature: Adams sues Peter Marais for defamation" (**Cape Talk**, 25/10/00,18:00) and "DA's mayoral candidate, Peter Marais is in trouble after he made allegations against Freda Adams" (**Zibonele**, 25/10/00, 18:00).

The media's coverage of women was limiting not only because women were not discussed as strong independent candidates, or on their own terms, but also because the diversity of sources for Female sources compared to Male sources were considerably less. Women occupy a diversity of roles and social positions in society yet these were not reflected in the media's coverage of the LGE.

Not only was there a tendency not to access women as sources for stories and comments but also issues focussing on women received extraordinarily low coverage. As a comparison, election related items on Diplomacy, which included coverage on the Middle-East crisis and Mbeki's talks in Rwanda, received more coverage than gender items. The low level of coverage suggests both the media and political parties did not take gender issues seriously.

Graph 11.2 indicates the gender breakdown of the fifteen most mentioned parties or organisations. It also indicates that women are poorly represented as sources in political parties. The highest being the PAC with 16.7% and this was largely due to Patricia de Lille as a leader in the party. Second to the PAC is the DA with 14.9%. The representation of women in the ANC was also low at 9.1%. The lowest however was the DA with 4.5% in spite of the row between Peter

Marais and Freda Adams which featured substantially. In government 70.3% of sources accessed were Male while the number of women accessed in government was 14.3%, which is five times less than the number of Male sources. This large imbalance does not only reflect the media's poor representation of women in general but also reflects that women are poorly represented in the political arena.

A more holistic view of the graph indicates that women were well represented (comparatively speaking) in the category of residents, with a level of 26.4%. This is the highest level in all categories. This suggests that women continue to be represented in stereotypical roles, as victims and residents, and not experts. Also surprising is the low representation of women in the IEC in spite of the fact that Brigalia Bam heads the IEC. In the category of traditional leaders, women were not at all represented, even though there are some female traditional leaders.

The onus of representing women more equitably does not rest solely with the media. Political parties also have a responsibility in ensuring that women are represented, particularly as they account for 52% of the vote. The Municipal Structures Act 58 of 1999, Chapter 6, Schedule 2, Part 3, 2.3 states that, "Every party must seek to ensure that 50% of the candidates on the party list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed through the list." In spite of this legislation, women were nearly invisible on candidate lists and the majority of political parties did not meet this requirement. Although the media did note this failure, for example "ANC sends back some party lists due to lack of representation of women" (**Business Day**, 19/10/00, pg 3) and "Women are poorly represented on party lists and in local government" (**Sunday World**, 22/10/00, pg 4), the media failed to interrogate and analyse the obvious absence of women from candidate lists and ask parties how they planned to address their non-compliance and their gender policies.

11.3 Crime and violence against women

Issues relating directly to women received extraordinarily low coverage. Violence against women, despite its prevalence in South Africa, was not addressed in the media and given a local government perspective. Surprisingly though, the number of crime items in general during the elections was low (around 5% of all topics covered compared to last year being around 9%). Past monitoring of the media indicated that crime was one of the most frequently mentioned issues in the media. Whilst the media in the last few years has made positive strides in reporting violence against women, there remains a tendency for the overwhelming majority of crime reporting to focus on dramatic events, such as heists and disasters. This emphasis to some degree helps explain why issues generally received little coverage during the elections. With a clear emphasis on events, issues dealing with political parties' policies on violence against women tended not to make the news. In addition to this, the nature of such reports limited the scope of issues being dealt with, and by implication, did not allow for them to be dealt with in their complexity and diversity.

Even where stories had a clear focus on women in the elections, they received little coverage and analysis. The issue of having sufficient women on parties' lists was one such story that although it received some coverage was a missed opportunity for the media to focus on women in the elections.

11.4 Housing, poverty and development

While these issues affect both men and women, the media could have provided a gender analysis on these issues. Another point to note is that these issues are relevant to a national election and not a local election, but in spite of this politicians used the issues in their campaigns, and the media failed to localise them or criticise their nationalisation by political parties. The most poverty stricken sectors of South African society are women and yet they were not the focus of items on these topics. The marginalisation of poor women by the media and government has profound implications for government policies and South African society on the whole. But none of the issues such as employment equity, welfare, health and housing were comprehensively raised in election coverage.

11.5 Health in general

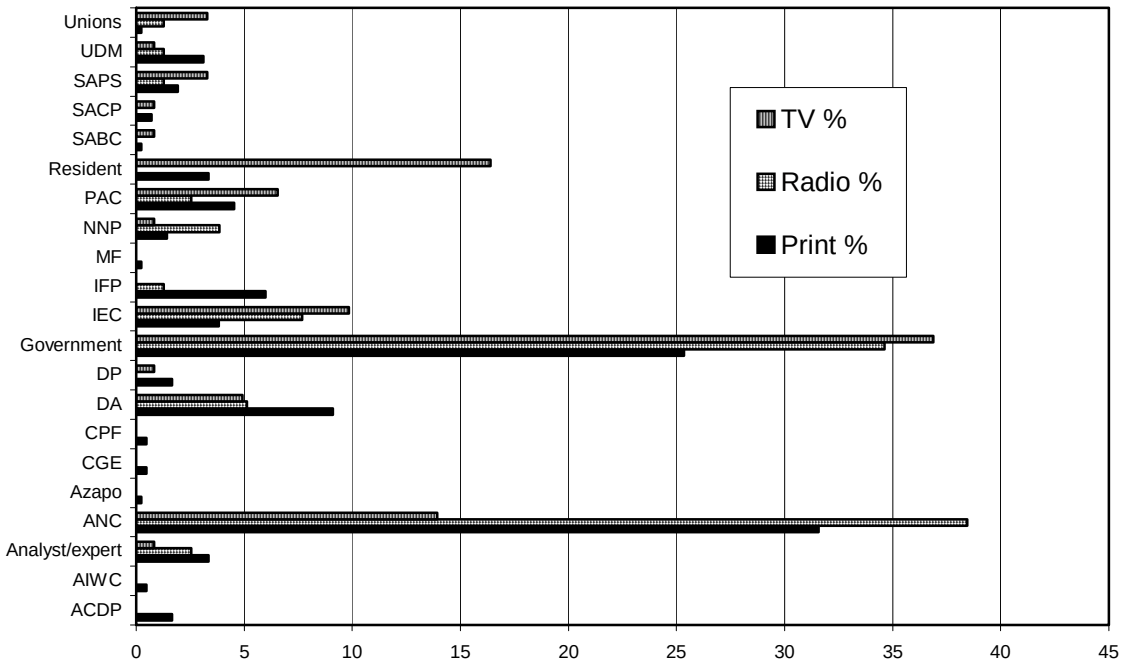
The issue of health could have been given a gendered perspective. Again this is not exclusively an issue that affects women, but women by virtue of their social position and access to health facilities are most susceptible to HIV/AIDS, and therefore warrant specific attention. In the interests of a media underpinned by a human rights culture, the media should be attentive to gender-specific issues such as reproductive rights. From our monitoring, the issue of reproductive rights has been largely absent.

11.5.1 HIV/AIDS

The question of HIV/AIDS and in particular the issue of providing anti-retroviral drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission featured prominently in party campaigning in this election, as well as in the 1999 General Election. The reports were simplistic, uninformative and often failed to explain the complexities involved in health policy. Issues such as preventative health strategy, primary health care for impoverished communities, child care, inoculations, birth control, TB, HIV/AIDS, affordable drugs and the question of delivery costs for these programmes in relation to women were inadequately addressed by all media. The particular vulnerability of women to HIV, and education to prevent the spread of the disease did not get much media attention.

The issue of representing women in the media is not only about there being insufficient items in which women were visible or accessed as sources, or even about women in the elections, but also about issues being approached from a gendered perspective and offering a gender analysis. Thus items for instance about housing could have been examined from a gender perspective, with questions being raised about the challenges faced by women in relation to local housing problems, such as those faced by domestic servants.

Graph 11.6: Female Source Breakdown Across Media (%)



Graph 11.6 illustrates the breakdown of women sources by print, radio and television. The print media displayed a greater diversity of sources than both radio and television. While it was never the highest, a substantial amount of coverage was given to women from a variety of parties. These included the UDM, SACP, PAC, NNP, MF, IFP, ACDP and of course the larger mainstream political parties such as the ANC and the DA. Radio stations on the other hand tended to access more women in the ANC and Government. In fact radio's coverage of women in the ANC was the highest of all mediums and was recorded to have been 38.5%. Women in government received 34.6% coverage on radio and this was the second highest level for the medium of radio. Women in other parties and organisations such as the IEC, DA, IFP, NNP, PAC, UDM and Unions received on average 4.5% coverage. While women in parties and organisations such as the ACDP, AZAPO, MF and even the CGE were not accessed at all.

Television's sourcing of women focussed on the Government (36.9%), which is the highest across all mediums. The ANC (13.9%) and the category of Resident (16.4%) is higher than the amount of women accessed as sources in the ANC. The high percentage of women accessed as sources for the category of resident is an indication that gender stereotypes continue to be perpetuated, and that women are often viewed as spectators in society rather than participants. The low percentages of women accessed as analysts or experts across all mediums, print (3.3%), radio (2.6%) and television (0.8%), further supports the assertion that women are rarely represented as authority figures. In addition, television's sourcing of women from other parties and organisations were not as widely spread as those of print and radio media. Women from parties such as the DA, IFP and PAC were accessed as sources, on average, 4% of the time. While women in parties such as the ACDP, AZAPO the MF and the CGE were not accessed at all on television.

In all instances and across all mediums, although women were accessed as sources, issues of relevance and concern to women were never discussed. Furthermore, few or no attempts were made by the various media to question parties on their policies regarding gender representation within the parties.

The media's coverage of women in the local elections overall was very poor, in terms of items about women, accessing women as sources and of providing information on issues of relevance to women. There are two aspects which need to be considered: There were some good examples where women were made the focus of stories and given front-page prominence in newspapers such as **The Star** and the **Citizen**. Those journalists and others that made and continue to make concerted efforts to represent women in their diversity, complexity and to make all issues in society relevant to women should be commended.

The second aspect to be considered relates to what is often used as a defence of the poor representation of women in our media, and that is the media are simply reflecting society, which sadly is rife with sexism and patriarchy. While this may be the case, it ignores that the media plays a significant role in society and shapes the perceptions, understanding and ideas about the world and society. It is a powerful, political, social and economic element in society as well as an instrument of change capable of altering the status quo. The media is also able to conscientise society by highlighting deficiencies thereby allowing for the redress of existing inequalities. With this in mind, while the media may be reflecting patriarchy in society, it has a responsibility to challenge it and to represent society fairly. For while there is sexism and patriarchy, women are also the majority.

The large gap between the number of Male and Female source accessed speak volumes about the lack of representation of women both in the media and in the political arena. Clearly there is a need for political parties to make a concerted effort to place women at the fore of their campaigns as candidates, spokespersons and leaders. Women should be a target group for political parties as demographics indicate that there were more female registered voters than there were male registered voters. Finally, it must be noted that the positive representation of women in the media is not only the responsibility of the media but also of other bodies and civil society organisations such as Chapter 9 institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations and government. The CGE's apparent inaction during the election period is highly problematic. As a Chapter 9 institution, specifically created to raise awareness of the problems faced by women in society, the CGE could have played a more prominent role in ensuring that issues relevant to women were given attention in the 2000 local government election.

Chapter 12. Race and Racism

In a society where issues of race and racism continue to illicit heated debate, it is incumbent upon the media to cover such issues in a complex and diverse manner.

As noted, one of the responsibilities of the media is to both reflect and challenge societal norms and values. Nowhere is this more important than in the realm of racism, where it could be reasonably expected of the media to challenge the commonly held hegemonic stereotypical representations and racially–based myths. With the agenda surrounding race and racism largely determined by the political elite in this country, it is up to the media to depoliticise the issue and engage more fully with the issues involved. A thorough evaluation of the media over the LGE period would however seem to indicate that the local media largely failed in much of the above.

A concern for a media industry underpinned by a culture of human rights would require the coverage of race issues within a human rights framework. This would, of necessity involve the proactive discussion of issues of race and racism. However, as will be made clear below, pre-election race coverage was largely reactive, with the media taking their cue from election period events. Issues of discrimination and other racially motivated abuses of human rights were largely absent from election coverage. The media furthermore largely failed in their duty to educate the public on the rights which should be enjoyed by all the citizens of South Africa, when it comes to issues of race.

In exception to the general lack of discussion surrounding issues of racism, the pages of **Die Beeld** included opinion pieces arguing for the necessity of decisive action to eradicate racism, both institutional and civil (15/11/00, pg 15) attempts at tackling racism, (22/11/00, pg 15), and the need for SA's political leaders to do much more to "combat racism" (24/11/00, pg 14).

In the course of developing our methodology for this project, with race and racism still fresh in the collective consciousness of the country, and with race expected to play a major role in the run-up to the local elections, it was assigned its own topic code. From coherent monitoring of radio, television and print over the period, a mere 1.9 % of all monitored items were identified as falling under this code. In numerical terms this boils down to a total of only 90 items across all media. Thus very few items of explicit racism or items primarily relating to issues of race were noted. However, a sizeable amount of items were identified as including an element of race, while not explicitly referring to race or racism. Thus race remains as a key feature in the local government election coverage.

12.1 Racialisation of voting patterns

Perhaps the most significant element of local election coverage regarding race and racism is the degree of racialisation accorded to voting patterns. While some concern was evident in attempting to unite the country on a non-racial basis, the tendency to segregate the voting public into racially defined homogenous voting blocs, was a conspicuous feature of LGE coverage. Items such as those in **The Star** (08/11/00, pg 2), calling for everyone irrespective of race to work for a

united South Africa, were largely overshadowed by items revealing clear racialisation.

Thus continual references were made especially to the "coloured vote" and, the "indian vote", to a lesser extent the "black vote", but significantly not the "white vote". The impression was therefore created that these communities vote with a single voice, for a single political party. With a single notable exception, the media largely failed to challenge this balkanisation. The failure to recognise the inherent diversity within each of the racially defined groupings, has served to situate the discussion within the hegemonic socio-political discourse of South Africa, as a society comprising distinct homogeneous racial groupings.

Thus references concerning the "Indian vote" were made, for example to:

- "The DA seemingly (being) poised to win the Indian Vote" (**Business Day**, 02/11/00, pg 13),
- "The unlikelihood of Indians supporting the ANC" (**Daily News** 28/11/00, pg 2),
- "The ANC (missing) the point when it comes to capturing the Indian vote" (**Mail & Guardian** 03/11/00, pg 34) and
- "The DA wanting to use the Indian vote to further their white interests" (**Independent on Saturday** 28/10/00, pg 12).

Items relating to the "Coloured vote " include:

- The furore surrounding the saga of Tony Leon's 'tan' on election posters in an apparent attempt to woo the Coloured vote (**Rapport**, 29/10/00, pg 3; **Beeld** 02/11/00, pg 15; **Mail & Guardian** 27/10/00, pg 6; **Zibonele** 29/10/00, 18:00, item 2; **Cape Talk** 29/10/00, 13:00, item 3; **Cape Times** 30/10/00, pg 1; **Star** 02/11/00, pg 14; 30/10/00, pg 1),
- The promises of Tony Leon of winning White, Brown and Indian voters and also more black support, during DA campaigning in Eldorado Park (**Rapport** 26/10/00, pg 14) and
- The possible "undermining of the DA's chances in coloured areas, in the wake of the defection of 60 NNP leaders over their exclusion from the DA's election lists" (**Business Day** 23/10/00, pg 1).

In their unnecessary mentioning of the issue of coloured voters, there was a clear complicity on the part of the media to present the election on racialised grounds.

Attention given to the "black vote" has been witnessed, for instance in articles:

- Concerning the "DA positioning itself to attract the illusive 'black vote' (**Beeld** 18/10/00, pg 14),
- Presenting "the black voter as the big fish in South Africa's electioneering Soap Opera" (**Sowetan** 01/11/00, pg 11), and
- An evaluation of DA strategy to develop support amongst "black voters" (**Beeld** 26/10/00,pg 14).

A clear racialisation was also evident in Deputy President Jacob Zuma's calls for greater cooperation between Indians and Africans (**East Wave** 16/10/00, 7:00, item 3) and former President Nelson Mandela's calls for Indians to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem (**Daily News** 13/11/00, pg 1).

The media challenge to this "racial" homogenisation was largely limited to an analytical piece in the **Daily News** (25/11/00, pg 9) written by a political scientist from the university of Durban Westville, entitled "Indians class vote likely" and criticising political parties for approaching Indians as an homogeneous voting bloc. By presenting Indian voting patterns as class rather than race based, diversity of opinion within the Indian community was catered for. The inclusion of this item in a regional newspaper begs the question as to why similar items were not included in other mediums. No items highlighting the diversity in the Coloured, African and White communities were noted, possibly leading one to wrongfully conclude that no differences exist within these groupings.

Local election coverage was, moreover, conducted within a discourse pitting Indian, Coloured and White minorities against the African majority. Not only did the media fail to challenge this dominant paradigm, but it actively colluded in efforts to split up the Black majority into its Indian, Coloured and African components.

Evidence in this regard is provided by an opinion piece in **The Citizen** presenting the DA, through Leon and Van Schalkwyk's leadership as protecting minority privilege (03/11/00, pg 12), and an article in the **Sunday Tribune Herald** likening the jockeying between the DA and MF in the run-up to the municipal poll for the voters of minorities, in some respects to the days of apartheid's farcical elections (26/11/00, pg 6). An exception was however provided in the form of an analytical article on the Coloured vote written by academic Franklin Sonn, presenting Coloureds as part of the majority disadvantaged by Apartheid, and criticising attempts to locate them as another minority (**Cape Times** 21/11/00, pg 8).

Of further concern in this regard, was the regionalisation of such coverage; thus it was within the geographical confines of the Western Cape that the discussion of the Coloured vote occurred. This discourse largely failed to be extended to Coloured communities in the rest of the country. Thus while it was reported for example that "the Coloured vote is crucial in the fight over the Cape Town Unicity" (**Citizen** 13/11/00, pg 7), that "the race for positions on the Cape Town unicity council will be hotly contested in (securing) the crucial 'coloured vote'" (**SABC 3**, 12/11/00, item 9) and that "the Coloured vote will decide Cape Polls, in light of ward demarcation" (**Business Day** 09/11/00, pg 15); Gauteng premier Sam Shilowa's electioneering efforts for the ANC in Westbury, a predominantly Coloured area in Johannesburg, were not been reported within this racial framework (**Sowetan** 22/11/00, pg 8). Likewise a discussion of the Indian vote was largely restricted to Kwazulu- Natal to the detriment of Indians in the other 8 provinces of South Africa. An erroneous picture was thus presented of Coloureds only being significant in the Western Cape, and Indians only in Kwazulu-Natal.

12.2 Racialisation of campaigning

Significantly, in much of the pre-election coverage, race was still located within the political domain, with little attempt on the part of the media to extend such discussion beyond the utterances and accusations of the major political actors and the racial characterisation of the contending political groupings.

In a country as race-sensitive as South Africa, the continued attention paid to race in coverage of party electioneering was surprising. While the continued reference to race is primarily the result of allegations and counter-allegations levelled by political parties against their opponents during electioneering, it was up to the media to critically analyse the appropriateness of such claims and to ascertain their relevance for the local elections, rather than merely repeat such allegations as presented by the parties. In keeping with the generally observed trend of a media characterised by a reactionary rather than proactive stance, with the agenda mainly set by the parties themselves, election coverage, instead of depoliticising issues of race and racism and thereby showing a concern for ordinary men and women, failed to take the discussion beyond the political domain.

Election coverage was noteworthy in the extensive racialisation of campaigning and electioneering of political parties, most notably the DA and the ANC. Despite concerns for the "unsavoury racial tone" of the campaigning styles of the DA and MF, which were presented as being reminiscent of the previous epoch by the **Sunday Tribune**, campaign coverage tended to foreground the negative reciprocal mudslinging between the major political actors, much of which has tended to take on a clear or hidden racial nature. This despite the assurances given by political parties that racist crimes and slurs would not be tolerated (**Daily News** 09/11/00, pg 1), in the light of the police dog unit incident.

Thus a clear racialisation of party identities was exhibited across the media. Therefore, depending on the origin of the story, election coverage of the DA either centred on them defending themselves as a non-racial party for all South Africans, in an effort to counter Black domination, or being criticised as a White party reflecting White interests, consisting of White leaders and Black 'stooges'.

Items have been noted on:

- The DA presenting itself as a party for the excluded (**Beeld** 18/10/00, pg 14),
- The DA presenting itself as a party for Blacks (**Citizen** 16/10/00, pg 4),
- The DA presenting itself as a party for all the people (**Daily News** 07/11/00, pg 10), and
- The DA presenting itself as a party for all races, classes and creeds, while "others (ANC) play the race card to try to win votes" (**Citizen** 30/11/00, pg 12);
- The need for them (the DA) to dispel the perceptions of protecting White privilege (**Citizen** 21/11/00, pg 12),
- The DA calling on its supporters to resist "Black domination", a clear reference to the political hegemony of the ANC in South Africa (**Beeld** 17/10/00, pg 2)

On the other hand, items monitored included those:

- Criticising the DA for treating Blacks like animals in the Western Cape (**Ukhozi** 24/10/00, 07:00, item 1),
- Former President Nelson Mandela calling the DA a party of White bosses and Black stooges (**Rapport** 03/12/00, pg 2; **Cape Talk** 02/12/00, 17:00, item 2),

- ANC Cape Town Mayoral candidate Lynne Brown telling Blacks and Coloureds in the Western Cape that they will be wasting their time voting for the DA (**Zibonele** 08/11/00, 18:00, item 6), and
- The DA (having) a long way to go before it can call itself a party for the rainbow people (**City Press** 19/11/00, pg 5).

An opinion piece was also noted in the **Sunday Independent** which presented White opposition parties as frustrating efforts of redistribution and transformation, while showing Black opposition parties as having the interests of the majority at heart (05/11/00, pg 7).

Perhaps the best example of coverage from the DA perspective was an opinion piece in the **Daily News** (27/10/00, pg 14) written by the DA Director of Strategy, Ryan Coetzee, that presented the ANC as failing to grasp the interdependent nature of South African society, in which the racial groups cannot and will not succeed unless the others succeed as well, and which accused the ANC of becoming a party for "some of the people" while the DA is "the party for all the people". The ANC was also presented as 'seeking to sow division' and as sending the message that minorities lack moral legitimacy. The DA in contrast was presented as building upon their Black support.

The ANC likewise tended to be represented as either a Black party still attracting the majority of Black support, a racist party akin to the former racist NP regime by discriminating against non–Africans on the basis of race and marginalising minorities, or as a uniting non-racial force in the country. In this regard mention can be made of:

- An article in the **Daily News** presenting the ANC as the only party to possibly unite the people of Durban (14/11/00, pg 10),
- An opinion piece in the **Cape Times** by ANC official Cameron Dugmore maintaining that ANC non-racialism has stood the test of time (04/12/00, pg 8),
- Items mentioning the DA criticizing the ANC for marginalizing minorities (**Business Day**, 16/10/00, pg 2), or
- Regarding such minorities in a negative light (**Citizen** 16/10/00, pg 4) and
- A **Citizen** op-ed saying most Blacks will still vote for the ANC because they fear the return of apartheid even through their lives might not have improved (C**itizen** 21/11/00, pg 12).

Other relevant items relating to the above include:

- DA leader Tony Leon's criticism of the ANC as being just like the former NP racists (**Beeld** 01/12/00, pg 4; **SABC 2** 29/11/00, item 8),
- DA Deputy-leader Marthinus van Schalkwyk's criticism of the ANC for using Mandela to accuse the DA of racism, while addressing a DA rally (**Cape Talk** 03/12/00, 17:00, item 4), and
- An article reflecting on the alienating of its African base by the ANC (**Sowetan** 17/11/00, pg 13), as well as
- An op-ed calling the ANC's "African leadership" racist, with the poor continuing to vote for the ANC as they are "conned" by the race issue **(Citizen** 03/11/00, pg 12).

Thus positive ANC coverage was the norm in ANC-derived stories and negative ANC coverage abounded in opposition, primarily DA criticism of the ruling party.

Such racialisation of parties was also evident in a call by Azapo, for Blacks to reject White parties and to vote for any Black party, i.e. any party excluding the DA (**SABC 3** 07/11/00, item 11), and in Minority Front leader Amichand Rajbanzi's rebuke of Indians for voting for White parties in the previous elections (**Daily News** 16/10/00, pg 2), and in his calls that the MF would not only canvas for the Indian vote but would seek the vote of all South Africans (**Sunday Tribune Herald** 05/11/00, pg 1).

Moreover much of this coverage tended to focus on the issues of racial politics within and between parties, especially surrounding the issue of President Mbeki and the "Race Card". Mention can be made here of:

- Coverage of DA leader Tony Leon's criticism of President Mbeki for increasing the levels of racist rhetoric at the Beeld Forum (**Beeld** 30/11/00, pgs 2 &17),
- His accusation levelled against Mbeki of trying to stir racial tensions before the elections after announcing a plan to personally investigate violence against farm workers (**Citizen** 01/12/00, pg 12),
- President Mbeki's calls for political parties to talk more honestly and openly about racism, which continues to polarise (**Beeld** 20/11/00, pg 2),
- The questioning by political parties of President Mbeki's calls for a political discussion on racism as an election ploy (**Beeld** 21/11/00, pg 4),
- The ANC and DA accusing each other of playing racial politics a day before the elections **(City Press** 03/12/00, pg 2),
- Winnie Mandela rejecting the DA's idea that Mbeki plays the race card, during a campaign in Maqekeza (**SABC 1** 02/12/00, item 8), and
- The possible use by Mbeki of the 'Race Card' to deflect attention away from failure in service delivery." (**Sunday Tribune** 26/11/00, pg 4**)**.

The Mbeki presidency was moreover presented as reinforcing rather than narrowing the racial gap in the country, through an opinion piece by Max du Preez in the **Daily News** (19/10/00, pg 14), reflecting on the increased emphasis on racial differences characterising the last year or so. President Mbeki's efforts were described as bringing South Africa back to the ideas of "liberatory Black consciousness" and "liberatory racial consciousness".

A more direct examination of the topic or racism was uncovered in an article appearing in the **Sunday Tribune** (12/11/00, pg 4) asking the question directly, "Is Tony Leon a Racist?"

In summary, on the whole the local media failed to adequately come to grips with race and racism in its complexity and diversity. Moreover, as is clearly illustrated above, this coverage tended to be reactive, rather than proactive. It would furthermore appear as if the local media did not give sufficient attention to removing the discussion surrounding race from the political domain. The space accorded race also revealed little concern for reporting such matters within a human rights framework. As was evident from the foregoing section, instead of actively engaging and challenging negative racial stereotypes and debating the

seemingly crucial issues involved, the focus on race was limited to a concern for 2 key areas, i.e. the racialisation of voting patterns and the racialisation of campaigning. It can therefore be concluded that race was generally poorly dealt with by the South African media within the context of the 2000 local government elections.

Chapter 13. Conclusion

The preceding chapters reveal the trends noticed during the two months of monitoring of coverage across a representative selection of the country's print and broadcast media of the 2000 Local Government Elections. The media on the whole was largely unsuccessful in fulfilling its educative and informative function. While restricted to discussing the media's role in enlightening and educating the public on the issues involved, this analysis recognises that the media is only one actor in bringing such issues to the attention of the public at large. The failure of other organs of civil society to play their part in ensuring a well-educated and enlightened voting public, particularly at a local level as an LGE necessitates, is thus noted with concern.

A coherent and thorough process of daily monitoring of election related items revealed certain general patterns in the amount and nature of coverage, as reflected in the foregoing discussion, progressing from the general findings presented at the outset, to the more specific incidences of race, gender and HIV/AIDS as mentioned in the last few chapters.

At a general level, as explained in Chapter 2, election–related coverage tended to minimise crime reporting, tended to profile prominent national political figures, and tended to provide some attention to mayoral candidates, to the detriment of local candidates, who were only fore grounded if they possessed unique attributes or special circumstances, such as important familial connections, disability or a seemingly incompatible duality of roles.

With the South African media characterised by a concern for events at the expense of issues, it is not surprising that the monitoring revealed pre-election coverage, which over-emphasised such events. The media failed to actively engage with the manifold issues brought up by the election process, and instead focused their energies on covering debates, campaigns, and pronouncements of the major political actors in a largely reactive, uncritical, unanalytical fashion.

As is evident throughout the report, media coverage was largely undertaken within a discourse established by the political parties themselves. Not only did the media conspicuously fail to set their own agendas in which to report on the LGE, but with the exception of a few examples, it failed to challenge the hegemonic stereotypical representation of race and gender. The large-scale politicisation of issues of race, and HIV/AIDS is a case in point, with the media failing to focus on the issues involved.

A multitude of examples have been presented of the unnecessary dramatisation of a comparatively free, fair and peaceful election process. The dramatised nature of most of the election-related coverage can be seen to impact negativity on the quality of election coverage.

In summary it can be maintained that the South African media largely failed to cover the 2000 local election process in its diversity and complexity. The coverage that was undertaken can be characterised as inadequately dealing with the issues involved. In the interests of a balanced and more representative media, it could be expected for such issues to have been reported in a manner catering

for all the divergences apparent within South African society. However, the monitoring period revealed:

- A lack of diversity of opinion,
- A lack of diversity in topic coverage.

The monitoring (as set-out in chapter 8) revealed an overarching domination of election coverage by a limited number of topics drawn from a list of 39 topic codes as presented in the introductory chapter, namely election campaigns, election problems, political violence, party and government corruption, and personality profiles. While this general pattern was replicated in radio coverage, the print media revealed a more even distribution of topics, including coverage of the environment, arts and culture, and party lists and manifestos. Television coverage focused on campaigns, crime, political violence, economics and business.

- Lack of diversity of party coverage, with party coverage dominated by the ANC/Government and the DA, to the ultimate exclusion of smaller parties (As elucidated in Chapter 7),
- Lack of diversity in geographical coverage.

Through determining the primary geographical focus of an item by categorising it as one of 13 geographical areas, reflecting local, provincial, national, African, and International relevance (Chapter 9), it was found that:

- National stories dominated all other areas,
- Local Coverage was greater than provincial, international and African coverage,
- There was an urban bias, in favour of the three major metropoles - Gauteng, Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal,
- Coverage of the other 7 provinces was roughly even and generally low,
- Print media had the highest coverage of national issues, with radio following closely behind.
- Print media had the highest coverage of local issues,
- There were similar patterns of provincial coverage in all the media,
- Regional media had an obvious tendency of including more items from that region,
- Media poor provinces received most coverage from the national media.

In the interests of ensuring a local media industry underpinned by a concern for a culture of human rights and committed to the establishment of a democratic society, certain specific issues were singled out for extensive analysis. In this regard, it can be concluded that such issues, including HIV/AIDS, gender, and race have not been given an adequate human rights focus. They have, moreover, not been dealt with in a sufficiently coherent and diverse manner.

Despite the appearance of some good examples where women were made the focus of stories and given front-page prominence in newspapers, the overall coverage failed to grapple with the complexity of gender issues.

As was clearly shown in Chapter 11, four major findings relating to gender coverage were apparent:

- That women were grossly underrepresented in the elections, despite constituting the voting majority.

The media failed in their positive obligation to challenge the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Despite some attention given to female Ministers, on the whole there was little effort to represent women in diverse roles-as leaders and in more meaningful roles, instead of representing them as passive, subservient and incapable of leadership positions. In the rare instances where women candidates were profiled, this was often accomplished primarily through representing them not as individuals in their own right, but rather in opposition or in relation to others, mainly men.

- That there was negligible gender analysis of issues in which women would have a clear interest

Such issues included Violence against Women, (which despite its wide prevalence in South Africa was not addressed), housing, poverty and development, and HIV/AIDS. With women representing the most marginalized, most poverty-stricken sector of the South African population, the lack of detail provided to gendering the above issues is a matter of concern. By not challenging the status quo, the media, to a degree was complicit in the marginalisation of poor women. This coverage furthermore tended to ignore human rights issues as they apply to women, such as reproductive rights.

- That women were rarely accessed as sources (9% of all sources accessed), revealing little improvement in the utilisation of female sources, from the 1999 general elections.

While women were poorly represented as sources in political parties, they were well represented as residents, with such representation in line with their dominant stereotypical roles as victims /residents, rather than as experts. In fact there was a tendency to utilise only a low proportion of women as analysts or experts across all mediums.

- Where the media did cover issues that focused on women, they were commendable pieces but were too few in number.

Race was likewise characterised (as elaborated upon in Chapter 12) by the media not challenging racial stereotyping, through the overt racialisation of voting patterns between the Indian, Coloured, Black and White segments of South African society, and the racialisation of election campaigning particularly by the DA and the ANC.

The extensive HIV/AIDS coverage noticed, in addition to its generally superficial, uncritical nature framed by little concern for issues of human rights, revealed highly uneven coverage across and within the print and broadcast media.

With the frequency with which such discussion was entered into differing to a large extent across the different newspapers, across the different radio stations and across the different television stations. (HIV/AIDS was discussed in Chapter 10).

With local issues fundamentally different from national issues, the media has a role to play in prioritising local over national issues and in according such issues the attention they deserve. However this difference failed to be reflected in media coverage, which bore a striking resemblance to the 1999 National elections, overemphasising fundamentally national issues of HIV/AIDS, the Middle-East, and land restitution, over local issues such as service delivery. (This was shown in Chapter 5).

Local issues were largely restricted to the election promises of the major political parties, although some limited analytical attention was forthcoming on the possibilities of implementing such promises, on privatisation and the new municipal structures.

In efforts at ensuring fair and balanced coverage, LGE coverage was monitored for the balance and fairness of the reporting (Chapter 4). On the whole it was found that the coverage was overwhelmingly fair and balanced with the majority of the monitored media having 80% or more fair items. However when clear and unequivocal bias was noted, this was more likely to relate to the ANC and/or DA than to any other party or organisation. The bias accorded the ANC was mainly negative, although some pro-ANC coverage was noted. The DA, when biased, in contrast was mostly the subject of positive coverage, although a few anti-DA items were apparent. Interestingly evidence was noted of some media having no pro-ANC items, with some elements of the media revealing a substantial amount of biased items in favour of the DA. The domination of the airwaves and pages by the DA and ANC, and the concomitant lack of attention on smaller parties, did not by itself reveal any bias.

It would appear as if the public and the political parties involved seemed to accept that media attention was fundamentally fair, judging by the minimal number of complaints reported against the media. There was however a tendency for the SABC, despite the prevalence of fair items, to favour the ANC.

Significantly the amount and nature of the coverage received by the election over time was highly uneven with significant vacillation, revealing periods of peaks and troughs, with the amount of coverage largely dependent on the coinciding events (Chapter 3).

The two-month monitoring period also revealed the extent of similarities and differences between public and private broadcasters in the realms of the print media, radio and television (as indicated in Chapter 6). A clear difference of prioritisation of party coverage between community and public service radio on the one hand and the private radio services on the other, with the former paying more attention to the ANC, and traditional leaders and the latter to the DA, the IEC, the IFP and the unions was noted. While coverage by the 3 types of broadcasters differed to some degree, all were similar in that the overwhelming majority of their coverage was distributed over only 5 parties/organisations.

Election coverage was also characterised by similar patterns of topic code representation across all the radio mediums, with all of these covering political violence, intimidation and municipal structures to the same extent. However they did differ in the amount of time devoted to party campaigning, with private radio stations not devoting nearly as much time as community and public service stations to this issue. Private stations instead focused on the IEC and dramatic incidents of demonstrations, strikes and protests, and crime, as well as opinion polls and surveys. Private radio also revealed the highest levels of gender coverage, which although still disappointing, reflects an improvement on the public service broadcaster, which it could be expected, would be more conscientious in this regard.

It was found that community radio gave minimal attention to voter education or the IEC. It was also surprising that they paid little attention to local issues, purportedly more in tune with the overall mandate of such mediums. That their overall coverage was comparable with the other broadcasters is commendable.

With respect to television coverage, it is apparent that **e-tv** are making vast strides in improving their coverage, in relation to the **SABC**, with election coverage perhaps even better this time round on **e-tv** than previous elections. Their bi-weekly programs on voter education seem to have placed them in a better position than the **SABC**, in fulfilling their public service role. Similar levels were however, surprisingly evident regarding the ANC /Government and DA across the channels. It was only really in their coverage of residents and unions where significant differences were noted, with **e-tv** having double the amount of items in this regard. **SABC** on the other hand showed a much greater interest in the IFP, and had more coverage of the IEC. The **SABC** had very high levels of party campaigning. While somewhat more concerned with crime, traditional leaders, and demarcation, overall topic levels of coverage were very similar on **SABC** and **e-tv**. **e-tv** in their dramatic, event-based coverage, paid little attention to party campaigning, with more even topic coverage.

Like the rest of the media, television broadcasters afforded little coverage to local government related issues. They had very little coverage of gender, although their coverage was marked by a comparatively high level of race and racism items in relation to other issues such as housing and health. Although television as a whole would seem to have provided greater use of female sources than the media-wide average, with **SABC** having double that of **e-tv** and **e-tv** have higher than average, the **SABC** as public broadcaster is still disappointing in this regard.

Questions need to be raised over the performance of the **SABC** as public service broadcaster with their coverage comparable to (not better than) that of community media, which operates on limited resources. The fact that the different media types revealed very similar patterns of coverage leads one to question the effectiveness of the public service broadcaster, which is expected to be more concerned with serving and informing the public than private and community media. This project would seem to indicate that they are not.

Thus in conclusion, it is apparent that while the media has made some progress in improving their coverage of elections, they have largely ignored issues of human rights in their reporting.

On the whole, they have failed to uncover the underlying issues framing the 2000 Local Government elections, and have failed to acknowledge the diversity apparent within our society. They have, moreover still not come to grips with their educative and informative role, in providing the public with adequate alternatives. Of particular concern is the fact that the SABC, as the public broadcaster has been overshadowed in its public service role by private and commercial broadcasters.