

ROLE OF MEDIA
IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY:
A CASE STUDY OF MAURITIUS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

BY
NADREENARAIN SINGH JOOSEERY

DEPARTMENT OF
MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA
DHAKA-1000, BANGLADESH

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***BY*
HARREENARAIN SINGH JOOSEERY**

Dhaka University Library

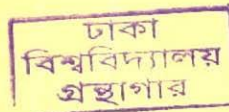


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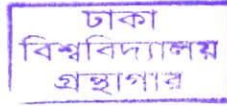
CERTIFICATE

Certified that the work incorporated in the thesis – **“Role of the Media in National Elections in a Multicultural Society: A Case Study of Mauritius”** submitted by Harreenarainsingh Jooseery was carried out by him under my supervision. Such material as has been obtained from other sources is duly acknowledged in the thesis.



(SHAIKH ABDUS SALAM)

Supervisor



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DECLARATION

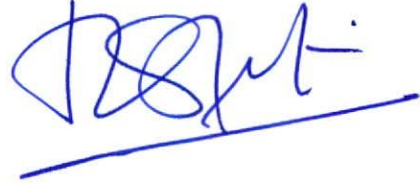
I hereby declare that the work reported in this thesis is original and has not been submitted by me to any University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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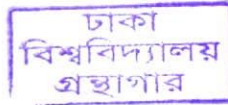
(SHAIKH ABDUS SALAM)

Supervisor



(HARREENARAINSINGH JOOSEERY)

Candidate



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ABSTRACT

From the development of the printing press in the 15th century and the advent of the electronic media, namely radio and television in the 20th century to the introduction of the internet and the development of the social media network in the 21st century, the media landscape has shown flowing dynamism and has continuously offered a whole gamut of information, education and entertainment to a wide variety of audiences, each time showing innovation and creativity. Tentacles of media reach all and everywhere. From the announcement of birth, death, marriage, to the dissemination of policies, and strategic intentions, the media have always served with due recognition. The importance and influence of the media on the public have always been a subject of fascination and interest....recognized, appreciated and even feared. Napoleon Bonaparte rightly said that ***“Three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets”***¹.

Media usage permeates politics and it is even argued that the survival of each depends on the other. All media are political and have the ability to “make or break” any public figure. Conscious of the harm that media are capable to inflict, politicians are extremely mindful of them and very often go out of their way to cajole journalists.

¹ Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, by Marshall McLuhan, The MIP Press, USA, 1994

This study attempts to understand the influence of the media as opinion shapers on the public during the general election campaign in the 2005 in Mauritius. Mauritius is a small island lost in the middle of the Indian Ocean, with a small population of about 1.3 million of Indian, Chinese, African and European origin. The peculiarity of Mauritius is that the media is widespread, with radio, TV and newspapers accessible to all. High literacy rate among the population coupled with an improved communication network since the last decade have created a dynamic communication landscape. Mauritius is also a mosaic of a variety of cultures, traditions and religions and provides a unique platform of study of different socio cultural groups' dynamics. This study also attempts to understand the perceptions of different ethnic groups of Mauritius to different forms of media contact during an election campaign taking into consideration their declared independence, presumed partisanship and acknowledged influence and also the level of engagement of the public to media exposures.

Political analysts claimed that the media in Mauritius have almost entirely supported the government and its alliance (MMM/MSM) during the election campaign in 2005. However, despite the presence of a strong media support, the Government alliance lost the election. This study attempts to throw light on the effectiveness of the media during the election, and also on their impact given their much acclaimed "make or break" power.

This study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Engagement of the media and the electorate is not necessarily indicative of the outcome of a general election
2. The public is more often a silent observer and act as per their conviction during an election, and not necessarily on media opinions
3. All the media have an agenda despite claiming independence
4. Different ethnic groups associate differently with different media channels, in relation to what each perceive as closer to their aspirations and interest

The objectives of the study are to understand the influence of the mass media and gauge the opinion of public, including politicians, journalists, different ethnic groups on the role of, expectations from the media, and the perceptions of the media on the public and vice versa, to determine the influence of opinions expressed in newspapers through editorials on the public, and to determine the extent to which the media has been biased, manipulative and partisan.

The study has used a three pronged survey instruments which are

- 400 questionnaires which were administered to the general public across the country.

- 639 contents of editorials and opinions expressed in 5 most popular newspapers which were analysed using a set of criteria and approaches
- 50 Interviews with high profile politicians and journalists which were conducted

A Conceptual Framework has been developed and is based on different approaches, adapted from Patterson, Robinson, Dewey and Lippmann. The research methodology is a mix of Patterson and Robinson approaches. The findings have confirmed the hypothesis that the media despite being a powerful influential instrument during election is not the sole determinant of public opinion during an election campaign. If the media has not succeeded in influencing voters, it does not show the media as unimportant; but instead as a non-sufficient factor to influence public opinion. The whole issue of voting and making a choice of candidates at an election is so complex that a single factor would not be sufficient to explain voters' choice.

The success at an election is a combination of mixed strategies which involve also and perhaps in the case of Mauritius more importantly the traditional patterns of social loyalties and clientelism. Political parties have highly efficient local machineries, with considerable mobilization capacity during election time when thousands of people from all walks of life join the campaign trail. Interestingly this study reveals that modern media-centered campaign is not necessarily the most effective route for winning an election.

The internet in 2005 has not been extensively utilized nor proved to be an influencing factor.

While media should necessarily act in concert and synergistically to influence public opinion, other factors like interpersonal contact, organized public and private meetings and intensive canvassing by political parties could be effective counter media influence. It was observed also that lack of coordination among the media coupled with style and language utilised by especially the written press that was beyond the reach of the average member of the public did diminish the impact of the media. There has been a low engagement level from the public, especially in the written press. The media's attempt at priming and framing to influence public opinion did not work effectively.

In so far as ethnic groups are concerned, the findings did not show clear cut preferences of different ethnic groups to different media channels. Hindus considered Christians owned/directed media groups as more manipulative and Hindus owned/directed media groups as less manipulative. Christians similarly considered Christians owned/directed media groups as less manipulative and Hindus owned/directed media as more manipulative. Muslims considered Hindus/ Christians owned/directed media groups as more manipulative than Muslim owned/directed media groups. However, when the acceptance rate was analyzed, contradictory views were recorded. Défi Plus which was owned by Muslims had an acceptance rate which was greater among Christians (61%) and Hindus (58%) than among Muslims. (45%).

Similarly Hebdo which was owned by Christians had an acceptance rate which was more among the Hindus and Muslims (46, 40% respectively) than among the Christians (29%). Weekend which was owned by Christians had an acceptance rate which was highest among Hindus than other ethnic groups. Similar findings were found for electronic media. Hence it was inappropriate to conclude that different ethnic groups associated themselves with media channels which were presumed to safeguard their interest.

Journalists have spoken highly of their profession, disclaiming any form of partisanship, favouritism and unfairness. However analysis of opinions expressed by journalists, interviews with members of the public and politicians have shown that the media were in fact manipulative, partisan and biased. Interestingly many politicians have had very positive opinions on the journalists and they even contended that partisanship should not be condemned, but welcome in a democracy.

This study questions traditionally acclaimed influence of the media while recognising the media together with other agents and institutions to be potentially impactful. It also questions media preferences of the audience based on communal and ethnic considerations while agreeing that the media do have vested interest.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Introductory Note

The important landmarks of the twentieth century like the two world wars, the discovery of penicillin and the new planet Pluto, the first man on the moon, the use of the first atomic bomb in Japan and the hydrogen bomb in the Pacific, the collapse of the communist world and the end of the cold war, and the emergence of a new world order with a shift from western domination etc have marked history in their own way, some showing tremendous advancement and others unfortunately marred human development. Alongside the media landscape was marked by the introduction of the first daily newspaper in Kenya, and its development into digital production, the invention of the short-wave radio and the audio cassette, the introduction of electronic TV, the introduction of VHS videotapes, the propagation of the mobile telephone, the release of the World Wide Web (WWW), the development of the internet and the social media. It is most appropriate to label the twentieth century as the first age of mass politics as well as the first age of mass communication. These two are invariably linked and cannot be dissociated as they both deal with advocacy, information, education, propaganda, sensitization, enrichment, entertainment and mobilization. The astute US President Franklin D. Roosevelt maximized the advantage of the

radio during World War II and since then politicians have extensively utilized the spoken and written press as a vehicle of information sharing and for propaganda. The social media network which was first developed for young students has furthermore revolutionized the landscape and is extensively used by celebrities and politicians all over the world. Governments throughout history have retained the capacity to control the media to reinforce legitimacy or fortify a regime's hold on power. Despite acceptance of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which includes "*the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information throughout any media regardless of frontiers*"², almost all governments around the world have proposed liberation of the media with regulations, which opens up avenues for restricted media coverage. According to the Privacy and Human Rights Report of 2004, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, many governments have used the pretext of terrorism to introduce laws of spying and surveillance. Indeed the expansion of the private communication networks across national boundaries and the rapid circulation of information through mass media have threatened political hegemony. Napoleon Bonaparte rightly said: "*three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets*"³. Indeed we are living in an "**Information Society**"⁴ where information is identified as a most valued commodity which dominates every aspect of public and private life. However the intimate connection between mass communication and the conduct of politics rests on the fact that the

² Article 19 of the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights

³ Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, by Marshall McLuhan, The MIP Press, USA, 1994

⁴ Media Policy and Globalization, by Paula Chakravartty, Katharine Sarikakis, Edinburgh University Press, 2006, pp. 117

media provide both a channel for political communication and a platform for political advertising. Political communication is a continuous process of news management for political gain; political advertising differs in its potential to be propagandist in character. The media gurus and politicians set very often the “agenda” by “priming” or “framing” events to shape opinions of the public. The effects of the media as opinion shapers on the public are not always causal in relationship, as there are a set of complexities and intricacies that influence human behavior and action.

Mauritius, being a multi cultural and multi racial country, provides an excellent research platform to document on whether ethnicity has special bearings on the election of a candidate. The Constitution of Mauritius makes provision for the representation of the minority groups into Parliament. The **Best Loser System** provides 8 additional seats in Parliament from among those who have “lost” but obtained high votes.

Mauritius is an open democracy where elections take place every five years. With a high literacy rate and high per capita income, one of the highest in Africa, the print and spoken media are at the doorstep of all citizens and form an integral part of their daily life. Acknowledging the complexities and intricacies associated in making a causal relationship between a media contact and its effect on the public, this study attempts to understand the extent to which the media influence and shape opinions of the public in the context of a general election campaign by gauging the perception and behavior of the general public, politicians and also the journalists.

In addition, the convolution of the media setting in the context of an electoral campaign imposes further analysis of the potential influencing factors and other persuasive campaign during electoral campaign. It is also possible that the public do not share the same values about news events or opinion expressed by the media. The **Theory of Cognitive Dissonance**⁵ postulates that we tend to look for information or ideas that maintain consistency and avoid the discomfort of incompatible opinions. This also means that the public may attend selectively to messages they already agree with, ascribe to opinions that are consistent to their own views, hence leading to a reinforcement of their own opinion rather than a change. The public may also be resistant to attempts at persuasion. Also, competing and contradictory views expressed by different media channels may cancel each other and have no effect on the public at all.

This study intends to throw light on the impact of the media as an opinion shaper during the 2005 general election in Mauritius. It proposes specifically to understand the perceptions of the electorate and media on each other, the degree of engagement of the electorate to a media exposure, the sensitivity of ethnicity in the multicultural setting of Mauritius in relation to the role of the media, whether the media has lived up to the expectations of the electorate and finally the influence of the media on the electorate.

⁵ A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, by Leon Festinger, Stanford University Press, California, USA, 1957

1. A. Background

The development of the printing press in the fifteenth century changed drastically the communication landscape and created scope for greater interaction and information sharing. Communication channels widened with the appearance of the first newspapers in Europe in 1450. The first daily newspaper came – Leipzig- in 1650. With the advent of the industrial revolution later in the eighteenth century which was also characterized by huge migration of people from one region to another in search of employment and increased urbanization, a new type of society developed: the “mass society”, and they demanded a new type of media: the “mass media”. The new populace demanded additional information on new and a wider range of issues and cross bordering their territory. In the twentieth century a further dramatic change happened in communication channels, notably with the coming of Radio and television. Guglielmo Marconi transmitted the first radio signal across the Atlantic in 1902, and later on in 1923 Vladimir Kosma Zworykin invented the first television camera: the electronic media was born, and it revolutionized communication a lot.

The development and adoption of radio and television has created an audio visual landscape that was new, amazing and capturing. Radio and television became the envy of all and its fascinating sound and image wooed people from all classes, and immediately became the most important channels of mass communication. This new landscape became the boon for politicians, who found radio and television the best way to be seen and heard, “*you like it*

or not, right in your house". Journalism grew and evolved over time as a major discipline and is today associated with the intelligentsia that can bring anybody on the top, or down at the bottom.

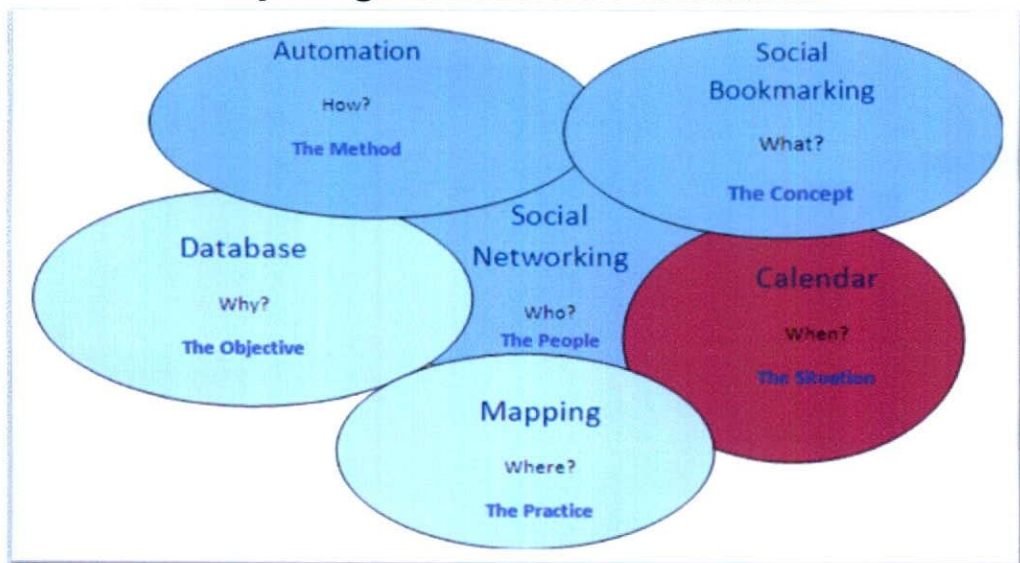
It is acknowledged that journalism is an important social tool, based on the free and efficient development of the fundamental rights of all citizens to freedom of information and the freedom of expression. While journalists are free to express their opinions, they do acknowledge the need for adherence to specified principles and conduct in check on violation of others fundamental rights, as described by their professional deontological code of ethics or "*canons of journalism*". The principles of thoughtfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability constitute the deontological code for journalistic profession. Withholding some information also forms part of journalism ethics, essentially for the "*limitation of harm*". The omission of minor children's name, crime victim's name or information that are likely to cause harm to reputation of somebody are few examples. The canons provide journalists a framework for self monitoring and self-correction as they move along professionally. The general code of journalism commonly appears in statements of professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast and online transmitters.

Journalism is the art of reporting, a discipline of engagement in facts presentation and their interpretations. Journalists sometimes referred to as reporters, news analysts, newscasters, news anchors, commentators or

columnists are assigned to gather information, interpret and transmit them in a form that is understood by the audience.

The principles of “5 Ws” and a “H” (**who, what, where, when, why, how**) constitute a framework as shown in Figure 1, which delineates how the journalist is to network with the society (Social Networking) and judge on what event in the society has triggered a particular incident, (Social Bookmaking), to situate the event (Mapping), to determinate the time and date that an event has happened (Calendar), to document on the reasons that will make the audience care (Database) and to find the mechanism to make the audience feel a difference (Automation).

Figure 1
Reporting Framework for Journalists⁶



The journalist needs to know **who** his audience is, both primary and secondary, **what, why** and **when** information is to be released, **where** information was collected and **how** is it going to be diffused. These will

⁶ Adapted from Kipling Methods

determine the quality of the reporting. In journalism the **5W and 1 H** is a concept in news style, research and investigations that are regarded as basic check list for information gathering. They relate to

- Who is it about?
- What happened?
- When did it take place?
- Where did it happen?
- Why did it happen?
- How it happened?

It is important that the journalist makes news worthwhile, pleasurable watching, hearing and reading and to this end, the analysis and interpretation of the concept, people, practice, situation, objective and method of journalistic reporting is of paramount importance. There are several types of journalism and a journalist does not always stick to one type. Different types of journalistic reporting are not exclusive of each other and very often a blend of different types of journalism is employed simultaneously

1. B Types of Journalism

Journalism refers to the news or feature stories that are expressed either in a descriptive way or concise pattern through different types of media. Journalist reports news, which can be used in print, aired on radio and television, or even loaded on the Internet. The main purpose of a journalist is to report news with accurate facts. However, throughout the years, there have been

different types of journalism developed that have given different dimensions to the field of mass media.

Since the appearance of the first English newspaper in 1620, the first telephone call of Graham Bell in 1876, the invention of cinematograph in 1895, the formation of BBC in 1922 and CNN in 1980 and the release of the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1991, the mass media has had a very powerful influence on public opinion, and now with the advent of cross media channels and blogging through the internet a new form of journalism has evolved.

Journalists today, use myriad of methods to sell their products and the internet and the development of the social media network has created a totally new dimension for information and knowledge sharing. Sensational Journalism, Community Journalism, and Celebrity Journalism are all evocative terms. News written for the web, the online journalism, is updated minute-by-minute. Besides, implicit faith of people in the news items has introduced a new form of advertising, i.e. *advertorials*. In this, advertisers merge their product content in the guise of an article for brand promotion and marketing of products. After all, it's all about how the journalists package their products.

Journalism can be categorized into 3 main types, namely:

Print Journalism:

Print journalism can be split into various categories like Newspapers, Magazines, Newsletters, Brochures, Private Publications, Press Releases, and Online newspapers. Each of them has their own requirements for reports write-ups. While some are targeted to the whole public, others target specific section and sub-section of the population like youths, adolescents, sport lovers etc. News reporting is straight forward and gives the essential to the readers, while features like hobby publications are more lengthy and elaborate.

Broadcast Journalism (Radio/TV):

Broadcasting is transmission of audio and visual programs to the audience, who could be the public as in general in the case of radio and Television distributed through frequency bands, or a selective group like a workplace broadcasting system. Cable program aims at general public but have limited audience as these are mostly paid. Some cable television channels are specialized in some fields, like sports or documentaries and have selected audiences.

Online Journalism (Cyber):

Online journalism is the extension of print and broadcast media into the web. Websites news includes video, podcasts, blogs and slide shows and provides opportunities for readers to post comments without approval of the editor apart from ordinary reporters!

While the mainstream Journalism consists of the Print Media on one side and the Electronic media on the other, the Online/ Cyber Journalism consists of a combination of both print and electronic technology. All of them have dimensions of reporting based on

1. Investigation
2. Interpretation
3. Surface/ Plain Reporting.

Journalism may be classified from other perspectives too. They are:

Investigative journalism is about unearthing facts and studying cases that may require more efforts, which can take months or even years. Journalists who specialize in investigative journalism create headlines with news that expose scandals or create sensationalism. Sometimes, persistent follow-up of a story proves beneficial to uncover some hitherto unsolved cases. This would require in-depth research from the journalist along with evidence. In Mauritius, "Défi Plus" and "5 Plus" border sensationalism and investigative journalism.

Interpretative journalism consists of analysis of fact, figures, actions, mindset, situation, and could involve a large section of the population in discussions through live broadcast, recorded interviews, online forums, and letters answering. Business and finance journalism very often analyses economic situation at different periods of time and interpret data for projections. Opinion polls are also gathered from the media network and these are analyzed during election period to provide indications to the public and which could be very instrumental in shaping public opinion.

Plain or Surface journalism aims to report news in a straight-forward manner that covers all the required facts. The style is direct with focus on the gist of the story with other necessary points. The news style should be concise and precise. The facts must be cross checked for authenticity. These news stories can be for the print media, television, radio, etc and often cover politics, social movements, cultural and sports events. News stories based on political suppression, public movements or abuse of human rights have proved instrumental in bringing social changes, or advocating for the oppressed.

However in all forms of journalism, the **Gonzo** or **Gotha** tools and techniques could also be applied. It is difficult especially with advances in technology to have one exclusive type of journalism that does not in one way or other become also interpretative, and investigative.

Gonzo journalism⁷ is a style of journalism which is written subjectively, often including the reporter as part of the story via a first person narrative. The style tends to blend factual and fictional elements to emphasize an underlying message and engage the reader. The use of Gonzo journalism suggests that journalism can be truthful without striving for objectivity and is loosely equivalent to an editorial.

Gotha journalism⁸ is a term used to describe methods of interviewing which are designed to entrap the interviewee into making statements which are damaging or discreditable to their cause, character, integrity, or reputation. This is very apparent in interviewing celebrities. (*Celebrity Journalism*). The aim is to make film or sound recordings of the interview which can be selectively edited, compiled, and broadcast or published to show the subject in an unfavorable light. Methods include misrepresenting the topic of the interview, then switching to an embarrassing subject, leading the interviewee to commit to a certain answer, and confronting them with pre-prepared material designed to contradict or discredit that position, repeatedly baiting the interviewee to befuddle them and get their guard down to elicit an

⁷ Thompson, Hunter S. *"Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas and Other American Stories"*. New York: Random House, 1996. p. 210.

⁸ Peter H. Russell, "Two Cheers for Minority Government: The Evolution of Canadian Parliamentary Democracy", 2008. p167

embarrassing response. Another technique is for the interviewer to remain silent after something on a subject has been said, which often leads the subject to say something to fill the silence. Gotha journalism is often designed to keep the interviewee on the defensive by, for example, being required to explain some of their own statements taken out of context thus effectively preventing the interviewee from discussing their own agenda for the interview.

The intent of Gotha journalism is always premeditated and used to defame or discredit the interviewee by portraying them as self contradictory, malevolent, unqualified, or immoral.

1.C Media and Politics

The media is to provide information about political matters to the public so as to enable the latter participate in the political discourse in a meaningful way and at the same time enlighten them to how to choose their representatives to the parliament. They are regarded as the 'fourth state' to provide a check to the government and ensure politicians' accountability to the people. However actual performance of the media and the way they portray politicians and present political issues are very often issues of concern. Political coverage are very often tainted with bias, distortion and sensationalism, hostility against politicians or a political party, and devoid of factual information and rational debate. At the same time political cynicism and apathy among citizens is spreading alarmingly. The pervasiveness of the media reinforces very often

negativism among the citizens. Robinson coined the term “**media malaise**”⁹ to denote the detrimental effects that the media cause to the public. Patterson referred to the media’s political coverages as horse races and game shows that create a distorted image of the politics and that nurture cynicism. The “Mobilization Theory” (explained in section 3.B.6) postulates that the media has positive effects on the citizen’s cognitive mobilization and political involvement. The media however has continued to remain a powerful institution, despite alleged bias, partisanship and unfair coverage of political events.

The reader would certainly recall Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian business executive who made huge fortune in real estate business in the 1960s, and in early 1980s and who founded commercial television networks in Italy and became a billionaire as head of the media empire embracing television, advertising, film, and publicity. He was accused of amassing huge wealth fraudulently and was convicted of financial crimes on several occasions. He however managed to come over all these charges and continued to rule as king in the media world, with powerful influence as a media Guru and wooed the public. He became one of the richest men in the world and was sworn in for a third term as Prime Minister of Italy on the 8th May 2008.

The election of Berlusconi as Prime Minister of Italy bears testimony of the impact of plutocratic governance in many countries of the world, abetted by

⁹ Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies: Katrin Voltmer and Rudiger Schmitt-Beck (p232), published by Routledge, USA, 2006

mass media. While it can make a Prime Minister, the mass media can also destroy a Richard Nixon and play game with Bill Clinton, and manage George Bush.

1.C.a The Press as the Fourth Estate

The origins of the term “**Fourth Estate**” are best explained within the context of the medieval “estates of the realm.” In medieval society, three “estates” were formally recognized: the Clergy (Lords Spiritual), the Nobility (Lords Temporal), and the Commoners. Each estate had a very distinct social role and a certain level of power, and the idea of the estates of the realm became so entrenched in European society that it still lives on, to some extent, although society is far more egalitarian today.

The public press is referred to as the fourth estate and consists of the collection of photographers, journalists, television broadcasters, and radio announcers, among others. It is agreed that the fourth estate has immense political and social power, thanks to the fact that the press can be used to shape societies while imparting news of note and commentary of interest. Because the fourth estate is recognized as such an important body, many nations have laws which protect the rights of the press, ensuring that citizens have access to reporting on matters of interest and of note.

In the middle of the 19th century, people began referring to the press as a fourth estate, referencing the fact that most parliaments and other houses of

government had an area (Press Gallery) set aside specifically for the use of the press, and pointing out that the press was a distinct group within the larger framework of the realm. Several historians credit the coinage of the term to Edmund Burke, who is said to have referenced the fourth estate when discussing the French Revolution. The term was later popularized by the 19th century author Thomas Carlyle.

The press plays a very important role in most societies, reporting on a wide variety of topics and creating powerful personalities who are relied upon for sources of information and commentary. Writing about the first estate in 1841, Thomas Carlyle pointed out that the press had a powerful role in parliamentary procedures, shaping the will of the people and influencing the outcome of votes among the government, as well. Carlyle also argued that the press was an important part of a democratic society, saying that writing gives people “a tongue which others will listen to”¹⁰.

1.C.b Universal Importance and the Responsibility of the Press

The importance of the press was highlighted by **Oscar Wilde** who wrote:

“In old days men had the rack. Now they have the press. That is an improvement certainly. But still it is very bad, and wrong, and demoralizing. Somebody — was it Burke? — called journalism the fourth estate. That was

¹⁰ Thomas Carlyle, “The Fourth State”, Section V of “French Revolution”, as posted in the online library of World Wide School.

true at the time no doubt. But at the present moment it is the only estate. It has eaten up the other three. The Lords Temporal say nothing, the Lords Spiritual have nothing to say, and the House of Commons has nothing to say and says it. We are dominated by Journalism".¹¹

The press sees itself as the holder of a public trust, with certain responsibilities towards its readers, its viewers and its community. Foremost among those, is to report the most significant stories of the day quickly, accurately and fairly. News fuels a journalist's "need to tell". That in turn, satisfies the public's "need to know". That interaction between the journalists and the public helps shape the course of events in a free society.

An empowered press is an enlightened press that provides information without any fear of prosecution and breach of code of ethics. Most news organizations strive for fairness, balance, and accuracy, and in general that is the rule rather. Still, when it comes to credibility, the public gives the news media middling marks at best. Some distrust can be attributed to errors that occur because of deadline pressure or poor judgment. But most of the distrust probably is rooted in what the readers and viewers see as bias. Because each of us "filters" news differently, we may disagree with the ways news is reported. Peter Jennings is right when he said: "*I think bias is very largely in*

¹¹ Wilde Oscar, "*The Soul of Man under Socialism*", in Guy, Josephine M., Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, 1V, Oxford University press, P.255, retrieved 2006-04-16

the eyes of the beholder"¹². E.A Grozier, Editor, *The Boston Post*, 1909 contends: "A newspaper, like a man, should be decent in its methods and manners"¹³.

Like men, newspapers do make mistakes, sometimes monumental. Wanting to be the first with breaking news is nothing new: beating the competition is a matter of pride for news professionals. The competitive 24/7 news cycle, high tech communications and deadline pressure are often blamed for news media mistakes. Media mistakes often occur because journalists fail to remember the adage that while it's good to be first, it's better to be accurate. Trying to be the first can be risky. Probably the best-known error in presidential election coverage was made in 1948 at the Chicago Daily Tribune, which declared Thomas Dewey the victor over President Harry S. Truman (Picture 1). In reporting the sinking of the **Titanic**, the Los Angeles Express (Picture II) made another heavy mistake by reporting that "All passengers are safe".

¹² Goldberg Bernard. *"Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News."* Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2001

¹³ Yankee Magazine Archive: yankeemagazine.com

PICTURE 1



The Chicago Daily Tribune declared wrongly in 1948 the election of Dewey as President of US

PICTURE II



The Los Angeles Express declared wrongly that all passengers are safe when 1517 died when the Titanic sunk on the 15th April 1912.

During the election campaign in USA in 2008, all the press declared Hilary Clinton the Democratic Nominee winner, while at the same time writing off John Mc Caine's candidacy. "The *smart money is on Hilary Clinton to win the White House in 2008.*" declared **The Economist** in May 2008. Charlie Cook of the Cook Political report wrote in the same year in the **National Journal** that '*For all intents and purposes, Mc Caine's campaign is over*'. They were both wrong, and President Obama won over Mc Caine.

Very often the media enters into sensational coverage. In 1833, the penny newspaper appeared, offering sensational "scoops", human-interest stories, grisly crime and, sometimes, harmless tall tales. The intent was to sell more newspapers. The trend of embellishing stories with rumors, speculations and half-truths lives on, most notably in some tabloids bearing suggestive or misleading headlines. Picture III shows cover pages of famous tabloid news reporting. Although sensationalism has many critics, it has many fans as well. The tabloid newspaper debuted in 1903 in London in the form of the *Daily Mirror*. Within a decade circulation was 1 million. Joseph Medill Patterson replicated the small sized newspaper into the *New York Daily News* in 1919 which got popularity because of its reader-friendly format for crowded subways. However, not all sensational news stories are of the supermarket tabloid variety. Stories that have legitimate news value sometimes get overplayed or hyped in the mainstream news media for many reasons, but that sort of sensationalistic treatment chips away at the credibility of the news media.

PICTURE III



The Tabloid Tradition: Sensationalism at its Peak.

Most journalists believe a free press must expose problems so society can solve. Those journalists see themselves as **watchdogs**. They help protect the public from those who would do harm, from high government officials to petty criminals. But this produces critics from both sides. Some say the news media are more like **lapdogs**, too timid to take on sometimes dangerous, tedious and costly work of investigative reporting.

The Watchdog also bites. **The Watergate Scandal** - an epic tale of crime and cover up at the highest levels of the US government- pitted the *Washington Post* against the leader of the free world. It began with a break at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters at Washington's Watergate hotel and office complex in 1972. The *Washington Post's* stories ultimately brought in the rest of the news media. Congress and the Courts also investigated. The

resulting exposure of White House wrongdoing led the president Richard M. Nixon to resign in 1974 and earned the *Washington Post* a Pulitzer Prize for public service.

We would be inclined to agree with the third *US President Thomas Jefferson* who said in 1787: "**Were it left to me to decide whether we**

FREE PRESS IS A
CORNERSTONE TO
DEMOCRACY

People have a need to know. Journalists have a right to tell.

Finding the facts can be difficult. Reporting the story can be dangerous.

Freedom includes the right to be outrageous.

Responsibility includes the duty to be fair.

News is history in the making. Journalists provide the first draft of history.

A FREE PRESS, AT ITS
BEST, REVEALS THE
TRUTH.

Courtesy: Newseum
Gallery, Washington, 2009

should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter...where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe”¹⁴. The influence of the media in politics is monumental and powerful. Indeed mistakes are made, tabloid news are released which may not be totally true, some news items may be biased and manipulated, and still the thousands of stories that are told and published and broadcasted everyday have a remarkably high rate of accuracy.

¹⁴ Robert W. McChesney & John Nichols: “Our Media not theirs- The Democratic Struggle against Corporate Media” Seven Stories Press. New York.p.24-252002

CHAPTER 2: THE COUNTRY PROFILE

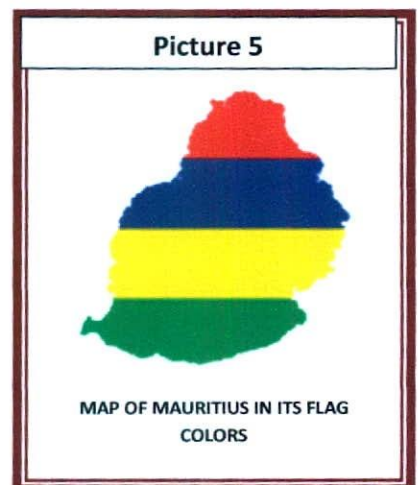
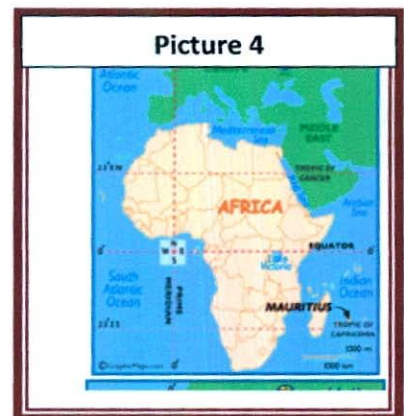
- **THE LAND, THE PEOPLE AND TRADITIONS**
- **A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY**
 - **MASS MEDIA PROFILE**
- **POLITICS, ELECTION AND THE MEDIA**

CHAPTER 2 THE COUNTRY PROFILE

2. A. Mauritius – the Land, the People and the Context

Mauritius is an island nation of an area of 2,040 square kilometres and is situated at 880 kilometres east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. It had a population of 1,260,696 as at July 2007, of whom 623,118 were males and 637,578 females, resulting to a sex ratio of 97.7 males per 100 females. In 2007 the population density was 618 persons per square kilometers and the population growth rate was 0.6%, the birth rate was 13.5 and death rate 6.5. Life expectancy at birth was 73.75 years.

Citizens of Mauritius are of diverse religious and cultural background and are descendents from India, Africa, China, and Europe.



MAP OF MAURITIUS IN ITS FLAG COLORS

The main religions are:

- Hindus (52 percent)
- Christians (28 percent)
- Muslims (16 percent)
- Buddhists and others (4 percent)

Chinese descendents are usually either Buddhist or Christians. Creoles are mostly of African mixed descent and are Christians. Other Christians are mixed and European descents. Hindus and Muslims are of Indian origin.

Because of its history, English and French influences are marked, with French speaking preferred over English, despite English being the official language. Most of the newspapers and media coverage are in French. The lingua franca is Creole which is a broken French and is widely spoken all over the island, though in the urban areas Bhojpuri, an Indian language is also spoken among the Indian descents.

2. A.1. Historical Traditions

Mauritius was a French and British colony successively before it attained independence on March 12, 1968. The island was first discovered by Arab explorers in 975 A.D, visited later in the 10th Century by Malays. Among the European powers, it first came under Portuguese control in 1505. By the end of the sixteenth century, Mauritius fell under Dutch authority when, in 1598, the Dutch Admiral Van Warwyck landed his fleet in a bay on the southeast

end of the island and named it after himself; Warwick Bay was later renamed Grand Port. Van Warwyck named the island Mauritius after Prince Maurice Van Nassau, the stadhouder of the Netherlands at that time. Although Dutch ships on the way to the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) occasionally stopped in Warwick Bay for shelter, food, and fresh water, there was no serious effort to develop the island.

In September 1715, Guillaume Dufresne d'Arzel occupied Mauritius in the name of French King Louis XV, naming it Ile de France. Warwyck Bay was renamed Port Bourbon and a little used dock in the northwest was named Port Louis. The transformation of Port Louis into a thriving sea port was the work of Bertrand Mahé de Labourdonnais, the French Governor who, in the 1740s, built forts, barracks, warehouses, hospitals, and houses. Roads were built throughout the island, and a shipbuilding industry was founded. The French period also marked the beginning of the island's sugar industry and the importation of African slaves.

In 1785, Ile de France became the headquarters of all the French possessions east of Cape Horn. During the Napoleonic wars, the British captured Mauritius in 1810. The Treaty of Paris restored most of the former French possessions to the Bourbon King of France, but not Mauritius, which remained a British possession.

Under the British, the sugar industry experienced rapid growth as an export crop. In addition, although the slave trade was abolished in 1807 and slavery

itself in 1833, plantation owners in Mauritius kept both practices alive until 1835. Even then, it took a payment of 2 million pounds to the owners to get them to abide by abolition. In the following years, the British encouraged thousands of Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, to migrate to Mauritius as indentured laborers. That process continued until 1907 when indentured labor was also abolished.

2. B. Mauritius: A Functioning Parliamentary Democracy

Politics did not become an important part of the island life until 1936, when the Labour Party was founded. After World War II, the Mauritius Labour Party (MLP) won the majority of seats in the Legislative Council at the 1948 general election. By 1959, the party had gained wide acceptance, and that year, MLP leader Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam was elected Chief Minister.

Mauritius was a French colony from 1715 to 1810 and a British Colony from 1810 till 1968 when it became independent, and Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, who is regarded as the Father of the Nation, became its first Prime Minister. Mauritius became a Republic in 1992 with a President elected by the Parliament as the nominal Head of State. The Prime Minister elected at the General Election.

Mauritius is internationally regarded as a functioning parliamentary democracy with a commendable record of regular fair and free elections and a fairly good

human rights record as well. General Election is mandatory after every five years, and the president after 5 years dissolves the parliament and calls for general election.

Mauritius is governed by a Prime Minister, a council of ministers, and a National Assembly with 62 elected members and 8 others nominated by the election commission from the losers to give representation to ethnic minorities through the “best losers system” (explained below in section 2. B.1). The Prime Minister is the head of the Government. He presides over the Cabinet of Ministers which advises the President of the Republic and is collectively responsible to the National Assembly for any advice given and for all action done by or under the authority of any Minister in the execution of his office. The Prime Minister's portfolio includes, inter-alia, the following:

1. Defense, Law and Order
2. Civil Status, Citizenship
3. External Communications
4. Electoral Commissions and Electoral Affairs
5. Government Information Services
6. Meteorological Services
7. Mauritius Oceanography Institute
8. Human Rights

Assembly members serve five-year terms. National and local elections, supervised by an independent commission, take place at regular intervals. It adopted a “Constitutional Democracy”, based on West Ministerial

parliamentary system, with clear cut separation of powers between the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary.

- **The Executive**

An important structure of the government of Mauritius is the executive branch. The Prime Minister who is the leader of the Majority Party is appointed by the President and is responsible to the National Assembly. The Cabinet of Ministers is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for the direction and control of the government, and consists of the Prime Minister (Head of Government), the leader of the majority party in the legislature, and about 20-25 ministers.

The Cabinet has 4 most powerful offices, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and 2 offices of Vice Prime Minister .They have the absolute power and authority over the cabinet and also help the Prime Minister in his tasks and responsibilities.

- **The Legislature**

The Constitution of Mauritius provides for the Parliament of Mauritius to elect the President who in turn appoints ministers on advice of the Prime Minister. The Parliament of Mauritius is modeled after the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, where Members of Parliament are voted in at regular general elections, on the basis of a 'first past the post' system. The National Assembly consists of 70 Members of whom 62 are directly

elected in 21 constituencies. The island of Mauritius is divided into 20 constituencies returning 3 members each and that of Rodrigues is a single constituency returning 2 members. After a general election, the Electoral Supervisory Commission may nominate up to a maximum of 8 additional members in accordance with section 5 of the First Schedule of the Constitution with a view to correct any imbalance in community representation in Parliament. This system of nominating members is commonly called the best loser system.

The political party or party alliance which wins the majority of seats in Parliament forms the government. It is the Prime Minister who selects the members of the Cabinet from elected members of the Assembly, except for the Attorney General who may not be an elected member of the Assembly but enjoys the status of a cabinet minister. The political party or alliance which has the second largest majority forms the Official Opposition and its leader is normally nominated by the President of the Republic as the Leader of the Opposition. The Assembly elects a Speaker, a Deputy Speaker and a Deputy Chairman of Committees as one of its first business. The Speaker may desire to act as the Chairman of Committees.

▪ **The Judiciary**

The statutes are based mainly on old French codes and on more recent laws with English precedents. The Supreme Court is composed of the Chief Justice, the Senior Puisne Judge and fourteen Puisne Judges. The Judges are also Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal and the Court of Civil Appeal.

It is the highest judicial authority in the country and is vested with all the powers and jurisdiction necessary to administer the laws of Mauritius. It is a superior Court of Record and has unlimited jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil and criminal proceedings and has the same original jurisdiction as the High Court in England. It is vested with all the necessary powers and authority to exercise its equitable jurisdiction as a Court of Equity. The Supreme Court also exercises supervisory jurisdiction over the subordinate Courts in order to ensure that justice is duly administered by any such Court. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction to determine whether any provision of the Constitution has been contravened, including the power to determine whether any law made by Parliament is void on the ground that it contravenes any of the provisions of the Constitution. It is also empowered to secure the enforcement of the protective provisions entrenched in the Constitution. The retiring age of the Judges is 67 and 65 for the Magistrates. The President, in consultation with the Prime Minister, nominates the Chief Justice, and then with the advice of the Chief Justice also appoints the associate judges. The President nominates other judges on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commissions. The legal system provides fair public trials for criminal defendants. Defendants have the right to counsel, including court-appointed counsel in case of indigency.

2. B.1. The Best Losers System: Ensuring Fair Representation of the Minorities

The Constitution of Mauritius provides for a system of Best Loser which is to ensure that minorities are fairly represented in parliament. The First Schedule of the Mauritian Constitution reads thus:

Paragraph 1(1)

Elected members to be returned by constituencies

“There shall be 62 seats in the Assembly for members representing constituencies and accordingly each constituency shall return 3 members to the Assembly in such manner as may be prescribed, except Rodrigues, which shall so return 2 members.”

Paragraph 5(1)

Allocation of 8 additional seats

“In order to ensure a fair and adequate representation of each community, there shall be 8 seats in the Assembly, additional to the 62 seats for members representing constituencies, which shall so far as is possible be allocated to persons belonging to parties who have stood as candidates for election as members at the general election but have not been returned as members to represent constituencies”¹⁵.

¹⁵ The Constitution of Mauritius, Paragraph 3(1), First Schedule, 1968

It is clear from the above provisions of the First Schedule of the Constitution that:

- (a) it is mandatory for a prospective candidate at a general election to declare which community he belongs to and his community will then be published in his nomination paper.
- (b) if any prospective candidate does not appear from his way of life, to belong to either the Hindu community, the Muslim community or the Sino-Mauritian community, he shall be deemed to belong to the General Population i.e. a residual and fourth community; (for the purpose of this study the population has been classified into Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Almost all Sino Mauritians, White and the Creole communities are Christians).
- (c) Regulations were passed, pursuant to paragraph 3(1) of the First Schedule, to give effect to the mandatory nature of the declaration of the community to which a prospective candidate belongs.

The rationale behind the Best Loser System is to ensure the adequate representation of minorities not only in the Legislative Assembly but also at the level of Cabinet. Its usual interpretation is therefore that it is "in defense of minorities" or a "guarantee for minorities".

From a historical perspective, it is important to note that from the 1950s, as soon as independence was evoked, there was an immediate tension between the different ethno-religious groups in Mauritius. Communal consciousness was then so high that it resulted into communal strife in 1968 between

Muslims and Creoles. The Best Loser System was a compromise of the pro-Independence forces with the strong right-wing forces representing minorities, demanding separate electoral registers, and opposing Independence.

The electoral system in Mauritius operates such that after a general election, the winners and losers are determined on the basis of the 'first past the post' system. Paragraph 5(1) of the First Schedule of the Constitution creates an additional category: 'the best losers' i.e. those who had the highest score amongst the losers. Out of those 'best losers', the Electoral Supervisory Commission may nominate up to a maximum of 8 additional members to correct any imbalance in community representation in Parliament.

The first 4 seats are therefore filled by the most successful unreturned candidates of the community which is least represented, irrespective of the political party they belong to. This attempts to redress the balance in the National Assembly. In order to ensure proper representation of minorities at the level of government, the remaining four seats are then allocated to the most successful unreturned candidates belonging to the most successful party and from the community which returned the fewest candidates.

2. C. Economic Situation

After its independence from Britain, Mauritius drastically revolutionized its low-income, agricultural-based economy that largely relied on sugar production to a labor intensive; export oriented industrialized economy that also features a thriving tourist sector. The tourist department advertises Mauritius as "the most cosmopolitan island in the sun" with a "charming population, always wearing a smile.", and sells its sand, sun and sea. The island nation does offer excellent hotel accommodation, a full range of water and land sports, beautiful beaches, and deep blue lagoons, all of which have combined to make the island a popular tourist destination, which contributes to the economy and well-being of its slightly more than one million inhabitants. Despite the recent industrialization, sugar exports still account for 25 percent of the country's export earnings. Mauritius has also developed into off-shore finance and investment center, attracting more than 9,000 offshore "entities," mostly interested in conducting trade with India and South Africa, as well as an investment in the banking sector. The island's annual economic growth rate has averaged 5 to 6 percent, which in turn has led to increased life expectancy rates, lower infant mortality, and the creation of a sophisticated infrastructure. In 1999, Mauritian exports were estimated at \$1.6 billion and its largest export clients were the United Kingdom (32 percent), France (19 percent), and Germany (6 percent). In 2009 exports reached \$ 2.055 billion. In 1999, its imports were valued at \$2.3 billion, with most goods coming from France (14 percent), South Africa (11 percent), India (8 percent), and the

United Kingdom (5 percent). In 2009 the country's import reached \$ 3.552 billion. Per capita income was US\$ 5,000 in 2007 and US\$ 7,000 in 2008. In 2009 per capita income reached \$12,400. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 4.2% in 2010 higher than the 3.1% growth attained in 2009. On the basis of the information gathered on key sectors of the economy and taking into consideration measures announced in the last budget speech, GDP is expected to grow by around 4.2% in 2011, at the same level of 2010¹⁶. It boasts the highest per capita income in Africa.

2. D. Mass Media Profile in Mauritius

After the independence of the country in 1968, the Constitution which was adopted on March 12, 1968, and amended on March 12, 1992, recognized the freedom of speech and of the press. By all accounts, the government of Mauritius respects these freedoms. Since 1968, many forms of media channels have evolved and these are growing day by day.

2.D.1 Print Media

The oldest newspaper published in Africa was in Mauritius: *Le Cerneen*, which was a French-language organ of the sugar industry. The second oldest daily in Mauritius, also in French, was first published in 1908 to represent the interests of the Creole community.

¹⁶ Economic and Social Indicators, Central Statistics Office, Mauritius, 2010 Edition

The growing numbers of immigrant Chinese and Indian laborers and their descendants produced the first Chinese newspaper, *Chinese Daily News*, in 1932, and the first Indian daily, *Advance*, in 1939. Improved literacy and the people's growing interest in politics led to more dailies: *China Times* (1953), *New Chinese Commercial Newspaper* (1956), *Star* (1963), *L'Express*, *Le Militant* (1969), *Liberation* (1971), *The Nation* (1971) and *Le Populaire* (1973).

As of 2002, there were a dozen privately-owned newspapers published in Mauritius and one on nearby Rodrigues Island. Most of them freely express their views in opposition to reigning government, and although sometimes they seemingly overstep their limits, the government has yet to invoke the libel laws available to it. With the exception of the Chinese dailies, all daily newspapers are published mainly in French. Additionally, the *Mauritius News*, a bilingual newspaper that is published monthly in London, England, has a wide circulation in Mauritius as well as in the Mauritian community in the United Kingdom. The newspapers extensively use two wire services: the All Africa Newswire available in English and French, and the Pan African News Agency, which provides its news stream in English, French, and Arabic.

Creole is a broken French and the lingua franca of the country. Creole is also refers to the community of black African descent. Bhojpuri is spoken essentially among Indian descendents of both Hindu and Muslim communities, and mostly in rural areas. Literacy rate is high at 94%, and newspapers are widely read. Radio and Television are widespread and cover

the whole island. Every household has a radio and a television and these constitute powerful sources of both information and entertainment to the population.

There were 16 Newspapers in 2005 in Mauritius namely:

1. Le Mauricien,
2. L'Express,
3. Le Matinal,
4. Week End,
5. 5 Plus Dimanche
6. Mauritius Times*
7. Le Défi Plus
8. Star
9. Le Militant
10. L'Hebdo
11. Le Dimanche,
12. News on Sunday*
13. Sunday Vani
14. La Gazette
15. Le Socialiste
16. Impact News.

A few weekly magazines existed like Week End Scope (for leisurely and light reading in the weekends), Business Mag (covering Business news), and The Turf Magazine, which covers turf news during turf season from April to

December. Most of these print newspapers and Magazines are in French with the exception of two marked above by asterisks (*) which are in English.

This study will be confine itself to 10 most popular and most widely read newspapers of the country. These have been selected as per their daily or weekly issues and they are Le Mauricien, L'Express, Le Matinal, Week End, 5 Plus, La Gazette, Le Défi Plus, Hebdo, Sunday Vani and Le Socialiste

2. D.2. Broadcast & Electronic Media: Radio and Television

Since 1999 there has been considerable debate about and subsequent changes to the government's control over radio and television broadcasting. In the campaign preceding the September 2000 elections, the issue of the government's control and misuse of the state-owned Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) held center-stage.

In August 2000, the National Assembly passed the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, which created the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) with a mandate to regulate and license all radio and television broadcasting. The law provided for the private ownership of broadcast stations and reemphasized the independence of the IBA. However, the IBA is composed of representatives of several ministries and is chaired by an appointee of the Prime Minister. It also answers to the Prime Minister on matters of national security and public order. The following July and August, the IBA began formulating licensing rules and hearing applications for broadcast licenses. In

December 2001, it authorized two private radio stations and announced that a third radio station would be authorized to broadcast. However, the stations were not able to broadcast at the time that they were authorized because they had not yet received "multi carrier" service. Thus the implementation of the law has been slow and the government's monopoly in broadcasting local news and programming continued in early 2002. Some government observers felt that the government was intentionally causing the delays because it did not want to let go its control over broadcasting. However, while the new stations were waiting to provide service, a private news organization opened up on the Internet that broadcast local news out over the Internet, thereby circumventing the ban on private party television or radio local news broadcasts. Also, foreign international news services such as the BBC, British Sky News, French Canal Plus, and CNN were already available to all by subscription. Almost all major Australian cities where substantial number of the Mauritian communities live, receive broadcasting programs from Mauritius. Two popular community radio programs which broadcast music, news, quiz programs, interviews, and "radiothons" in French and Mauritian Creole in Australia are:

- The Melbourne South Eastern Community—Mauritian Community Program on 3 SER 97.7 FM (stereo)
- The Mauritian, Rodriguan, and Seychelles Community Program, which is run by volunteers, on 3 ZZZ 92.3 FM.

Radio and TV programs cover a wide range of subjects and are broadcast in different languages including French, English, Hindi, Creole, Chinese and a

host of other Indian languages. Programs are mostly purchased from foreign suppliers whilst a fair proportion is produced locally.

Radio Broadcasting in Mauritius first started on a private basis on 9 August 1927 by Charles Jollivet with a Medium Wave radio transmitter of 1 kilowatt assembled by him, two manual record players and a carbon granule microphone. The station was lodged at his residence in Beau Bassin and was known as "Radio Maurice". It was later transferred to the attic of the Plaza Theatre in Rose Hill. The daily program consisted mainly of music and news and lasted for 2 hours.

A second station under the aegis of the "Société des Radiophilles" set up by one Mr. P. Adam came into operation around 1937. It was originally located at his residence in Forest Side and was later moved to the Town Hall in Curepipe. The broadcast was made by a Philips Transmitter of 60 watts – wavelengths 42 meters. It was mainly used to send messages to the members of the Société.

In the wake of the Second World War hostilities in 1939, the British Ministry of Defense took over the control of these two stations. About the same time, delegated by Général de Gaulle, H. Montocchio together with F. M. d'Unienville operated another Radio Station known as "France Libre d'Outremer" located near the Highlands sugar factory. The equipment used was a second hand short wave transmitter of 1 kilowatt purchased from the South African Broadcasting Company.

By the end of the Second World War, "France Libre d'Outremer" was taken over by Government and was merged with the "Société des Radiophilles" of Curepipe. This was the prelude for the birth and development of a national broadcasting station, for as from 1st July 1944 the Mauritius Broadcasting Service (MBS) was set up as a sub-department of the Government Public Relations Office, then managed by H. Ardill and Dr. Vaughn – Head of Information Services. Transmission was done from the studio in Plaza, Rose Hill until 1946 when the station was transferred to the then Teachers' Training College at Forest Side – now PSC building. Three segments of programs (Morning, Midday and Evening) were broadcast daily using a second hand Short Wave transmitter converted to a Medium Wave – 225 meters wavelengths. At about the same time the Globe Reuters News Service, formerly the Government Press Service, was annexed to the MBS and administered jointly. Over the years broadcasting expanded considerably in terms of structure (building and equipment), broadcast hours and variety of programs both in content and languages. To date there are popular private radio channels like Radio Plus, Radio 1 and Top FM which all operate on FM and which capture huge audiences. The MBC have 4 Radio Channels, Radio 1, 2, and 3 and a special channel for Indian languages called Taal FM.

TV Broadcasting was introduced in Mauritius as an act of faith by the then Prime Minister Sir Sewoosagur Ramgoolam to consolidate the spirit of nationhood so as to face the struggle for and afterwards the challenges of the Independence of the country. TV Broadcast on a pilot basis started late in the year 1964, pending completion of the installation and operation of the three

Repeater Stations (Fort George, Mount Thérèse and Jurançon). With the operation of Jurançon on 31st December 1964 this phase was completed. Subsequently on 8 February 1965, Television was officially launched with a daily evening transmission of about 3 hours. The first TV outside Live broadcast was launched on the occasion of the royal visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra in 1968.

Broadcast of formal educational TV programs started in 1969 when it was necessary to increase the daily duration of programs by one hour. Midday transmissions, during weekdays only, originally of half-hour duration and later extended to two hours include a News bulletin started in 1974. At first the broadcast was intended to TV dealers to enable them to provide a service to their clients. During weekends and public holidays the afternoon transmission was of a longer duration.

In the years which followed Independence in 1968, the roles and obligations of Television as a tool to stimulate socio-economic development and cultural synthesis of the nation was enhanced. The utilization of Television was optimized. Thus both the number and variety of local programs have continuously been increasing.

The phasing out process of black and white television started in 1973 and indeed the OCAMM Conference which was held at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka in the same year was broadcast live in color (SECAM System). Since then colorization of all equipment was an on-going process so

much so that the eve of Christmas 1975 heralded the color broadcast of a considerable number of programs. By 1978 the colorization process was fully completed. Thus the quality of programs as well as their content was improved. The development of television was speeded up as from 1990, following the implementation of a 2nd Channel (MBC 2) on 30th July 1990. This was followed in October 1995 by the operation of two Pay TV Channels: Canal+ and Sky News. A third Channel (MBC 3) became operational in March 1996.

Maximum TV coverage of the island has been ensured by the installation of additional Repeater Stations at strategic locations. The TV landscape is fast changing due to the development in the field of electronics and broadcast via satellite. Private companies are investing in the broadcast business. Thus MC Vision, a local private company, is running two Pay TV Channels. It is operational since 1st February 1999. MBC owns 15% share of the MCVision Company. There are many other Pay TV channels that are now operating in Mauritius that offer a variety of customized programs. Canal France Internationale (CFI), Doordarshan, Sky News and Deutsche Welle, BBC, are received daily and relayed on MBC Channels since this year. The MBC transmit on an around the clock basis since the 5th September 1999.

2.D.3 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation

The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is the national public broadcasting service (Radio and TV) of the Republic of Mauritius and its outer islands including Rodrigues. It was established as a body corporate on 8 June

1964 under the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Ordinance no. 7 (1964). Prior to that date it operated as a Government Service under the name of Mauritius Broadcasting Service. The MBC is administered and controlled by a Board of seven members. The execution of its policy and its day to day control and management rests with the Director General who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. The MBC derives its income mainly from license fees and advertising. A monthly license fee is payable by all domestic electricity consumers (Act no. 56 of 1954) possessing a TV set – this accounts for 60% of its total income. Advertisement on Radio and TV contributes to about 35% of its income. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation is an important instrument for the government and is involved in government propaganda openly, though it declares itself as free and independent. The opposition parties always complain against the unfair, dishonest, partisan and pro-government coverage of political events by the MBC, as shown in Picture IV.

PICTURE IV



Public Graffitiists against the MBC in 2008

2. E. Mauritian Politics, Election and the Media

Politics in Mauritius takes place within the framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, where the President is the nominal head of the state and the Prime Minister the head of the government with all executive power. Mauritian politics is vibrant and characterized by coalition and alliance building. All parties are centrist and reflect a national consensus that supports democratic politics and a relatively open economy with a strong private sector.

Alone or in coalition, the Mauritian Labor Party (MLP) ruled from 1947 through 1982. The Mauritian Militant Movement/Mauritian Socialist Party alliance won the 1982 election, taking all 60 seats in Mauritius. In 1983, defectors from the MMM joined with the PSM to form the Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) and formed a majority in coalition with the MLP.

In July 1990, the MSM realigned with the MMM (Alliance MSM/MMM) in September 1991 national elections won 59 of the 62 directly elected seats in parliament. In December 1995, the MLP returned to power, this time in coalition with the MMM. The MLP's Navinchandra Ramgoolam, son of the country's first Prime Minister, became Prime Minister himself. Ramgoolam dismissed his MMM coalition partners in mid-1997, leaving MLP in power only with several small parties allied with it.

The MMM and MSM rejoined in a coalition(MMM/MSM Alliance) that won the 2000 elections and, although a handful of MPs defected from the MSM in early 2005, both parties went together to the next election in July 2005, competing against the Social Alliance, a MLP-led coalition, and which comprised of other smaller parties, namely: The Mauritian Party of Xavier-Luc Duval (Parti Mauricien Xavier-Luc Duval), The Greens (Les Verts) , The Republican Movement (Parti Republicain), and The Mauritian Militant Socialist Movement (Mouvement Militant Socialiste Mauricien). The government lost the election in July 2005 and the Social Alliance, won with 48% of votes and formed a new government.

Despite the fact that the government machinery, including the national Radio and TV broadcast and some major newspaper were favoring the Government led alliance, the opposition won the election.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.A Literature review: The Secondary Data

A literature review hence is a critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles. A literature review is an essential chapter of a thesis in the sense that it constitutes in looking around on all relevant available materials to better understand the issue under investigation, to be up to date regarding published materials and any contrasting perspectives and viewpoints on the topic, and also in laying the foundation for an elaboration of a framework unique to the thesis. It constitutes surveying scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant

" A literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship, and does not report new primary scholarship itself. The primary reports used in the literature may be verbal, but in the vast majority of cases reports are written documents. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical/analytic, or methodological in nature. Second a literature review seeks to describe, summarize, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of primary reports."

Cooper, H. M. (1988), "The structure of knowledge synthesis",

to the issues under investigation, and determining which literature makes significant contribution to the understanding of the topic. Literature reviews

are secondary sources and as such, do not report any new or original experimental work. Literature Search consisted in finding and perusing materials relevant to the areas under investigation; analyzing problems and their solutions in related to the subjects, fields and their components related to these areas; evaluation of data that contributed in better understanding of the topic under investigation; analysis and interpretation of findings and conclusions from other studies.

This aims at synthesizing literature reviews and elaborating on how the different reviews have contributed in analyzing the impact of the media as opinion shapers in the general election in 2005 in Mauritius. Different materials reviewed from different sources were reviewed to better understand the concepts related to Mass Media and Communication, specifically in relation to politics. This has helped in better understanding the intricacies of media involvement in influencing voters on their choice of candidates at national elections. The main features from different literature reviews undertaken have been synthesized and utilized to formulate a Conceptual Framework unique to this study. Hence the Conceptual Framework outlined is the result of a thorough analysis of different issues, concerns raised, approaches utilized in measuring the impact of the media on the public especially during election campaign. Information has been sought through different sources, namely:

- Books
- Reference Materials
- Electronic Databases/ Internet
- Visits

- Journals
- Conference Papers
- Dissertations
- Indexes/Abstracts Printed
- Government publications
- Theses

It is noteworthy to state that the researcher has also visited several media stations like the CNN in Washington D.C, BBC in London, the MBC in Mauritius and also the Newseum in Washington DC. At the Newseum, the researcher reviewed different newspaper articles that have shown the bias and mistakes that the most renowned media made on important political issues and these have been highlighted in Chapter 1 (1.C) of this study under the heading: Media Influence in Politics. In addition the researcher has also surfed extensively on the internet and consulted articles and newspapers from other researchers to document on the history of the spoken and written press and the different forms of Journalism and which have been described in Chapters 1 and 2, and also on the impact of the media on politics which has been very helpful in analyzing the data collected in this study.

3. B Materials Reviewed

In the book “**Kellogg on Advertising and Media**”¹⁷ edited by Bobby Clader, the authors explore the new landscape of advertising and the Media with the concept of ‘**Engagement**’ as an overarching theme. They examine in details the concept of “engagement” in connection to the media and argue that

¹⁷ “Kellogg on Advertising & Media”: edited by Bobby J. Calder; published by John Wiley & Sons. Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey (2008)

engagement is not a marketing buzzword, nor a new challenge but one that has more urgency in today's media world. Bobby J. Calder and Edward C. Malthouse in the first chapter of the book write on Media Engagement and Advertising Effectiveness. Though the chapter deals with media engagement in relation to advertising effectiveness, it has nonetheless helped to discern the importance of engagement of an audience to a media exposure, and has been instrumental in developing the conceptual framework of this study.

The authors point out that "*engagement embodies a sense of involvement... It is engagement with a TV program that causes someone to want to watch it, to be attentive to it, to recommend it to a friend, or to be disappointed if it were no longer on the air. Likewise, it is the absence of engagement that will likely cause these outcomes not to occur*". Engagement comes from a media contact which is very often referred to as "experience", and the authors write that "engagement comes from *experiencing* something like a magazine or TV program". The philosopher John Dewey (1934/1980) captured the nuances of experience best: "*... we have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences...is so rounded out that its close is a consummation and a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is an experience*". An engagement to a media contact (experience) could be positive or negative or just null.

This study has used the concept of engagement of the electorate vis a vis a media contact during an election campaign. The **Conceptual Framework** that has been developed in this study to analyze the influence and effect of different media exposures on the public in Mauritius has utilized the concept of 'engagement' described above.

Bernard Goldberg in the book entitled "**Bias**"¹⁸ deals on issues ranging from homelessness to AIDS and explains how reporters have simply regurgitated the propaganda of pressure groups they favor to the detriment of honest reporting. It exposes how liberal bias pervades the mainstream media. The author is an Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist who has been working for CBS News for 3 decades and who had repeatedly voiced his concerns to network executives about the often one-sided nature of news coverage. In his introduction, he cites with justification Peter Jennings who said in 2001: "*I think bias is very largely in the eye of the beholder*". He relates how the problem of homelessness was created in President Reagan's era and then destroyed in President Clinton's era in US, and how the epidemic AIDS was blown up using the fear factor among the population instead of giving real statistics on the kind of people contracting the disease. "*The goal was simple: scare the hell out of straight America- then they would have to pay attention*". He argues that very often the most important story is not seen on TV essentially because it might not be pleasing, or "*sufficiently mysterious sexy*". He considers the people working in TV to be arrogant "*if arrogance were a*

¹⁸ "Bias" by Bernard Goldberg, published by Regency Publishing, Inc, 2001

crime, there wouldn't be enough jail cells in the entire United States to hold all the people in TV news." He stated that *"One thing to remember about network news is that it steals just about everything from print"*.

The book "Bias" has helped to better understand the fact that whatever is stated by the press needs not be taken as granted and that an element of bias does exist. Hence during the collection of data in this study respondents have been specially asked about how they perceive the media to be in terms of "manipulation" of information to suit a particular purpose. Indeed as pointed out in the analysis of the findings a majority of respondents consider the media in Mauritius, both written and electronic to be "manipulative".

Eric Alterman, the author of **"What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and the News,"**¹⁹ does not totally agree with Bernard Goldberg, cited above and argues that *'to those who do not already share Goldberg's biases, his many undocumented, exaggerated assertions have the flavor of self-parody rather than reasoned argument'*. He contends that the **influence of the media** is determined not by the editors or journalists but by those who own the media. He adds that *'It is not reporters or editors, but the owners of the media who decide the quality of the news... they set the standard of quality by the quality of the people they choose and the news policy they embrace... to ignore the power of the money at stake to determine the content of news in*

¹⁹ "What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and the News," by Eric Alterman, published by Basic Books, 2003

the decisions of these executives - given the role money seems to play in every other aspect of society - is indefensibly childish and naive”.

Eric Alterman makes a very important assertion that has been considered in this study: *“Television remains the news source from which the vast majority of Americans receives their news. But that does not necessarily make it the most influential”.* In this study the impact of Television on the electorate in Mauritius where it is indeed an important source of information, has been studied and also whether it has indeed been influential in shaping the opinion of voters during election. Eric Alterman states that the *‘print pundits generally have a higher standard of truth-telling than do television pundits because the (relatively) lasting quality of their work makes errors far more costly to their respective reputations than merely mounting off on a television program that disappears into the ether when the credits roll’.*

In this study attempt has also been made to analyze the perception of different ethnic groups on different media channels. Given that Mauritius is a multi-cultural country, the ownership of a media channel by a particular ethnic group is seen to influence the affinity of that ethnic group to that channel. If for example the ownership of a media channel is Christian, that channel is perceived to safeguard the interest of that particular ethnic group. Eric Alterman contends in his book that ***“newspapers are more explicitly ideological there and readers generally choose their papers according to the view that matches their own”***. This study will also analyze whether

different ethnic groups associate themselves differently with different media channels on the basis of what matches their own ethnic background.

Eric Alterman refers in Chapter 10 of his book specifically to the election of George Bush in 2000 in USA against Al Gore and questions: *"How did one of the most experienced candidates (Al Gore) in our history somehow 'lose' to (George Bush) one of the least qualified?"*. One of the most important reasons was *"the almost universal hostility he (Al Gore) inspired in the reporters and Editors who covered the race"*. Bush charmed the press while Al Gore repelled his. Here the power of the media in shaping public opinion and in influencing elections is very much highlighted. Alterman states: ***"The media can, under the right conditions, make or break a candidate with voters through the manner they choose to portray him or her"***. Frank Bruni, Bush's campaign reporter writes in his book *"Ambling into History"* that: *Modern politics was not just superficial because the politicians made it so. It was superficial because the voters let it be"*. Bruni considers that the voters hence need to know only what they want to know and that the media should hence be the agenda setter. This idea will be taken later in this study to analyze the perception of the voter and the media vis a vis each other. Again while analyzing the data in this study, the power of the media to "make or break" has been considered, especially in the Mauritian situation where almost all the media were in favor of one political party which lost the election in 2005. The message for Bush to get elected was to forget qualifications, experience, and intelligence etc, which Al Gore possessed. The message was to vote to the easy going and not complicated guy who could come to your

house for dinner and would not bore you with policy decisions to prove that he is smarter! In this study, analysis has been conducted on the reasons that the public vote for one candidate.

The book "**Politics of News**"²⁰ edited by Jaswant S. Yadava is a collection of papers and articles written by internationally renowned scholars such as Herb Schiller, Dallas Smythe, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Bob Stevenson Grant Nobel. The foreword of this book is written by the President of the International Association for Mass Communication, James D. Halloran, also the Director of the Centre for Mass Communication Research of the University of Leicester, UK in 1984. James D. Halloran points out that in dealing with international news and dialogues, balance, fairness, representativeness, accommodation and even compromise need to be considered. He also contends that when dealing with international news, the powers of the communication world has been *"not only to control the flow of information, but have also been able to set their own agenda and control the dialogue"*. This idea is also elaborated further in this study at various stages especially on the issue "**Agenda Setting**" role of journalists while covering news items and initiating debates during the general election in Mauritius. The Editor of this book, Jaswant S. Yadava also stresses the power of information and states in his introduction to the book *"the power to control information is one of the keys to power as such"*. Citing W.R Hinchman in "The Use and Management of Electrospace", he states *"the information and communication systems with ever-increasing*

²⁰ "Politics of News" by Jaswant S. Yadava, published by Naurang Rai, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, India, 1984

technological innovations invade the mind with relentless pressure to inform selectively, to misinform cunningly, and to misinform mischievously". The author also condemns the domination of western media in developing countries. Accordingly in 1973 at Algiers, the head of the Non Allied Movement (NAM) called for concerted action in the field of mass communication, and for a "New International Information Order" (NIIO) as part of the Action Program for Economic Cooperation so as to correct the imbalance, bias and distortions in the flow of information by the western media. The objective is to balance the concern about the "Unusual" like accidents, earthquakes, famines, disasters etc with the "usual" news about socio-economic development and progress which constitute vital concern of the people and governments of developing countries. The western countries opposed the stand and generated heated debate at the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the general Conference of UNESCO from 23rd November to 5th December 1982. UNESCO was charged by western spokesman with grave misdemeanor in supporting the NAM against the western media and the leader of western countries eventually cut down funding to UN agencies particularly UNESCO. There has been some positive development in some developing countries with the creation of the News Agencies Pool of NAM in 1976, but the situation became complicated with the advent of the Communication Revolution triggered by the new Communication and Information Technologies in the latter part of the 20th Century. The west used the Communication Technologies and Product to maintain their supremacy in the media world. The author opines hence that *"the information rich will*

continue to grow richer threatening to make the information poor relatively speaking even poorer”.

Analyzing the papers presented in “Politics of News”, it is apparently obvious that politics dominates the news coverage in all media systems, with importance to national interest. It is observed in this book under review that in general foreign news coverage is 25% of total news bulletin, with some even lower; Japanese foreign news coverage is reported to be 16% only of total news coverage. There is an almost total neglect of third world news coverage by the western media, as pointed out Robert Stevenson and Gary Gaddy, authors of a paper on “*Bad news and the Third World*”. It is also pointed out that because of the prestige and resource that the western media enjoy, they are privileged to engage in “agenda setting”. Interestingly the paper on the “**Radio Spectrum and the Third World Interest**” bears special significance to this study which analyses also the spoken press and its impact on the public as an opinion shaper during election campaign.

Dean E. Alger, the author of “**The Media and Politics**”²¹ covers wide areas of interest to this study and touches on Public Opinion, Values, Attitudes and Perceptions in shaping public opinion, the Formulation of News and their Impact on the Public, the Media in Election: Methods of Study, Media Coverage and Politics, the Media and the Dialogue of Democracy. The author states (pp. 2) that **communication** originates from the Latin word *communis*

²¹ The Media and Politics by Dean E. Alger, published by Prentice–Hall, Inc, New Jersey, USA, 1989

which means *common*. Communication allows the establishment of “commonness” among people, a sharing of specific thoughts and feelings as well as the more general orientation and perspectives, including loyalties, that enable people not only to work together on particular projects but also to maintain a social order and to operate a stable political system. Somewhat more formally, communication, in a societal context, can be defined as the process of social transactions that people use to construct meanings that constitute their image of the world, on which they act, and to exchange those images through the use of symbols (which can be linguistic or visual). The author believes that people derive their opinions from their beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions. The author cites Walter Lippmann statement that *“For the most part we do not first see and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world, we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture”*. The author acknowledged the powerful **influence of the media** in shaping public opinion and states that all that is in the head of the public are the work of the media. The media remain the vital connecting link in the political system today. Walter Lippmann rightly put it: *“the pictures in (their) heads of what the world is like- pictures largely selected and arranged by the media”*²². The author opines that the centerpiece of a representative democratic system is the process of selection of representatives by the public through elections which are intended to be the principal form of political participation on the part

²² The Media and Politics, (Modern Democracy and the Vital Connecting Link, pp. 6) by Dean E. Alger, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc, New Jersey, USA, 1989

of the public. Traditional sources of information on candidates have been the political parties and their regional and local organizations, however the author points out that in America the party label has lost significance and that many people receive information and cues on political choices from interest groups with which they are affiliated. It is increasingly individual candidate evaluations that guide people's electoral choice. This study inquires indeed on the political choice among the public in terms of information that they receive not from political parties but from the spoken and written media and also enquires on the particular interest of these media groups in a functioning democracy like Mauritius. The author rightly states *"what people have increasingly relied on for information and impressions is the mass media"*. The author quotes Walter Lippmann to say that people respond to political matters on the *"pictures in their heads"* that have been selected and arranged by the media. He cites **President J.F Kennedy** who in a speech to the nation broadcasters once declared *"The flow of ideas, the capacity to make informed choices, the ability to criticize, all of the assumptions on which political democracy rests, depend largely on communications. And you are the guardians of the most powerful and effective means of communication ever designed"*. To the author there are two elements that are important to true democracy, they are firstly the **availability of alternative choices** to the public and secondly the **ability of the public** to make such choices in a meaningful manner. The spirit of Democracy is very much translated by the statement of Abraham Lincoln *"that*

*government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth*²³

The author elaborates on the **Information Processing Theory** or **Schema Theory** and which will eventually guide the discussion on the findings of this study, especially on the issue of influence of the media on the public. The Information Processing Theory postulates that people have a limited capacity to take in all mass media messages to which they are bombarded all the time. The theory contends that people develop structures of understanding based on past experiences called 'schemas'. These 'schemas' ties up to bits of knowledge and make a common connection and "*tame the information tide*". The meanings that are extracted are based on experiences, beliefs and perceptions of the receiver. "*The content of what is recalled by the public is scant compared to the offerings*".

The author opines that **Thomas Patterson's study** of the media in the 1976 presidential election in USA has remained a prime landmark and a masterpiece of social science. Patterson notes that "*election news results from a series of decisions made by news organization about what to observe, what to report, and what emphasis to place on various parts of the coverage*", and hence prescribed **Content Analysis** - the studies of the number of stories in the news and their content communicated as election news. He contends that it is not possible to analyze all news stories and hence a choice needs to be made. Patterson notes that also important is the how the public receive

²³ Abraham Lincoln: BrainyQuote, P 4

and respond to the news. Patterson proposes also that the state of mind of people before they are exposed to particular election news should also be analyzed so as to understand the changes that the election news has made. His study interviewed the same panel of people seven times. However here the problem that may arise is that it could be that it is not the media impact which is being discovered but something artificially stimulated by the study itself, termed as “*re-interview – sensitization*” problem.

The author also elaborates on the **Robinson study** of the media in the 1980 political campaign in the USA. Michael Robinson has been a pioneer in the study of the media in politics. Michael Robinson and Margaret Sheehan conducted a study to analyze what is communicated to the public and the media role during the 1980 presidential election in USA. The Robinson Approach not only attempted to analyze the content of the news but also the comparison between the print and TV coverage to see if and how they differ. The following criteria were used:

1. **Objectivity** in terms of how the coverage relates to facts, cites other's opinions, and without drawing an explicit conclusion from personal interpretation of the journalist
2. **Equity of Access** of candidates to news coverage, in terms of time on and in the news media
3. **Fairness** in treating the candidates in terms of how balanced was the coverage of different candidates
4. **Seriousness** in discussion like on policy matters and candidates' qualifications

5. **Comprehensiveness** in covering the election campaign in general

The above criteria though very relevant are difficult to judge without the element of subjectivity. The Robinson's approach does however provides an excellent benchmark for determining the role of the media; and however subjective one could be, it would always be indicative of the overall role and impact of the media during an election campaign.

The approach used in this study to analyze the situation in Mauritius is a mix of both Patterson and Robinson Approaches. It has used the content analysis in assessing the impact of opinions, editorials and news coverage in the 2005 General election in Mauritius. It has interviewed politicians, journalists and the public to gauge their perceptions of the role of the media and the general opinions emitted by major newspapers in Mauritius. The criteria of assessment of Robinson have also been used to analyze the opinions and news coverage in editorial and the exchange of opinions in major newspapers and in the electronic media.

Katrin Voltmer edited the book "**Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies**"²⁴ in which several authors examine how political communication and the mass media have played a central role in the consolidation of emerging democracies around the world. Covering a broad range of political and cultural contexts from Eastern and Southern Europe,

²⁴ Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies, edited by Katrin Voltmer, published by Routledge, 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN, 2006

Latin America, Asia and Africa, this book investigates the problems and conflicts encountered in the process of establishing an independent media, and in the context of competitive politics in post-autocratic societies. The authors deal with the following issues:

- The changing journalistic role perceptions and journalistic quality
- The reasons and consequences of persisting instrumentalization of the media by political actors
- The role of the media in electoral campaign
- The way in which the citizens interpret political messages and the extent to which the media influence political attitudes and electoral behavior
- The role of the Internet in building a democratic public sphere

To justify the freedom of the press, it is argued that that the media should provide for a free **“Market of Ideas”** where contradictory voices are heard on the assumption that the ‘truth’ comes out only through exchanges of argument and counter-argument. From this viewpoint the media is assigned a passive role in facilitating exchanges or providing the forum to the public. However it is also questioned whether confrontation of competing views does indeed reveal the ‘truth’ or just promotes those who can express their views most effectively. The two functions of the media – forum and information provider are not mutually exclusive. Some argue that the media is committed to a particular cause: that of **‘Mobilizing Information’** to strengthen more participation of the public in political decision making. However the **‘information quality’** that the media imparts to the public is most important.

There is a marked contradiction between the normative prescription and the empirical contribution of the media to the functioning of democracy. From the normative point of view, the media is supposed to provide information that would enable the citizens participate in a meaningful manner. The media is regarded as the '**Fourth State**' (explained in Section 1.C.a) serving as a control mechanism by exposing all government misconduct. However from the angle of empirical contribution of the media, the way the media presents political issues is very much an issue of concern. Political coverage is very often characterized with sensationalism rather than factual information. This also nurtures political cynicism and apathy among the public. The detrimental effects caused by the media in portraying politics have been termed "**Media Malaise**" by Robinson in 1976.

The "*Media Malaise*" has however been challenged. The **Mobilization Theory** asserts that the media has positive effects on the public cognitive mobilization and involvement. Rather than blaming the media in creating the "*malaise*" proponents of the Mobilization Theory argue that the media provide opportunity for "*low salience learning*" that enables all citizens to participate in political discussions. Information stimulates the motivation to participate in the political process, which in turn increase appetite for additional information, and for greater engagement from the public. The role of the media in imparting information, and being the "*watchdog*" or "*fourth state*" is primordial in keeping political authorities accountable by monitoring their activities and investigating possible abuses of power. Some believe that the control function

of the media is more important than the information function. However it is difficult to draw the line exactly between **‘Watchdog Journalism’** (desirable) and **muck-racking Journalism** (harmful), as the process of decoding and reconstruction of media messages by the audience is complex and is dependent on cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral factors that change in different situations and over time. The authors in the book contend that the distinction between newspapers and television depends on the channel quality of the different media. Positive effects are usually attributed to print media that are more active in processing information, whereas television’s heavy reliance on visuals is thought to distract analytical thinking. A further disadvantage of television is that it is embedded with entertainment context and this reduces the intensity of political information on TV.

This study has utilized the arguments in Katrin Voltmer’s book in analyzing the impact of the media on the electorate. The level of engagement of the reader or the listeners and viewers has also been assessed in this study. In the questionnaires to the public and interviews conducted during the investigation, the **information quality** has been assessed in terms of the degree of **“biased”** and **“manipulated”** information that the respondents have received from both the written and spoken press during the 2005 general election in Mauritius. This study has also documented on the level of participation or ‘engagement’ of the audience to a media exposure.

Noam Chomsky, the author of "**Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda**"²⁵ questions whether we want to live in a democratic society or a totalitarian society. He cites Walter Lippmann to argue that there are 2 types of functioning class of citizens in a democracy, namely the "**Specialized Class**" that take active role in running the general affairs of the country. The second class are the big majority of the population which Lippmann called the "**bewildered class**" is the "*ignorant and meddling outsiders*" and who must "*be put in their place*" and allowed only to choose their leader. Once having elected their representatives, they are supposed to sink back and are reduced to spectators. The logic behind is that the majority are too stupid to be able to understand things and if try to manage affairs they just cause trouble. Hence it would be immoral and improper to permit them to govern and are the "**bewildered herd**" that need to be tamed. This is done through propaganda in a democracy. It is contended that the "*bewildered herd*" needs to be "*scared and frightened*" so that they remain distracted and do not cause trouble and hence it is important that all opinions be engineered. For the author all is dictated by propaganda. The author cited the Gulf War to illustrate how propaganda works. The war against Iraq was fought against Weapons of Mass Destruction which were supposedly hidden by Saddam Hussein.

²⁵ Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda by Noam Chomsky, published by Seven Stories Press, Canada, 2002

Robert W. McChesney and John Nichols, authors of “**Our Media, Not Theirs:**

The Democratic Struggle against Corporate Media”²⁶, contend that the media has failed to fulfill the basic watchdog function in USA and cite the lies that of the US Administration to the general public over the wars that have been fought over the past century, from World War 1 to Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. The authors question the *raison d'être* of the militarized approach, and the eligibility of US to act as judge, jury, and executioner of a “terrorist”.

The US media has been always compliant in supporting US war, offering scarcely any interrogations of officials on ill-defined and limitless wars. This is essentially because the media is supported by interest groups. It is extraordinary degree of power and influence located in few hands. Indeed, thirteen of the hundred wealthiest individuals of the world- all of whom are worth \$4 billion- are media magnates. News stories that might hurt the image of the owner, however plausible they might be, are censored. The authors consider the reporting practiced by corporate media in USA not as journalism but as “stenography” and add that “*The structures of our media, the concentration of its ownership, the role that it plays in shaping the lives of our children, in commercializing our culture, and in warping our elections, has been off-limits*”.

²⁶ Our Media, Not Theirs: The Democratic Struggle against Corporate Media, by Robert W. McChesney and John Nichols, published by Seven Stories Press, New York, USA, 2002

However concentration of **media ownership** is not the sole cause of the problems with the media. The two main problems fostered by concentrated media are hyper commercialism and denigration of public service. The media interest serves the investors and not democracy. The authors argue that *“the media experience increasingly resembles an infomercial ...and that democratic journalism should provide a ruthless accounting of the powers-that-be and the powers-that- want-to- be, both in government and politics and in the extremely powerful corporate sector”*. The authors are favorable to **partisan journalism** only in situation where competition exists and all are given equal chance to voice their opinions, or else it would be just uncontested propaganda. The authors also highlight the election of Bush against Al Gore in 2000 in US which was tainted by corrupt practices by Republicans that systematically excluded thousands of Floridians from voting and which cost Al Gore the presidency...and which the media did not highlight. Having played this role in picking the president, the media could not and did not question Bush even after September 11 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York.

The authors propose a structural media reform that would give to the people what they want and in a fair and balance manner, and that would pave the way to a more effective role of the media in a functioning democracy. They propose also “Civic Journalism” to make the citizens make informed choice and participate effectively in decision making process and also in educating school children on the ways the commercial media system operates so to guard them against disinformation.

Marshall McLuhan, the author of “**Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man**”²⁷ adopts a very philosophical approach to the concept of media and distinguishes between “*hot’ and ‘cool’ medium of communication*”, with different effects on the public. He states: “Hot medium are low in participation, and cool medium are high in participation or completion by the audience. Naturally, therefore, a hot medium like radio has very different effects on the user from a cool medium like the television”. For him print is a hot medium, and television a cool medium. In spite of the fact that this notion of cool and hot medium has very much been debated and not really understood many other authors after him have made their own interpretation of the concept, leaving the distinction very blurred and at times incomprehensible philosophy. The author is of opinion that “**the message is the medium**”. For him the content of any medium is always another medium. “*The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph*”. He opines that “*each form of communication ‘transport’ not only carries, but translates and transforms the sender, the receiver, and the message*”. He highlights the importance of the press in spite of the emergence of the ‘*electric media*’ which has helped to construct a ‘*Global Village*’. He cites Lenin to have declared that “*A Newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator; it is also a collective organizer*”. Stalin also recognized the newspaper as “*the most powerful weapon of our Party*” and Khrushchev cited it as ‘*our chief ideological weapon*’. Napoleon

²⁷ Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan, published by MIT Press Edition, Massachusetts, USA, 1994

also gave lots of importance to the newspaper and is reported to have said that *“three hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets”*(p13).

Paula Chakravarty and Katharine Sarikakis, the authors of **“Media Policy and Globalisation”**²⁸ explore the conditions and ideas behind global communications policies, analyses common policy concerns, conflicting interests, the place and voice of the public. The authors contend that the expansion of private communication networks across national boundaries and the rapid circulation of information through new media threatened the notion of state sovereignty and promised greater accountability and overall efficiency of the communication services. They consider that **“Social scientists today are generally more circumspect about the ‘withering away of the state’ and the emergence of a ‘borderless world’**. As economic and technological changes transform the traditional bonds of state intervention in matters of policy-making, control of communication is directly related to economic wellbeing. However beyond economic interest governments retains capacity to control the media to reinforce their hold on power. Excuses are used by government to control the media. For example in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001, governments have used the pretext of terrorism to introduce illegal laws of spying and surveillance. The authors are in favor of **state intervention** in the media as against **state control**. State intervention has been identified in terms of policy. They argue that if the public service

²⁸ Media Policy and Globalisation, by Paula Chakravarty and Katharine Sarikakis.; published by Prem Rawat for Rawat Publications, Jaipur, India, 2006

broadcasting is to have any future, it would need to pursue and achieve a status of accountability. The authors argue against the control of global communication by the West. In the 1970s with the call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in UNESCO, the western media were put to task. The five major news agencies that dominated international news were severely criticized and this led to the formation of the News Agency Pool, which aimed at an alternative news distribution system within the Third World. This led to a massive attack by US media industry on UNESCO. As an outcome both the Reagan and Thatcher administrations withdrew from UNESCO in mid 1980s, taking with them their financial dues thereby crippling the organization. It was in 1998 that Joseph Stiglitz, then Senior Vice President and Chief Economist for the World Bank that strongly outlined that developing countries need to be given the chance to own their policies and that USA should acknowledge that they should have “greater humility, the frank acknowledgement that we (people from USA) do not have all the answers”.

Arifa Salam, PhD student, in her thesis entitled “**Good Governance and the Role of the Media: The Case of Bangladesh**”²⁹ highlighted the linkage between good governance and the media in Bangladesh during 2001 and 2006. It examined the relationship between the government and the media to see how the media is playing its role to ensure good governance. Her study

²⁹ Study on Good Governance and the Role of the Media: The Case of Bangladesh, by Arifa Salam, PhD student, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University

used content analysis of 4 daily newspapers and prime news analysis of TV and radio.

She considers political will as the fundamental and deciding factor to ensure the conditions and enabling environment for good governance. All depend on the historical context, value system, tradition and culture together with conditions of accountability and responsibility. She contends in her thesis that ***“Free Media and the Press is the vanguard of democratic system. We are living in the age of media. It is now playing important role to shape public opinion on different issues by providing information. It helps to create debate, exposes miss deeds of political parties and public institutions, and finally helps people to form their views on certain issues and act accordingly.”*** Her thesis gives prominence to the media as an opinion shaper in its interface with the government, industries or business and the consumers of the media product. It states that the media play important role in creating an environment where people can raise their voices, express their views, making government institutions responsive to the public and public representative accountable.

The thesis also mentions that in Bangladesh “the government owned media act like government’s prolocutor and produce biased news and views, which only served the interest of the party in power... private satellite channels set a milestone in the electronic media history as it ends state monopoly on the media. In Bangladesh, media is intensely political. While some newspapers

are explicitly partisan, others despite efforts to remain objective are perceived to support political interests”.

Christiane Eilders in her paper “**Impact of Editorial Content on the Political Agenda in Germany; Theoretical Assumptions and Open Questions Regarding a Neglected Subject in Mass Communication Research**”³⁰

considers that the media do not only serve as neutral transmitters of information but also interpret and assess the events, issues and opinions they disseminate. They play an active role in the communication process by expressing their own views and opinions and trying to influence the agenda and attitudes of citizens and political actors. The media is regarded as either ordinary mediating agencies for events and issues without any consideration of political bias in selection and interpretation or they are considered as manipulative and manipulated agencies influencing public attitudes and policy decisions without democratic legitimation. However in political communication process the “mass media are participating actors with genuine political interests and goals”³¹. It is assumed that editorials reflect the political views of a newspaper and serve as a forum of presentation for the media’s own view of public affairs.

Framing is a means to organize experience by supplying the context within which a particular occurrence or event is interpreted. Framing thus enables

³⁰ Impact of Editorial Content on the Political Agenda in Germany; Theoretical Assumptions and Open Questions Regarding a Neglected Subject in Mass Communication Research, by Christiane Eilders, Berlin, 1997

³¹ Schulz 1993: 36; page 1996b

the individuals “to locate, perceive, identify and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Snow et al.1986:464). Editors can influence the interpretation and evaluation of events the way these are “framed”. The paper analyzes the editorials of 5 prestige newspapers, similar to the present study. The paper analyzes the issues treated by the newspapers and the actions that political parties took related to these issues. The paper contends that the media is one of the various political actors taking part in the political discourse. ***“If one wants to judge the impact of media on politics, the relative chances of the other institutionalized and non-institutionalized actors to voice their opinions in public debate have to be considered”*** concluded the paper. This is a major contention and has been utilized in this study to explain the influence of mass media and other actors on public opinion in Mauritius.

**CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION AND
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: MEDIA CONTACT,
ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICS**

- **THE FREEDOM TO COMMUNICATE**
 - **MEDIA AND POLITICAL OPINION**
- **JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- **STUDY APPROACHES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: MEDIA CONTACT, ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICS

4.A The Freedom to Communicate

The principle in a working democracy is that *“all human being are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”*³².

There are however two fundamental elements that guide communication channels. Firstly, all people have got the right and freedom to inform and be informed on all matters of common interest. All individuals and organizations are free to express any idea, opinions in any form. Secondly, all freedoms have got limitations. Everybody is free to speak or express an opinion but is limited by culture, ethics, and rule of law. Hence the journalists, while dedicated to provide all information to the readers and viewers, are restricted by the deontological code and law which will determine their contents, languages, styles, information imparted. In the area of politics, the role of the journalist is to provide information and report on programs and activities of all political activities in a *fair and balanced* manner.

In politics, there are two distinct classes: the “few” specialized class that form the elite of the decision makers and “politicians”, and the “majority” that goes

³² Article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights

for electing the “few”. The journalist becomes the mediator between the “few” and the “majority”. Guided by the need to impart information and the deontological code, the journalist is also the judge on **what** and **how** to deliver. The journalist hence distinguishes between **who** the “few” and “majority” are, and **why** and which information needs to be discerned from one to another, and **where and when** the information is to be given.

Everything that happens is not necessarily news, unless it is reported in the media. The media reports should not only be “**news worthy**” but sometimes have to match also with what editors wish to publish or go on the air. The media always chooses which of “news” need coverage and how. The choices depend on many factors:

- First, very often the editors look for a “news story” that can be told and sold, and that displays the attribute of drama, and suspense and involves conflict, problem and denouement that would sustain the interest of the audience. The journalist John B Bogart’s wrote “**When a dog bites a man, this is not news, because it happens so often. But if a man bites a dog, this is news**”³³. This phrase describes a phenomenon in journalism in which an unusual, infrequent event is more likely to be reported as news than an ordinary, everyday occurrence. The news media generally consider an event more newsworthy if there is

³³ John B Bogart(1848-1921), City Editor “ The Sun” USA

something unusual about it; a commonplace event is unlikely to be taken as newsworthy. The result is that rare events often appear in headlines while common events rarely do, making the rare events seem more common than they are.

- Second is the element of something that is novel and current. News should be “new” and “different” from ordinary affairs.
- Third is the element of sensationalism, something which is dramatic and scandalous. However, it is important that the readers and viewers find the news coverage relevant and of concern to them. Relevance to the listeners, viewers and readers like their health hazards, the risk of rising unemployment, the increase price of food, and locality where they live... creates high impact and involves greater engagement of the “consuming” audience.
- Finally, celebrities and well known people are also news makers. The viewer, listener or reader, however passive he/she could be, is always inquisitive about celebrities.

Of course there are many other elements or characteristics that make an event newsworthy. The journalist is free to present whatever they think and perceive to be important for the public to know. This freedom to communicate has ushered important changes in history. The Watergate Scandal – an epic tale of crime and cover up at the highest level of US Government pitted the

Washington Post against the President of the most powerful nation of the world. Unveiled by the Washington Post (Picture VI), the Watergate scandal led to the resignation of the President Richard Nixon and earned the Washington Post the Pulitzer Prize³⁴.

PICTURE VI



³⁴ The **Pulitzer Prize** is a U.S. award for achievements in newspaper and online journalism, literature and musical composition. It was established by Hungarian-American publisher Joseph Pulitzer and is administered by Columbia University in New York City. Prizes are awarded yearly in twenty-one categories. In twenty of these, each winner receives a certificate and a US\$10,000 cash award. The winner in the public service category of the journalism competition is awarded a gold medal, which always goes to a newspaper, although an individual may be named in the citation.

4. B. Media and Public Opinion

The **Agenda-Setting Theory** postulates that the news media have a large influence on audiences by their choice of what stories to consider newsworthy and how much prominence and space to give them. Agenda-setting theory's main postulate is salience³⁵ transfer. Salience transfer is the ability of the news media to transfer issues of importance from their news media agendas to public agendas. Through their day-by-day selection and display of the news, editors and news directors focus the audience's attention and influence its perceptions of what are the most important issues of the day. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the agenda setting role of the news media.

The media agenda is the set of issues addressed by media sources and the public agenda which are issues the public consider important. ¹Agenda-setting theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw³⁶ in their ground breaking study of the role of the media in 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The theory explains the correlation

³⁵ **Salience** is the state or condition of being prominent. The Oxford English Dictionary defines salience as "most noticeable or important." The concept is discussed in communication, semiotics, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and political science. It has been studied with respect to interpersonal communication, persuasion, politics, and its influence on mass media.

³⁶ McCombs, M.E., and D.L. Shaw. (1972) The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36 p. 176-187

between the rate at which media cover a story and the extent that people think that this story is important.

The agenda-setting function has multiple components:

- Media agenda are issues discussed in the media, such as newspapers, television, and radio.
- Public agenda are issues discussed among members of the public.
- Policy agenda are issues that policy makers consider important, such as legislators.
- Corporate agenda are issues that big corporations consider important.

These four agendas are interrelated. The two basic assumptions that underlie most research on agenda-setting are that the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it, and the media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

The media uses diffusion to spread ideas and aid in its agenda setting. Opinion Leaders and boundary spanners are very important to the media at using their networks to pass on the flow of information.

An opinion leader is often someone who is thought of by others to know a significant amount of information on a topic or is an "expert". This could be anyone from a specialist in a certain field, a politician who is the head of a specific congressional committee, or a mom who is very active in the PTA. They are often at the center of a social network, more attentive to outside

information and capable of influence. Since the opinion leaders are those in a social network who are most likely to watch the news or pay attention to the news media, they are an extremely important tool at spreading information to the masses.

4. B. Accessibility Bias and Opinion Shapers

'Accessibility bias' argument stipulates that opinions, judgment and decisions are made on the basis of those information that are more accessible and are easily retrieved from the memory. Those informations that are more easily retrieved from the memory are those that are more frequently and more recently conveyed by the media.

The Accessibility Bias is effective because people are cognitive misers. They do not pay attention to every single subject. They also like to use heuristic methods (finding easy good enough solution, without lengthy research) or "shortcuts" when it comes to learning about topics that they may not have an interest in. So if the news media decides to show a certain topic more often than another it shapes the agenda and shapes what people remember and call back to at a later time.

4.C. The Cognitive Effects Model

Cognition is a term referring to the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension, including thinking, knowing, remembering, judging and problem-solving. These are higher-level functions of the brain and encompass language, imagination, perception and planning. The Cognitive Effects Model postulates that the media has an indirect influence on people's attitude. The public already has their set of ideas and opinions and the media cannot do much to change those. However by harping repeatedly on an issue, the media can influence level of importance the public ascribe to the issue. For example, if the media report more on the economy than on other issues, people would end by giving more importance to economic issues than others in their reasoning. This is a means by which the media "set the agenda". This suggests that the media do not directly affect "how" the public think, but in fact affect "what" the public think.

There are several theoretical concepts that fall under the umbrella of agenda setting such as priming and framing. According to the concept of **Priming**, news media exposure presumably causes the activation of related knowledge, which is more likely to be retrieved and used in later judgments because it is more accessible in memory and comes to mind spontaneously and effortlessly. It's the actual act of linking two different elements in order to generate a general known idea. The concept of priming is supported by the accessibility bias argument. **Prime setting effect** occurs when news content

suggest to news audiences that they ought to use specific issues as benchmarks(economic, social, poverty etc) for evaluating the performance of leaders and government.

Framing is defined as the selection of - and emphasis upon - particular attributes for the news media agenda when talking about an object (the fact of cutting and trimming news stories in order to filter it and shape it as the sender wish and placing various degrees of emphasis on the attributes of persons, public issues or other objects when they think or talk about them). In other words, **framing effect** is not related to just what is said in news reports, but how they are characterized and presented. It is through this unique characterization/portrayal of issues/objects that communicates certain meanings to audiences apart from just stating facts and figures; the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Other studies however do not support the agenda setting theory and consider that the correlation between media agenda and public agenda is not causal. They contend that the news media is just responding to the already 'existing" public agenda; that the media is just providing what the public wants and is not actually changing the public agenda.

The power of the media though explained in varied approaches is undeniable. While the media can be agenda setting in certain conditions and with certain audiences, it can also trigger some aspects of political life which were altogether forgotten or simply never primed. Hence the **“prime setting effect” or “framing effect”** could be as powerful, pervasive and determining in shaping public opinion. Media priming is a more specific aspect of agenda setting. Politicians tend to direct discussions on issues on which they have the strongest reputation. For example at the 2008 American presidential election, experience, faith and patriotism as against change and hope were primed and constituted a driving force in the choice of the candidate.

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter”

**The 3rd US President
Thomas Jefferson
(1787)**

The media however remains an important catalyst and driving force during elections. Candidates with no media support are always marginalized. The public has moreover become highly dependent on the media for information and impressions. During election campaign, the media is on the alert as this is the peak season of the media industry. Given that the figure is public, the issue is national, the stake is very high, it is always fascinating to study the impact of the driving force that can shape or reshape the whole national scenario and direction, and change the life pattern of a whole nation with just a stroke of the pen or the release of spoken or visual “news”. In an open

democracy, the media can make or break a candidate. The gains or damage could be very lasting and imprinting. Thomas Patterson, contends "*Today's presidential campaign is essentially a mass media campaign.... for the majority of voters, the campaign has little reality apart from its media version*"³⁷.

4.D Journalism and Public Participation: Two Concepts of Democracy

Even though there is no specific, universally accepted definition of 'democracy', there are two principles that any definition of democracy includes: equality and freedom. These principles are reflected by all citizens being equal before the law, and having equal access to power. Additionally, all citizens are able to enjoy legitimized freedoms and liberties, which are usually protected by a constitution.

There are several varieties of democracy, some of which provide better representation and more freedoms for their citizens than others. There are two concepts of democracy, namely open and controlled. Open Democracy is characterized by equality and freedom among the citizens. Usually the most popular form of open democracy is the parliamentary system at which the people elect at free election their representatives at the parliament. These representatives are accountable to the electorate and need to answer to them

³⁷ Patterson Thomas: *Mass Media Election*, pp 44-45; cited by Dean E. Alger in *The Media and Politics* ; pp 188

in terms of accomplishments after a fixed period of time as determined by the Constitution of the country. On the other hand controlled democracy is hostile to open democracy, or parliamentary democracy, and contends that a certain degree of control over the mass of people is essential to pursue effective policy decisions.

Controlled Democracy

Walter Lippmann believed that there are two classes of citizens:

- (1) The "FEW" - those who run the affairs of the country. The "few" specialized class that analyze, execute and make decisions and run the country.
- (2) The "MAJORITY"- those who form the mass. The big majority which Lippmann called "*the bewildered herd*" who function like spectators who are occasionally allowed to voice their opinion in the elections.

Lippmann contends that the majority spectators do not have the capacity to govern and must eventually be barred from managing the country. The assumption is general public is just too stupid and if they are involved in running the country, they are just going to cause trouble. Hence they need to be "tamed" and constantly "distracted".

Open Democracy

John Dewey on the other hand contends that the “majority” is as enlightened as the “few” and has the capacity to actively participate together with the few in decision making and policy formulation. He believes that we are all equally empowered and have the capacity to take part in any activity at the same level. He hence proposes Community Journalism to make the public participate fully and openly in public debate.

4.E Journalism and Public Participation: Two Schools of Thought

There are hence two distinct schools of thought that still characterize the debate on the role of journalism in a democracy; one is supported by Walter Lippmann and the other by John Dewey.

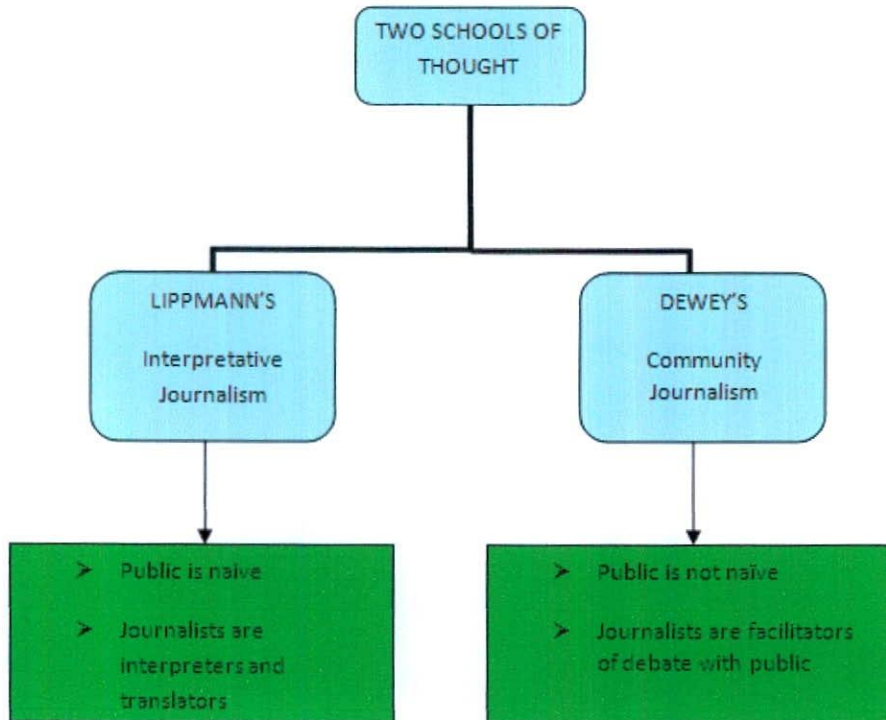
Lippmann proposes *Interpretative Journalism* and believes that the role of a journalist is to act as a moderator or translator to the general public who do not understand the complexities of political issues and at times they are too engrossed into their daily life that they just don't care about complex public policy. The journalist has got the important role to bring to the masses information that is understood by them in a language that they can consume. Hence journalists should play the role of interpreter, translator of complex policy decision to the masses. In so doing, the journalists also act as a watchdog over the decision makers, as the latter depends on the votes of the public to stay in power. The journalists ensure that, by sharing information to

the public, the latter will effectively exercise its voting power at general election.

Dewey on the other hand proposes *Community Journalism* and does not believe that the public are naïve and that they do not understand political issues emanated from the decision makers. He believes that besides informing the public, the journalist should also weigh the consequences of political decisions and policies. Hence besides informing the public, he believes that the journalist has also the important role to actively involve the community in the debate over political issues.

Community Journalism is at the center of new developments in the field. In this new paradigm, journalists are able to engage citizens and experts in the community in political discussions. Dewey believes in shared knowledge as being superior to individual knowledge. In Dewey's framework, though experts and scholars are welcome in the discussions, there is no superiority or any hierarchical structure as against Lippmann's understanding of journalism and society.

Figure 2



In Mauritius as in all functioning democracy, the media plays both the role of an interpreter and facilitator of discussion and information sharing among the public. Readers, viewers and listeners are involved in discussions on various issues that are debated both at the written and spoken press. Though the written press has the liberty to screen letters and opinions sent by readers before publishing, in live radio and TV debates, such kind of censorship is difficult. All listeners and viewers express their concerns in surprisingly equal force, be it a street vendor or an office manager.

4.F Mismatch between Theory and Practice

All countries nowadays claim to be democratic, whether it is controlled or open. In the most “open” democracies like United States and United Kingdom, a “controlled” form of governance exists. Some contend that the Lippmann’s approach borders “Leninism”, and condemn withholding information to the public as undemocratic. The journalists in most of “open” democracies do withhold their source of information, in the name of deontological code or for “security reasons”. There is a growing realization of a mismatch between the theory and practice of communications. The journalist will always claim loud and high on the independence of their thoughts, and their respect of the deontological code in being fair, balanced and just in reporting. All journalists who have been interviewed for this study have indistinctively praised the independence and fairness of journalists. However the politics of journalism in reality is dictated by a set of intricacies from within and outside the immediate environment of the journalists and which makes the communication very often a mere semblance of independence and fairness.

The media world is a business world and journalists with their own judgment of the degree of assimilation that the audience is capable of, impart and share news, opinions and views in a business-like manner. The recipient of the message uses the messages to construct his/her own judgment as per his/her own ability to assimilate, and depending whether he/she is among the “few”

alert audience or the “majority” naïve audience. The “giver” of the messages has the liberty of choice on the 5 Ws and 1 H principle in covering media news, as explained in Chapter 1 of this study.



The journalist, in whatever forms of democracy he/she finds himself / herself, has a personal judgment on the “few” and “majority” audiences. As a mediator, the journalist touches both audiences. He may be privileged with the “few” that would make his information more selective and “competitive” vis-à-vis fellow colleagues and appealing more to the “majority” and hence doing better business. In the real world of business, the holder of a Masters degree in Business Administration is not ensured success in business, because theory and practice are not always congruent.

In addition, most self-claimed independent journalists in both the spoken and written press are not alien to manipulation and political bashing.

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4. G The Media in Elections: Study Approaches

This study has analyzed two schools of thoughts pertaining to the engagement of the audience to a media contact, namely Lippmann's and Dewey's. These two schools of thoughts have thrown light on how the public could be perceived as an audience during an electoral campaign. It has also utilized the two methodological approaches that have been used in assessing the impact of the media on the public during election campaign, namely the

Patterson Approach and the Robinson Approach. These two approaches would be further highlighted in discussing the Conceptual Framework that has been used for the analysis of the findings in this study.

The Patterson Approach

If the mass media is an important opinion shaper during the election, then it is important to understand what the media is communicating to its audience. The media will select and choose news item which it feels important and satisfying to what it wants the audience to know. *“Election news results from a series of decision made by the news organization about what to observe, what to report, and what emphasis to place on various parts of the coverage.”*³⁸

Thomas Patterson Approach in studying the impact and influence of the media in election in 1996 in US has been widely documented and is referred to as one of the best approaches in media studies, despite its weakness of not having analyzed the effect of political advertisements in his study. Patterson considers that one of the best ways to study the influence during election is to do **Content Analysis** of the news item. It is not possible however to analyze all the contents of all news items of all the actors in the

³⁸ Patterson Thomas: *The Mass Media Election*, pp 9.

mass media. Thomas Patterson while studying the media in the 1976 presidential election in US chose samples of news items in selected major news networks in each of the major geographical coverage, and analyzed their contents of the news in terms of:

- Date of the news item
- Attached photos to the news item
- Length of the news item
- Position of the news item in the medium (Front page or early broadcast)
- Principal subject and actor
- Favoring or not the actor
- Reference to personal qualities of candidates

Patterson considered that it is not only important to know what has been communicated to the public, who communicated and how, but also what has been the response from the public, that is the degree of engagement from the public. To understand the media effect, Patterson interviewed the voters as many as seven times in the course of the campaign after the election, on their awareness of election issues. It is felt that in order to analyze the effect of the media during the election, it is important to establish the state of mind of the people before a media contact, to establish the "baseline". Hence Patterson conducted the baseline interview before the election and a series of interviews with a panel of people several times during the course of the campaign to determine the effect of the exposure to the media. There is however the risk of "*reinterview-sensitization*" which may constitute sensitizing public opinion

on “news item” by the interviewers themselves, and which was not known to them before, and which may give false conclusions. Patterson does not consider it however to be a significant factor in altering the conclusions.

The Robinson Approach

Michael Robinson and Margaret Sheehan conducted a study on the role of the media in the presidential election of 1980. Michael Robinson has been a pioneer in the study of the media in politics. In the study that he conducted together with Margaret Sheehan in 1980, they not only analyzed the content of news but also compared the print with the TV coverage to see if and how they differed. They used five criteria in their analysis model, namely *Objectivity*, *Equity*, *Fairness*, *Seriousness* and *Comprehensiveness*, as explained in Chapter 3.

The problem in Robinson approach is to rightly evaluate what is an objective coverage and how much “*insinuations*” that a particular word or sentence in a press report can carry. While assessing the objectivity of a report, subjectivity of the assessor in terms of his/her interpretation of “non-overt” facts and “insinuations” are always present. Similarly to determine the “fairness” of coverage, Robinson and Sheehan assessed how much “positive information” and ‘negative information” a coverage contained. If coverage on a candidate has as much as three times positive information as negative, the coverage is judged “**Good Press**” for the candidate in question.

4.H Conceptual Framework for this study

This study has developed a unique Conceptual Framework using as background the two schools of thoughts pertaining to the engagement of the electorate to a media contact and the two methodological approaches previously used in assessing the impact of a media contact on the electorate. The actual situation prevailing in Mauritius where this study has been conducted demonstrated that the electorate is perceived to be neither totally “alert” nor totally “naïve”. Hence a midway between the two schools of thoughts (Lippmann and Dewey) is considered realistic in describing the Mauritian electorate. Likewise a mix of the Patterson and Robinson approaches has been utilized in the analysis of data, which consists of the analysis of questionnaires administered among the public, interviews with journalists and politicians and content analysis of editorials and opinions expressed during electoral campaign in newspapers. However before describing the process of analysis within the Conceptual Framework, it is important that the term ‘engagement’ is clarified.

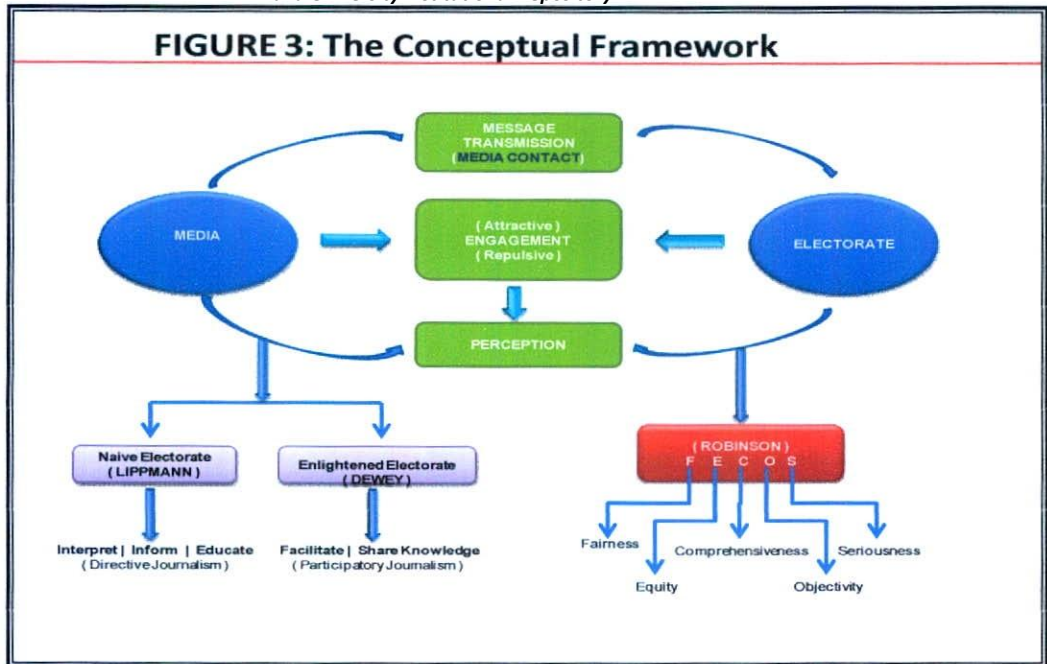
4.H.1 The Media Engagement in Politics

The term “Engagement” refers to the degree of involvement that a particular audience has as a result of a media contact. All media contacts and their outcomes are not necessarily engagement. Somebody referring a magazine which one comes across inadvertently to another person shows the outcome of a media contact. However if the other person in turn emits a reaction to the content of the magazine, then there is an engagement, which could be positive or negative. Similarly when the wife watches a football match on TV with the husband just out of a sentiment of companionship, but without any particular interest in football, there is a media contact without any engagement.

An engagement entails a sense of involvement, of being connected with. A media contact embodies engagement when it provokes a particular conscious or unconscious experience and reaction, like talking about and sharing what is read or seen and heard in the media. The experience could be positive, that is generating an attractive feeling to a media contact; or negative, that is generating a feeling repulsion to it. Hence reading a newspaper may not emit any sense of engagement from the reader, or if it does, the engagement could be positive or negative.

4.H.2 The Analytical Process within the Conceptual Framework

This Conceptual Framework has been developed using the concept of engagement explained above. It explains the process of message transmission from the media, to the electorate which creates a media contact. Once messages are transmitted, an engagement may be expected from the receiver. The nature of the engagement would be determined by the perceptions that the transmitter and receiver of the messages have on each other. The engagement of the electorate to a media contact as shown in the Conceptual Framework below is determined by how the electorate perceives a message in terms of its fairness, equity, comprehensiveness, objectivity and seriousness. If the electorate does not consider the media contact as important there may be no engagement at all. However if the electorate is agreeable to the opinion expressed in the message, there may be a positive or attractive engagement, and in this case the reaction of the electorate will be positive to the media contact. However if the electorate is not agreeable with the message, the electorate engagement could be negative or repulsive. Similarly the engagement of the media on the electorate is determined by perception that the media has on the electorate, that is whether the media consider the electorate to be “naive” or “enlightened”.



The Conceptual Framework shown in Figure 3 used in this study is a blend of various approaches and concepts. The steps are summarized below:

1. A media contact through a message transmission from the media to the electorate, may create no engagement or an engagement which could be either positive or negative.
2. The degree and nature of engagement depends on how
 - (a) the electorate perceive the media
 - (b) the media perceive the electorate
3. The perception that the electorate have on the media depends on their judgment of the media in terms of its fairness, equitability, comprehensiveness, objectivity and seriousness, as explained by Robinson.
4. The perception that the media have on the electorate depends on whether they judge the electorate to be naive (as contends Lippmann) or enlightened, (as contends Dewey)

To understand the degree of engagement and the perceptions of both the media and the electorate during the election campaign of 2005 in Mauritius, and also the impact and influence of the media on the electorate as opinion shapers, the following survey instruments were used in this study:

1. 400 Semi structured interviews of general public
2. 45 Open interviews with politicians and journalists
3. 639 Analysis of editorials and opinions expressed in 5 major newspapers

In the case of Mauritius it is assumed that the electorate is not naïve, given that there is a high literacy rate that that there is a continuously growing culture of for media exposure. However it cannot also be asserted that the electorate is completely alert on all political issues. There is no high level of debate on policy decisions in the community and most of the discussions centre on issues that affect the public directly, like increase in prices, unemployment and level of salary. With the widespread access of the public to both the electronic and written media, it is assumed that the media do have an importance in knowledge and information sharing.

It is true that the media can make or break a candidate at an election. Al Gore lost the Presidency in USA against George Bush in 2000 despite being perceived as more articulate, intelligent and capable than George Bush. This was essentially because of his conflicting rapport and arrogance vis a vis the media, as described Chapter 3. However in Mauritius during the 2005 general election the situation was different.

Almost all the media in Mauritius (both electronic and written) before and during the general election in 2005 were pro-government. Opinion polls released by the media forecasted a win of the government alliance at the general election. The very powerful National Radio and TV together with most widely read newspapers were overtly in favor of the Government. In spite of this very favorable conditions created by the media, the government lost the election. It is not well understood whether the public always take the media to be trustworthy and creditworthy. Hence this study intended to explore the extent to which the media was influential as opinion shapers during the election campaign in 2005. There is also another interesting dimension of the media landscapes in Mauritius in terms of press ownership. Mauritius is a multi cultural country with coexistence of people with different ethnic background. It is contended that each ethnic group tends to associated itself to the press which it perceives to be close to them.

Traditionally the Labour Party was looked upon as a party of the Hindus (Majority) and has almost always been led by a Hindu. The only major newspaper that was owned by a Hindu was "Le Matinal" and was considered to be pro- Labour Party. All the other major newspapers (Le Mauricien, L'Express, Weekend, 5 Plus) were owned by the Christians (Minority), and considered to be close to the MMM party, whose leader was a Christian. One newspaper which was also popular (Défi Plus) was owned by the Muslims.

This study hence used a framework which analyzed the extent of engagement between the media and the electorate during an election campaign, the power

of the media in agenda setting, priming and framing to shape the opinion of the electorate, the perception of the electorate on the media and vice versa using a mix of the Patterson and Robinson approaches taking into consideration the cultural and ethnic diversity of the country and its possible nuance with the newspapers' stand and opinions emitted.

**CHAPTER 5: HYPOTHESES, OBJECTIVES AND
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- **THE HYPOTHESES**
- **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**
- **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

CHAPTER 5

HYPOTHESES, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.A The Hypotheses

Mauritius is a multi racial country and groups the three main religions of the world: namely Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. There has a small population of Buddhists which is negligible. It is an open democracy and all is eligible to vote at the age of 18. Election takes place every 5 years. In 2005 the opposition alliance won the election against the Governing alliance despite the presence of a strong media which were almost all supporting the government. The population is very literate; radio, television and newspaper reading are widespread across the country. Hence the influence of the media as opinion shapers is questioned. The receptibility of the public to media messages is also questioned. The quality of messages transmitted is questioned. The power of the press as a “necessary” factor to influence electorate is questioned. It is hypothesized that

1. Engagement of the media and the electorate is not necessarily indicative of the outcome of a general election
2. The media may be a “necessary” but not a “sufficient” factor to influence public opinions
3. The public is more often a silent observer and act as per their conviction during an election, and not necessarily on media opinions

4. All the media have an agenda despite claiming independence
5. Different ethnic groups associate differently with different media channels, in relation to what each perceive as closer to their aspirations and interest

5.B Objectives of this study

Public opinion is influenced by political manifestos of political parties, the quality of the candidates that are presented, the types of campaign that are being undertaken, i.e. through public meetings and gatherings, door to door campaign, posters and print materials distributed, debates on radio and TV, articles in the press and others. It is not possible to have a thorough understanding of all the influential factors in a single study. It is common knowledge that the press can “make or break” a candidate's chance of winning an election. Different case studies have shown the power of the media as a determining factor, and this has also been documented during this study. However the case of Mauritius may show a different picture. It is not sure that the media is really influential during the election. During the election campaign of 2005 in Mauritius there are contradicting evidences that go against popular belief of the influence of the media. This study aims at understanding the degree of influence of the spoken and electronic media on the electorate as opinion shapers and also at elucidating the “make or break” power factor of the press during the election campaign of 2005. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To understand the influence of mass media during the electoral campaign of 2005,
2. To gauge public opinion on the ways the written and spoken press have exercised their role during the electoral campaign
3. To comprehend the expectations of the voters on the role of the press and whether the latter have performed according to these expectations.
4. To understand the perception of the electorate in terms of their age, gender, ethnicity, educational and their geographical (urban, rural) distributions on the influence of the media as opinion shapers
5. To understand the opinions of the politicians on the importance and use of the media during an electoral campaign
6. To study the contents of editorials and opinions of journalists on issues of public interest during the year of electoral campaign and find out whether the opinions expressed in the press had any impact on the electorate.
7. To understand the perceptions of different ethnic groups on how informative and manipulative have the media been during the electoral campaign
8. To determine the extent to which the media have been biased, partisan and manipulative

5.C Research Methodology

This study seeks to analyze the degree of engagement of the media contact (both written and spoken) on the audience in 2005, a year of general election in Mauritius. It seeks to identify the degree to which the spoken and written press has had impact on the voters in their choice of candidates or political parties during the general election of 2005 in Mauritius. In administering this work, the methodology utilized is described below.

The methodology used in this study is a mix of the main tenants of Patterson and Robinson Approaches. These two approaches have been described earlier in Chapter 4. The methodology used in this work is not as comprehensive as Patterson Approach as it does not have a baseline to compare change in opinion of the audience before and after the election nor has a singular group of electorate had been selected for constant follow up as the election campaign unfolds; nor is it as detailed as Robertson Approach. It is limited to only one year and reaches major newspapers and radio and TV channels that are known to be most popular. It uses the Content Analysis of Press Editorials and opinions of selected newspapers with mix criteria of analysis from both Patterson and Roberson Approaches. The researcher set up a Review Team – a panel of 4 persons (1 journalist, 1 politician, 1 statistician and 1 teacher- representing the member of the general public) to review the analysis of opinions expressed in these newspapers clustered into

different groupings. As prescribed by the Robinson Approach, it also analyses the influence of the Spoken press.

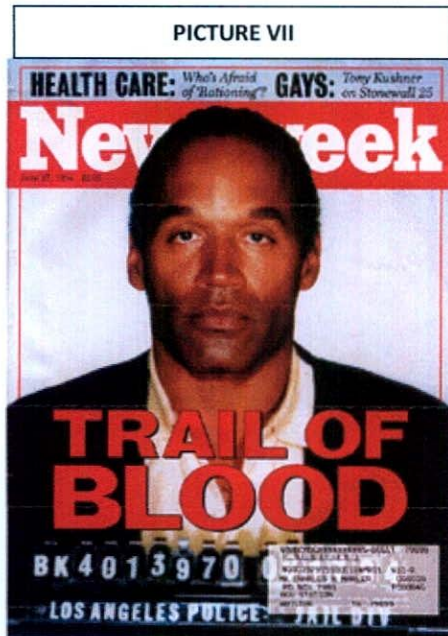
The study however is wide enough as it gathered information from a wide cross section of the general public across the country and reaching all ethnic groups with different socioeconomic background to selected targeted audiences like politicians, and journalists.

5.C.1 Distinction between Informative and Manipulative Media

In this study distinction will be made between “**Informative**” and “**Manipulative**” media. Hence, it is important at the outset to define the terms “Informative” and “manipulative” media. The term “informative media” in this study is used to describe all types of reporting by the media that give factual descriptions of incidents, statements and speeches and that do not carry any value judgment, personal views or opinions of the reporter. Informative media is blank news without any comment from the journalist, nor of anybody. However not all informations are given as factual. Very often the journalists comment on or interpret news items. In such cases, the information is colored with subjectivity. Here lies the risk of the journalists becoming “manipulative”.

Media manipulation is an aspect of public relations in which partisans create an image or argument that favors their particular interests. Such tactics may

include the use of logical fallacies and propaganda techniques, and often involve the suppression of information or points of view by crowding them out, by inducing other people or groups of people to stop listening to certain arguments, or by simply diverting attention elsewhere. Many of the more modern mass media manipulation methods are types of distraction, on the assumption that the public has a limited attention span. Very often the journalist manipulates photographs, stills or videos to give a picture of an event or a person which the journalists wants to portray. A comparison between the cover pages of the "Time" and "Newsweek" magazines of the same photograph of O.J Simpson in July 1997 shows the different intentions in portraying Simpson after his arrest for the murder of his wife. The cover photo of "Time" Magazine of Simpson which portrays the latter darker, and which emphasized the shadow of his face, induced negativity and irritation. However, the cover photo of Simpson in "Newsweek" during the same period was the same police photograph without any alteration, and gave an opposite picture than that used by "Time" Magazine. Simpson was later acquitted by the Court. This example shows how images can be manipulative to achieve the desired dramatic effect as shown in the pictures below:



News are not always neutral in coverage. John Hartley writes: *“one of the primary functions of the news is continuously to signify myths through the everyday retail of “newsworthy” events”*³⁹. It is important for the audience to learn the skill to decode visual language elements in news content and “understand how the techniques and conventions of news coverage are used to construct a mediated version of reality that is almost a poor substitute for actuality”⁴⁰... otherwise the audience will always agree to what they see and hear without questioning their validity and authenticity.

³⁹ Hartley, John: *Understanding News*, p.29-30; New York, Routledge, 1982

⁴⁰ Leah Katherine Hathaway Brigham: “Decoding Visual language Elements in News Content” Thesis, Massachusetts College of arts, May 2002, Massachusetts, USA

5.D Sources of Data, Survey Instrument and Sample Size

The study used both secondary and primary data. The first step in data collection is to look for secondary data. These are data that already exists in the form of journals, articles, books etc. for some purpose other than the issue at hand. The data that are still needed after that search is completed will have to be developed specifically for this research project and are known as primary data.

Questionnaires and interviews were used for collection of data, and discussions were held based on semi-structured interviews and open ended checklists. This study administered questionnaires to the general public, conducted interviews and discussions with main stakeholders, namely journalists and politicians, and these constitute the source of primary data. On the other hand, literature review and content analysis of editorials and opinions expressed in newspapers during the period of election campaign (January 2005-June 2005) constitute the source of secondary data.

5.D.1 Primary Data

Primary source of data were from interviews through questionnaires to the general public (400 respondents) and also through interviews with selected audiences (50 respondents) having particular interest in the ways opinions are shaped during an election, namely journalists and politicians.

▪ **Questionnaires among the General Public**

The questions were designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. A mixture of closed and open format was used but care was taken for the questions to be clear, succinct and unambiguous so as to avoid the questions being interpreted differently by different interviewers. The questionnaires furthermore do not have any leading, embarrassing and hypothetical questions. The questionnaires were **pre-tested** among 20 individuals consisting of people from different background, including politicians and journalists. Valuable suggestions were made by respondents during the pre-test and all were incorporated when finalizing the questionnaire. On the suggestions of many, a question was added to give to respondents the liberty to express any other general opinion they wish. The questionnaires were also expanded to give scope for the respondents to give any comment on any question asked.

400 questionnaires of 25 questions each were administered by **20 research assistants**. These research assistants were briefed thoroughly on the questionnaires and oriented to facilitate the administering of the questionnaires to the public, and ensuring confidentiality of statements made by respondents. A special meeting facilitated by the main Researcher was organized with the research assistants to explain the objectives of the study and also to brief them on the ways and means to collect relevant and unbiased information. The main Researcher also administered the questions especially but not exclusively to high profile respondents. Making provisions

for faulty or inadequate information gathered from the questionnaires, 420 questionnaires were administered among which 400 were retained after a quality control.

The questionnaire was divided finally divided into 3 sections, the first section was an introduction, explaining to the interviewees the purpose and objectives of the questionnaire and assuring the interviewees on the confidentiality of views and opinions expressed. The second section sought information on the profile and basic characteristics of the respondents in terms of their age, education, employment, family size and ethnic group. The third section of the questionnaire attempted to gather information on the influence of the media as an opinion shaper, the extent to which exposure to a spoken and written media contact has had influence on the electorate during the general election campaign of 2005, whether the electronic and written media have been informative and manipulative, the perceptions of and expectations of the respondents on the media. The questionnaire also made provision for the respondents to express any other opinions on the media. The questionnaires were administered to men and women from both urban and rural areas reflecting the national sex and geographical distribution.

- **Interviews with Selected Audiences**

Primary data were collected also through interviews with selected audiences that have particular interest in the ways opinions are shaped, viz, the journalists and politicians.

The Mauritian Parliament has 70 parliamentarians and they are all alert especially during election campaign, to the influence of the media. Many engage in and seek press interviews and participate in debates on the TV and radio on political issues. During general election the National TV gives "equitable" amount of air time on both radio and TV to major political parties to voice their opinions on several occasions as the election comes close and these are very much valued both by views and the politicians. Though different political parties present their program separately through different interventions at allocated air time, the national Radio and TV also organize live debates with representatives of different political parties.

Hence this study also collected the opinions of politicians on the influence of the media and its role. Journalists are also important gatekeepers and shapers of opinions and play an important role during the election. Some journalists look at the election period as a peak period for them, a period when they are most challenged. Hence 30 sitting and past parliamentarians and 20 senior journalists were interviewed to collect information on their personal experience with the media and also to understand the importance they give to the media as an influencing factor during election campaign.

These included present and past Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, Leaders of Opposition, Ministers, Junior Ministers, Parliamentarians, Municipal Councilors, political activists, Editors in Chief, editors, reporters, news casters and other journalists from both the written and spoken press. High personalities like former Prime Minister and the Leader of opposition,

sitting and former Ministers were interviewed at their respective offices and residences and this was made possible after constant follow ups on appointments. These interviews were conducted by the researcher himself who was privileged to have worked with and known these high personalities through his previous work assignment in Mauritius. The interviews were conducted in December/ January 2007, January 2008, July 2008, December 2008, and July 2009.

An Interview guideline was developed and the questions to the respondents were related to the personal experience politicians had with journalist and vice versa, the perceptions of the respondents to journalists' reporting of political issues and the extent to which they found the media to be informative, manipulative and independent in their reporting. The interviews with journalist and politicians very often took the form of very informal discussions and hence the set of questions as listed in the interview guideline were not asked to all in the same order.

5.D.2 Secondary Data

A thorough literature review was conducted on the situation of media coverage in and outside Mauritius, on the theoretical approach for analysis of Media Reporting during election campaign. Chapter 3 is dedicated to literature review and highlights all the major literature review conducted. Secondary data was also collected through Content Analysis of Editorials, Opinions and

Views expressed in newspapers. In 2005 there were 16 newspapers in Mauritius, as explained in section 2.D.1. Some were dailies others were weeklies. Among these 16 newspapers, 5 major newspapers were chosen according to their popularity, judged by their number of issues and sales. These 5 newspapers were those that had most number of issues among the dailies and weeklies. These newspapers were

1. Le Mauricien (dailies)
2. L'Express (dailies)
3. Le Matinal (dailies)
4. 5 Plus (weeklies)
5. Weekend (weeklies)

Indeed as revealed by the findings from the questionnaires administered to the general public, these newspapers were confirmed as the most popular newspapers. From these 5 newspapers, 639 opinions and views were collected from January 2005 to July 2005. All Editorials together with opinions expressed by other journalists and readers were collected. While some papers had weekly editorials, others had twice weekly or thrice weekly. Dailies did not have daily editorials.

Content analysis of editorials and opinions expressed was conducted using mix criteria from both Patterson and Robinson approaches.

The following criteria were used:

1. Subject coverage: whether the subjects discussed related to national issues like education, society, judiciary, economy, politics, or to international affairs
2. Reference to political parties and candidates: whether the discussions referred to political manifestos of the different political parties and their candidates
3. Issues reported / discussed: whether the events of political parties are covered and how the political incidents are reported
4. Fairness in reporting: whether the reportings of different political parties like press conferences and communiqués are reported in all fairness and in a balanced manner
5. Nature of coverage: whether the reports are positive, negative or neutral
6. Engagement with electorates: whether the readers or viewers are given opportunity to voice their opinions

The researcher used the **Whole Item Reading formula**, which constituted in reading the whole text of all the opinions expressed in the 5 newspapers during January 2005–June 2005. The contents were clustered into different groupings, namely Economics, Socio-Cultural, International Affairs, Local Politics, and Educational. However some of the opinions expressed were not solely on one issue but a combination of different issues and these were clustered into Miscellaneous Affairs. The researcher set up a **Review Team** (constituting of 4 persons namely 1 journalist, 1 politician, 1 statistician and 1 teacher- representing the member of the general public) to review the analysis

of opinions expressed in these newspapers clustered into different groupings.

The panel also suggested a few changes in the grouping of opinions and these were positively incorporated by the researcher.

5.E Survey Instruments

This study utilized **3 Survey Instruments**, namely:

1. Administration of Questionnaires to the General Public (Primary Data)
2. Interviews with Specific Audiences, viz: Politicians and Journalists (Primary Data)
3. Literature Review and Content Analysis of Editorials and Opinions Expressed in Newspapers during electoral campaign (Secondary Data)

5.F Sample Size

The population of the Republic of Mauritius by 1st July 2005 was 1,206,346 of which 596,498 (49%) were males and 609,848 (51%) were females. 70.9% of the population were above the age of 18, constituting a total of 855,364 that were eligible to vote in 2005. 57% of the populations were living in rural areas, whereas 43 % were living in urban areas. As this study focused on the impact of media influence at general election, obviously the target population would be 70.9 % of the total population of Mauritius who were above 18 and eligible to vote at election. Hence the target population was 855,364.

Total Population : **1, 206,346**

Population below 18 : 350982

Population above 18 : 855364

Target Population : 855,364

In the study, the random sampling technique was adopted. Sample size was determined through statistical confident test using the following formula:

$$\text{Sample Size (n)} = \frac{Z^2 Np (1-p)}{Z^2 P (1-P) + e^2 (N- 1)}$$

where

n = Sample Size

Z = Critical value obtained from the normal distribution = 1.96

P = probability of Success = 0.5

p = Probability Parameter = 0.5

e = Acceptable sample error = .05

N = Population Size

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{1.96^2 \times 855,364 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{1.96^2 \times (.5) \times (.5) + (0.05)^2 \times 855363} \\ &= \frac{3.84 \times 213841}{3.84 \times 0.25 + 2138.40} \\ &= \frac{821149.44}{0.96 + 2138.40} \\ &= \frac{821149.44}{2139.36} = 383.8 \end{aligned}$$

Sample Size n = 383.8 = 400 (round figure)

In addition 50 interviews with politicians and journalists, and an analysis of 639 opinions and editorials expressed in 5 major newspapers were conducted.

5.G Data Analysis – The Process

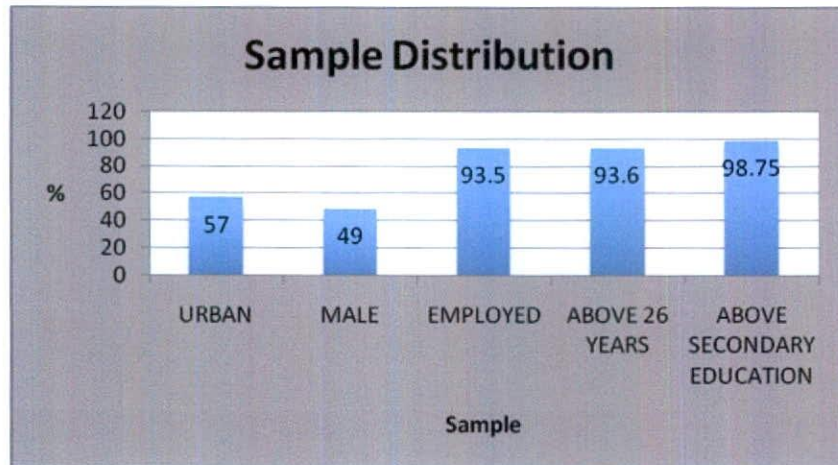
The analysis stage included most intensive deskwork involving processing, synthesizing and analysis of data using ‘*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*’ (**SPSS**) program and presentation in appropriate format for incorporating in the report. Data processing and analysis included code analysis to facilitate the required output generation. The data analysis was conducted first on the sample of respondents’ primary characteristics. A **Review Team** was set up, as explained earlier to review the findings of the content analysis and to match them with the response from the public and journalists to determine the congruity among the findings and provide explanations to any discrepancy. The Panel met on several occasions, individually with the researcher and in group discussions and all the findings were reviewed.

5.H Distribution of Sample

The samples were analyzed in terms of their sex, geographical, age, occupation, education, family and ethnic distributions. 57% of the samples were living in the urban areas, 49% were males, 93.5 % were employed

during the period of study, 93.6% were above the age of 26, and 98.75% had at least secondary education. Figure 4 shows the detailed figures of the distribution of the sample.

Figure 4



5.H 1. Sex and Geographical Distributions of Sample

Given that in 2005, 49% of the total populations in Mauritius were male and 51% were female, and that 57% of the total populations lived in rural areas as against 43% living in urban areas, the sample size of 400 had been divided to reflect both the geographical and sex distributions of population.

Out of 400 respondents, 172 were from urban regions and 228 were from rural regions. These reflected the national percentages of people living in urban and rural areas, which were 43% and 57% respectively in 2005.

In terms of sex distribution, out of the 172 respondents living in urban areas, 88 are females and 84 are males. Out of 228 respondents living in rural areas,

116 are females and 112 are males. These figures also reflect the national percentages of females to males living in Mauritius, which is 51% to 49% respectively.

5.H.2 Age Distribution of Sample

The minimum age for voting in Mauritius is 18 years. Hence the target populations in this study were those above the age of 18. The populations were grouped into 3 distinct categories, reflecting the youth, the middle aged and those above. The three categories were:

- (1) 18 – 25 years
- (2) 26 – 45 years
- (3) 46 years – above

Hence there were 6.5% youth among the respondents, 61.3% among the middle aged and 32.3% above middle age.

5.H.3 Occupational Distribution

While 4% of respondents were students, 94 % were in the working age group, 1 % was retired and 1% was unemployed. This is in line with the fact that the country had reached full employment level and minimum age of work is at 18 years in the country.

5.H.4 Educational Distribution

All respondents have had some form of education and this reflects almost 100% literacy rate in Mauritius. 1.25% of respondents have had primary education, 32.25% secondary, and 66.5% tertiary education. A vast majority of the respondents has had university diploma or degree.

Mauritius has the advantage of having a literate electorate. Education has been free till the tertiary level since 1972. The period under study is 33 years after free education was introduced in the country. The average Mauritanian reads and listens to broadcasts regularly and is well versed on political matters. This study attempts also to understand the impact of media influence during election on those who have had different levels of education, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary, and also to understand which of the media channels proved to be more appealing to which section of the population.

5.H.5 Family and Ethnic Background

9.8 % of the respondents live in a family size of 2 persons, 22.3 % have a family of 3 persons and 68 % have a family of 4 persons and more as shown in Figure 9. This indeed reflects the average family size of Mauritius. Most of families especially those living in the rural areas are joint families with mothers and fathers living together with the children. However the average family size in Mauritius is small essentially because of a low fertility rate. Total Fertility Rate in Mauritius was 2.1 in 2005. 52% of the respondents are Hindus, 28% are Christians and 20% are Muslims. These are the three main religions in

Mauritius and religious distribution of the respondents does reflect the national distribution, with Hindus as the majority group followed by Christians and Muslims.

5.H.6 Voters among Respondents

Nearly four in every five respondents (79.0%) exercised their voting rights while nearly one in every five respondents (21%) did not vote at the last general election in 2005 due to lack of time, interest and absence from the country. Only 1.5% respondents were found not eligible to vote and these constitute essentially those who were below the age of 18 in 2005 during general election.

**CHAPTER 6: ROLE OF MEDIA IN NATIONAL ELECTION
IN MAURITIUS: THE FINDINGS**

SECTION 1

- **FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION FROM
ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES TO GENERAL
PUBLIC**

SECTION 2

- **FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION FROM INTERVIEWS
WITH SPECIFIC AUDIENCES: JOURNALISTS AND
POLITICIANS**

SECTION 3

- **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION FROM CONTENT ANALYSIS
OF EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN
NEWSPAPERS**

SECTION 4

- **SYNTHESIS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

CHAPTER 6

ROLE OF MEDIA IN NATIONAL ELECTION IN MAURITIUS: THE FINDINGS

This Chapter is the core of this research which aims at understanding the role of the media in influencing and shaping opinions of the electorate during the election campaign in Mauritius. It also aims at gauging the perception of the members of the public, the journalists and politicians in particular on the influence of the media on the electorate. As explained in the previous chapter the primary and secondary data were collected through 3 survey instruments, namely

1. Administration of Questionnaires to the General Public (Primary Data)
2. Interviews with Specific Audiences, viz: Politicians and Journalists (Primary Data)
3. Literature Review and Content Analysis of Editorials and Opinions Expressed in Newspapers during electoral campaign (Secondary Data).

Below is an analysis of the findings from these three survey instruments grouped into 4 sections, namely:

Section1: Findings from Administration of Questionnaires to the General Public

Section 2: Findings from Interviews with Specific Audiences,

Section3: Findings from Content Analysis of Editorials and Opinions Expressed in Newspapers

Section 4: Synthesis of Data Analysis

SECTION 1

6.1 Findings and analysis from Administration of questionnaires to general public

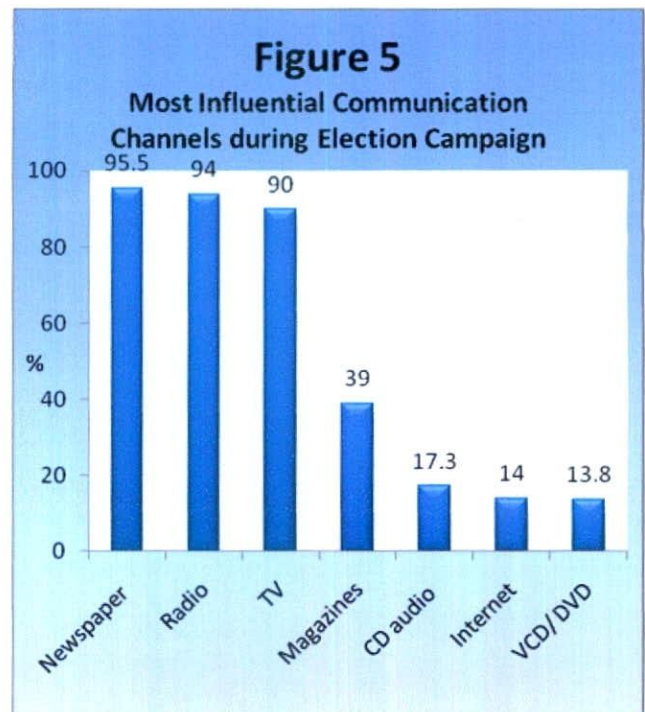
The questionnaires were administered to 400 respondents at work site, in the community and at home among men and women of all classes and education status. Mauritius is divided into 9 districts, and their population ranges between 70,000- 120,000 people each, with the exception of one District called Plaines Wilhems which constitutes of 30 % of the total population of the island. Hence 120 of the samples of 400, constituting of 30% of the respondents were from Plaines Wilhems. 35 respondents from each of the remaining 8 districts were selected. The respondents constituted of people working in Government, NGOs, Private Sector, Municipalities, Village Councils, the civil society, the self employed, retired and unemployed. The majority of respondents nearly 80% were in full time employment, with the rest being students and retired. The profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, geographical, educational, occupational distribution and ethnic background is explained in Section 5.H.

6.1.a The Most Influential Communication Channels

According to the study, the most influential communication channels during the election campaign among the written press was Newspapers and among the electronic media were Radio and Television, which were ranked between 90% to 95%. Magazines were low in influence and were ranked at 39%.

The use of CD/VCD/DVD and Internet was considered to be the least influential.

The breakdown of responses of respondents regarding different media channels is captured in Figure 5. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which newspapers had been influential in shaping opinions of voters during general election campaign. In response to this question, majority (95%)



of the respondents mentioned 'that newspapers are very influential in shaping opinions and a very insignificant number of respondents (5%) stated 'less influential' and 'not influential'. This is indeed in congruence with the opinion

expressed by almost all people around the world, and as depicted also by studies conducted Patterson and Robinson in USA, as explained earlier.

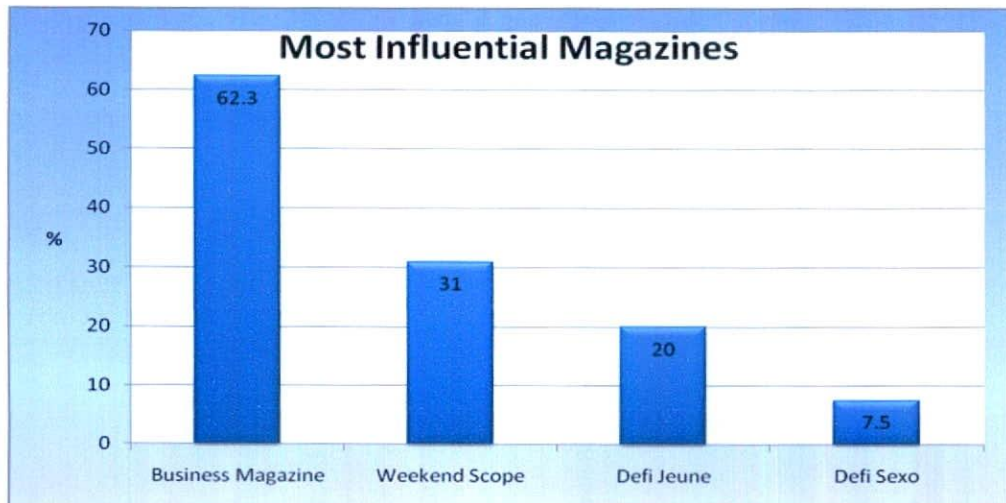
Respondents were further asked to indicate the extent to which the radio has been influential in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign. In response to this question, majority (94%) of the respondents mentioned the radio to be influential and only 16% felt that it was not influential.

90% of respondents also considered TV as a very influential media in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, and 10 % stated 'not influential' or 'less influential'. Despite the fact that there was no private national TV station, respondents agreed almost totally that the government owned TV channels did have important impact on the electorate. It is possible that the majority of the population watched the national TV only because they did not have any other choice.

With regard to the influence of the 'Magazines' in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, majority (61.0%) of the respondents considered 'not influential' while 39 % stated 'influential'. Hence findings showed that magazines were not perceived as important opinion shapers. It is possible that respondents viewed magazines as leisure reading. In fact most of the magazines in Mauritius were for leisure reading and were either weeklies or monthlies, with the exception of one monthly 'Business Magazine' which was more 'serious reading' on economic and financial issues, but had limited audience. 62.3% respondents considered the "Business Magazine", 31.0% mentioned the "Weekend Scope", 20.0% pointed out the "Défi Jeune"

and only 7.5% indicated the "Défi Sexe" as influential magazine in shaping opinion of voters during general election, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6



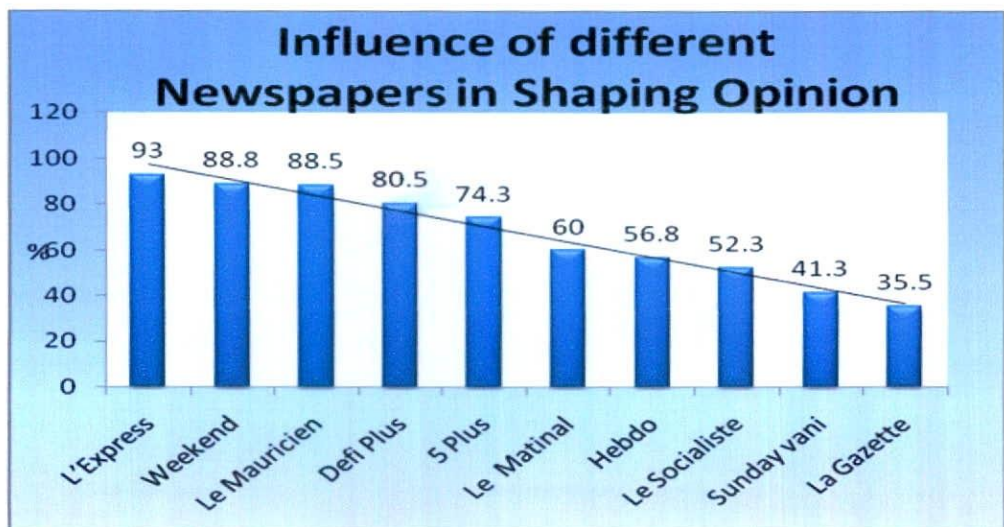
Regarding the influence of the Internet in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, 71.75 % of the respondents considered internet 'Not influential' while 14 % replied 'Influential'. Though internet has been used during the last general election campaign by a few politicians, its impact has not been significant. There is an equal percentage of respondents (14%) who did not respond and also declared that the internet was influential. However as internet and specially the social media network is growing fast and is becoming popular, it is possible that in future Internet would play an important role in shaping political campaign. About the influence of the CD audio in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, majority (67.6%) of the respondents mentioned 'not influential', and 17.3% felt it to be influential. As to the influence of the VCD/DVD in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, majority (72.3%) of the respondents

mentioned 'not influential', or 'less influential', and '13.8% only considered it influential', and a very insignificant number of respondents (3.5%) stated 'most influential'. It is true that during election campaign, a few candidates have used VCD and DVD but these have not proved to be cost effective and popular.

6.1.b Most Influential Newspapers

10 newspapers namely Le Mauricien, Weekend, L 'Express, 5 Plus, Défi Plus, Le Matinal, Le Socialiste, La Gazette, Sunday Vani and Hebdo, were selected in their order of daily issues and coverage and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which these newspapers have been influential in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign. In response to this question, almost all the newspapers were found to be influential in shaping the public opinion, with varying degree of influence, as shown in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7

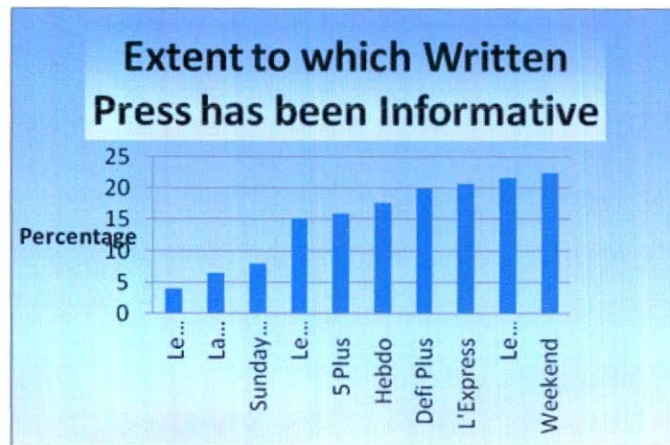


As identified in the study, the "L'Express" ranked at the top as the most influential newspaper. Among the respondents, 93.0% identified "L'Express", 88.8% indicated "Weekend", 88.5% of respondents considered "Le Mauricien", 80.5% pointed out "Défi Plus", 74.3% stated "5 Plus", 60.0% considered "Le Matinal", 56.8% cited "Hebdo", 52.3% mentioned "Le Socialist", 41.3% declared "Sunday Vani" and 35.5% said "La Gazette" as influential in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign. This also indicated the popularity of these newspapers and the six top newspapers were l'Express, Weekend, Le Mauricien, Défi Plus, 5 Plus, and Le Matinal.

6.1.c Most Informative Newspapers

Newspapers have not been considered to be a powerful source of information compared to the electronic media. The highest ranking newspaper in terms of information sharing was Weekend at 23%. Weekend, Le Mauricien and L'Express were considered the most informative newspapers, however they rank between 20% to 23% of respondents. The least informative newspapers were Le Socialiste, La Gazette and Sunday Vani, as shown in **Figure 8**.

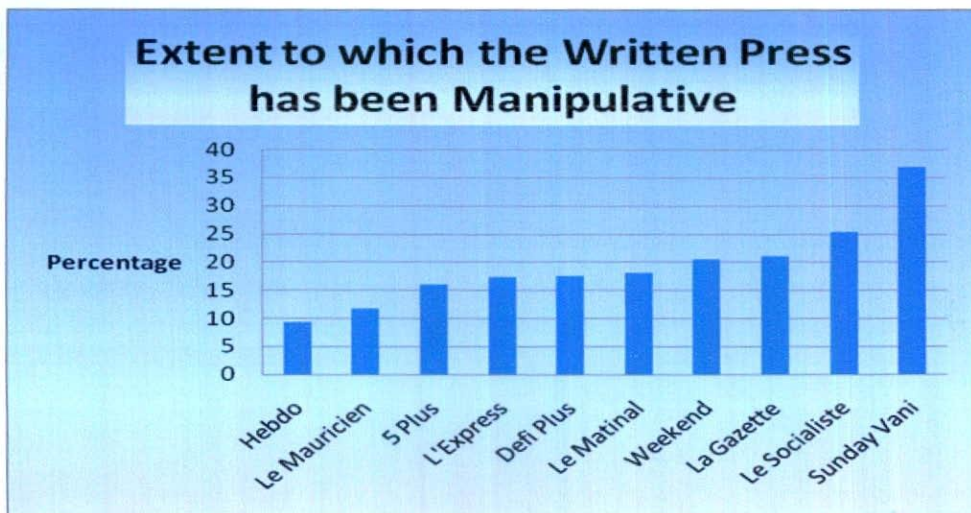
FIGURE 8



6.1.d Most Manipulative Newspapers

The study revealed that newspapers that were considered least informative were also considered as most manipulative, as shown in Figures 9 and 10. The most manipulative newspapers were Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste, La Gazette, while the least manipulative newspapers were Hebdo, Le Mauricien and 5 Plus, as shown in Figure 9.

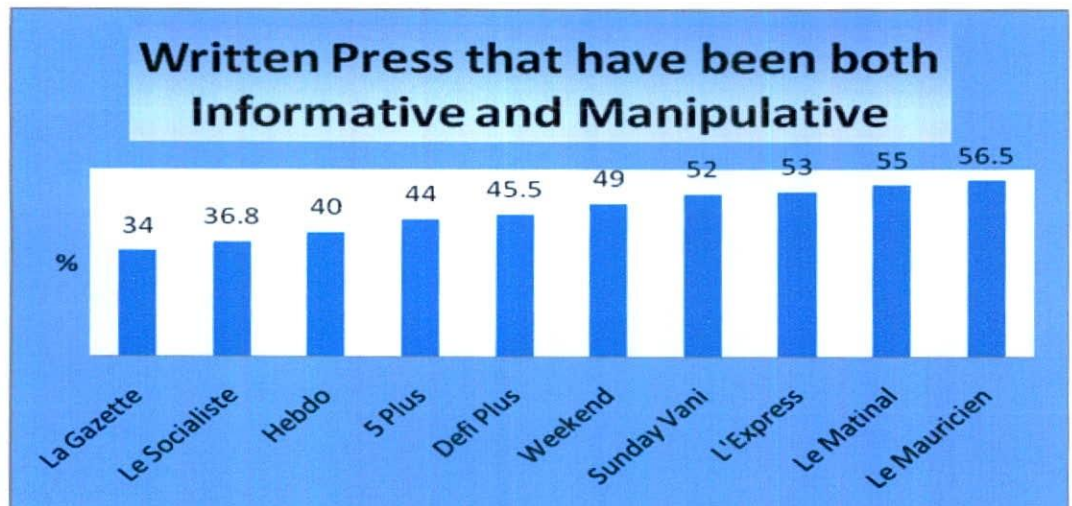
FIGURE 9



6.1.e Newspapers That Were Both Informative and Manipulative

Between 30% and 60% of respondents considered the written press to be both informative and manipulative, as shown in Figure 10. Respondents considered that newspapers were all informative and manipulative with a small degree of variation.

FIGURE 10



Informative, Manipulative and Acceptable Press

The study revealed that newspapers which were considered least informative were also considered as most manipulative. Sunday Vani, La Gazette and Le Socialiste were considered to be least informative and these newspapers were also been considered as being most manipulative.

However all newspapers were considered to be informative and manipulative. Those newspapers which had the highest score in being both informative and manipulative were considered in this study as most acceptable. Those newspapers which were ranked as being mostly manipulative were considered to be the least acceptable. Hence the acceptance rate of a newspaper was determined by the rating of the newspaper as being both informative and manipulative. In fact those newspapers which had been rated as both informative and manipulative were also those newspapers which had been rated as more influential, as revealed in Figure 8, and hence more popular.

This study will now analyze how the respondents perceive each of the 10 newspapers in terms of being informative and manipulative. Though all the newspapers are considered to be both informative and manipulative, as discussed earlier, there are variations among them. Those which are considered to be less manipulative and more informative are considered to be more just and balanced in their reporting.

6.1.e.i "Le Mauricien":

According to the study, over two in every ten respondents (21.8%) considered the "Le Mauricien" as informative, while over one in every ten respondents (11.8%) marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, majority of the respondents (56.5%) considered the "Le Mauricien" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-1)

LE MAURICIEN
Le Mauricien has an acceptance rate of 57% among the electorate and is preferred more among the Christians (64%) and quite significantly by the Hindus (55%) and Muslims (49%).

TABLE-1: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LE MAURICIEN"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	87	21.75
Only Manipulative	47	11.75
Both Informative & Manipulative	226	56.5
No Response	40	10
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Christians were more likely to consider the "Le Mauricien" as informative. With regard to different ethnic groups, nearly one-third (31.2%) of Christians compared to 15.9% of Hindus and 23.8% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, a very insignificant percent of Christians (0.9%) compared to 39.9% of Hindus and 8.8% of Muslims treated the "Le Mauricien" as manipulative. In addition, about two-third of the Christians (64.3%) compared to more than half of Hindus (55.3%) and nearly half of Muslims (48.8%) considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-2).

TABLE-2: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LE MAURICIEN" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "Le Mauricien"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
Informative	15.9%	31.2%	23.8%
Manipulative	39.9%	0.9%	8.8%
Both Informative and Manipulative	55.3	64.3	48.8

Le Mauricien had more the favor of Christians and less of Hindus. As explained earlier, the ownership of Le Mauricien was Christian and this group tended to associate themselves with Le Mauricien on the assumption that the newspaper was more prone to protect their interest. The majority of Hindus

considered Le Mauricien as manipulative while Christians did not considered so.

6.1.e.ii. "Le Socialiste"

In line with the study, only 4% of the respondents considered the "Le Socialiste" as informative, while over one-fourth of the respondents (25.3%) marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, more than one-third (36.8%) of the respondents considered the "Le Socialiste" to be both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-3)

LE SOCIALISTE

In general, Le Socialiste has an acceptance rate of 37% and there is no big variation between acceptance rate among different ethnic groups, from 39 % by Christians, 41 % by Muslims and 34% by Hindus.

TABLE-3: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LE SOCIALISTE"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	16	4.0
Only Manipulative	101	25.25
Both Informative & Manipulative	147	36.8
No Response	136	34
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed, as shown in **Figure 4** that Christians, Hindus and Muslims did not considered the "Le Socialiste" as informative and its ranking in terms of informative press was between 8% to as low as 2.4%. In contrast, 10.7% of Christians compared to 26% of Hindus and 25% of Muslims treated the "Le Socialiste" as manipulative. In addition, 39.3% of Christians compared to 33.7% of Hindus and 41.3% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-4).

TABLE-4: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LE SOCIALISTE" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "Le Socialiste"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Informative	2.4	8	2.6
Manipulative	26	10.7	25
Both Informative and Manipulative	33.7	39.3	41.3

6.1.e.iii "Hebdo"

In accordance with the study, 17.8% of the respondents considered the "Hebdo" as informative (only informative/more informative) while 9.3% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative (only manipulative/more manipulative). On the contrary, two-fifth of the respondents (40%) considered the "Hebdo" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-5)

HEBDO

In general Hebdo has an acceptance rate of 40%, and is more accepted among the Hindus (46%) than Muslims (40%) and Christians (29%).

TABLE-5: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "HEBDO"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	71	17.8
Only Manipulative	37	9.2
Both Informative & Manipulative	160	40.0
No Response	132	33
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Hindus were more likely to consider the "Hebdo" as informative. With regard to ethnic groups, 20.2% of Hindus compared to 18.7% of Christians and 10.1% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 15.5% of Hindus compared to 7.2% of Christians and

6.3% of Muslims treated the " Hebdo" as manipulative. In addition, 45.7% of Hindus compared to 29.5% of Christians and 40.0% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-6).

TABLE-6: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "HEBDO" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "Hebdo"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Informative	20.2	18.7	10.1
Manipulative	15.5	7.2	6.3.
Both informative and manipulative	45.7	29.5	40.0

6.1.e.iv. "Défi Plus"

As revealed by the study, 20.0% of the respondents considered the "Défi Plus" as informative while 17.5% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, about half of the respondents (45.5%) considered the "Défi Plus" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-7).

DÉFI PLUS

Le Défi Plus has a general acceptability rate of 45% and has an appreciative acceptance among different ethnic groups, 61% by Christians, 58% by Hindus and 45% by Muslims. This is an interesting finding in the sense that though Défi Plus is owned by a Muslim group, its acceptance rate among other communities is higher than among Muslims.

TABLE 7: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "DEFI PLUS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	80	20.0
Only Manipulative	70	17.5
Both Informative & Manipulative	182	45.5
No Response	68	17
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Christians were more likely to consider the "Défi Plus" as informative. With regard to ethnic groups, 16% of Christians compared to 9.6% of Hindus and 2.5% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 4.5% of Christians compared to 21.2% of Hindus and 3.8% of Muslims treated the "Défi Plus" as manipulative. In addition, 60.7% of Christians compared to 56.7% of Hindus and 45.0% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-8)

TABLE-8: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "DEFI PLUS" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "DÉFI PLUS"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Informative	9.6	16	2.5
Manipulative	21.2	4.5	3.8
Both informative and manipulative	56.7	60.7	45.0

6.1.e.v. "5 Plus"

In relation to this newspaper, 16% of the respondents considered the "5 Plus" as informative, and 16.0% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, 44% of the respondents considered the "5 Plus" both informative & manipulative.

(Ref: Table-9).

5 PLUS

5 Plus has a general acceptability rate of 44%. Though the acceptability rate of 5 Plus is higher among Christians (57%), there is no big disparity among Muslims (43%) and Hindus (41 %).

TABLE-9: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "5 PLUS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	64	16
Only Manipulative	64	16
Both Informative & Manipulative	176	44
No Response	96	24
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Hindus were more likely to consider the "5 Plus" as informative. With regard to ethnic group, 15.4% of Hindus compared to 14.3% of Christians and 10.1% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 22.1% of Hindus compared to 6.3% of Christians and 7.5% of Muslims treated the "5 Plus" as manipulative. In addition, 40.9% of Hindus compared to 57.1% of Christians and 43.8% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-10).

TABLE 10: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "5 PLUS" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "5 Plus"		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Informative	15.4	14.3	10.1
Manipulative	21.1	6.3	7.5
Both informative and manipulative	40.9	57.1	43.8

6.1.e.vi. "L'Express"

20.8% of the respondents considered the "L'Express" as informative while 17.3% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, over half of the respondents (53.0%) considered the "L'Express" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-11).

TABLE-11: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "L'EXPRESS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	83	20.8
Only Manipulative	69	17.3
Both Informative & Manipulative	212	53.0
No Response	36	9.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Christians were more likely to consider the "L'Express" as informative. With regard to ethnic group, 25.9% of Christians compared to 17.8% of Hindus and 21.3% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 8% of Christians compared to 32.3% of Hindus and 12.5% of Muslims treated the "L'Express" as manipulative. In addition, 62.5% of Christians compared to 48.1% of Hindus and 52.5% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-12)

L'EXPRESS

L'Express has a general acceptability rate of 53% and is preferred by Christians (62%), followed by Muslims (52%) and Hindus (48%).

TABLE-12: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "L'EXPRESS" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "L'Express"		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Informative	17.8	25.9	21.3
Manipulative	32.3	8	12.5
Both informative and manipulative	48.1	62.5	52.5

6.1.e.vii."Weekend"

Consistent with the study, 22.6% of the respondents considered the "Weekend" as informative while 20.5% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, nearly half of the respondents (49.0%) considered the "Weekend" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-13). The study also revealed that Christians were more likely to

WEEKEND

The Weekend has thus a general acceptability rate of 49% and is acceptable among all ethnic groups as their variations are insignificant ranging from 46% to 50%. However it should be noted here also that although the ownership of Weekend is Christian, it has more the favor of Hindus (50%) than Christians (49%) and Muslims (46%). This finding questions the hypothesis that different ethnic groups tend to associate themselves with different press channels in relation to what each perceive as closer to their aspirations which in turn is

consider the "Weekend" as informative. With regard to ethnic group, 30.3% of Christians compared to 16.8% of Hindus and 26.3% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative.

TABLE-13: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "WEEKEND"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	90	22.6
Only Manipulative	82	20.5
Both Informative & Manipulative	196	49.0
None	5	1.3
No Response	27	6.8
Total	400	100.0

In contrast, 6.3% of Christians compared to 28.4% of Hindus and 13.8% of Muslims treated the "Weekend" as manipulative. In addition, 49.1% of Christians compared to 50.0% of Hindus and 46.3% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-14).

Dhaka University Institutional Repository
**TABLE-14: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF
 "WEEKEND" BY ETHNIC GROUP**

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "Weekend"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Informative	16.8	30.3	26.3
Manipulative	28.4	6.3	13.8
Both informative and manipulative	50.0	49.1	46.3

6.1.e.viii. "Sunday Vani"

According to the study, 8% of the respondents considered the "Sunday Vani" as informative while 32.8% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative.

SUNDAY VANI
Sunday Vani has a general acceptability rate of 52% but has been rated as being only 3% as informative. It has a strong support by the Hindus (71%) against Christians (30%) and Muslims (18%).

On the contrary, over half of the respondents (52.0%) considered the "Sunday Vani" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-15).

TABLE-15: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "SUNDAY VANI"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	32	8
Only Manipulative	131	32.8
Both Informative & Manipulative	208	52.0
No Response	29	7.2
Total	403	100

The study also revealed that Hindus were more likely to consider the "Sunday Vani" as informative. With regard to ethnic group, 9.6% of Hindus compared to 6.3% of Christians and 6.3% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 20.7% of Hindus compared to 33.9% of Christians and 26.3% of Muslims treated the "Sunday Vani" as manipulative. In addition, 34.1% of Hindus compared to 26.8% of Christians and 22.5% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-16).

TABLE 16: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "SUNDAY VANI" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "Sunday Vani"		
	Hindus %	Christians%	Muslims %
Informative	9.6	6.3	6.3
Manipulative	20.7	33.9	26.3
Both informative and manipulative	31.4	28.8	22.5

6.1.e ix. "La Gazette"

In relation to the study, 6.5% of the respondents considered the "La Gazette" as informative while 21.0% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, over one-third of the respondents (34.0%) considered the "La Gazette" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-17).

LA GAZETTE
La Gazette has a general acceptability of 34% and has a very strong Hindus support (82%), and a low support from Christians (20%) and Muslims (18%). Only 1.5% considered the newspaper as informative.

TABLE-17: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LAGAZETTE"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	26	6.5
Only Manipulative	84	21
Both Informative & Manipulative	136	34.0
No Response	154	38.5
Total	384	100

The study also revealed that Hindus were more likely to consider the "La Gazette" as informative. With regard to ethnic group, 19.7% of Hindus compared to 17% of Christians and 12.5% of Muslims identified the

newspaper as informative. In contrast, 12% of Hindus compared to 20.6% of Christians and 10% of Muslims treated the "La Gazette" as manipulative. In addition, 39.4% of Hindus compared to 17.9% of Christians and 22.5% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-18).

TABLE 18: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LA GAZETTE" BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on "La Gazette"		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Informative	19.7	17	12.5
Manipulative	12	20.6	10
Both informative and manipulative	39.4	17.9	22.5

6.1.e.x. "Le Matinal"

15.3% of the respondents considered the "Le Matinal" as informative, while 18% of them marked the newspaper as manipulative. On the contrary, over half of the respondents (54.80%) considered the "Le Matinal" both informative & manipulative. (Ref: Table-19).

LE MATINAL
Le Matinal has a general acceptability rate of 54% and has the favor of 61.5% of Hindus, 49% of Christians and 45% Muslims

TABLE 19: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF "LE MATINAL"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Only Informative	61	15.3
Both Informative & Manipulative	219	54.7
More /only Manipulative	72	18
No Response	48	12
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Christians and Hindus were more likely to consider the "Le Matinal" as informative. With regard to ethnic groups, 17.9% of Christians and 17.8% of Hindus and 5% of Muslims identified the newspaper as informative. In contrast, 14.3% of Christians compared to 8.7% of Hindus and 7.5% of Muslims treated the "Le Matinal" as manipulative. In

addition, 49.1% of Christians compared to 61.5% of Hindus and 45.0% of Muslims considered the newspaper both informative and manipulative. (Ref: Table-20).

TABLE 20: INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE STATUS OF “LE MATINAL” BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group Response on “Le Matinal”		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Informative	17.8	17.9	5
Manipulative	8.7	14.3	7.5
Both informative and manipulative	61.5	49.1	45

While Hindus and Christians in general have mostly the same opinion on the newspaper, Muslims differ greatly and consider the newspaper to be less informative and more manipulative.

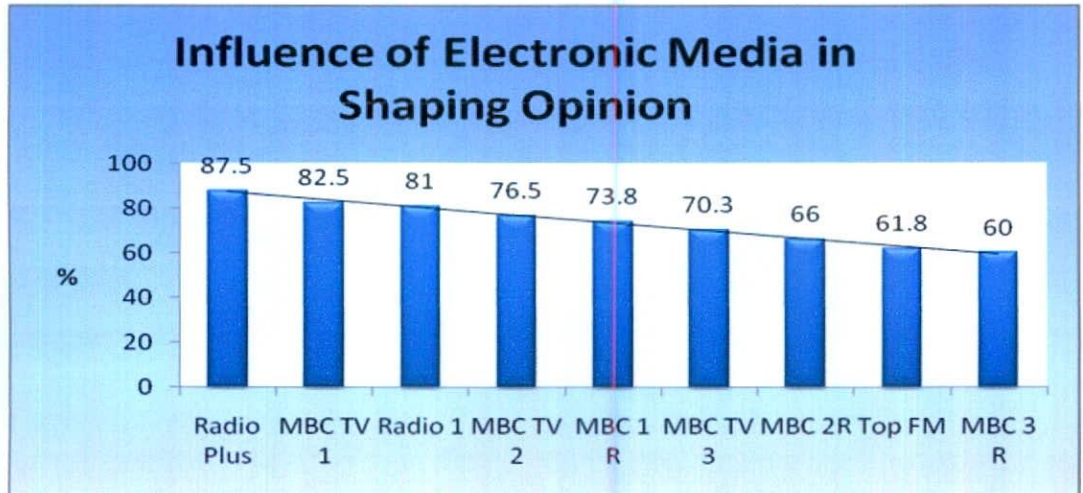
6.1.f Most Influential Electronic Media

There were in 2005 9 Radio and TV channels in Mauritius and their impact and influence has been analyzed. The different electronic media were MBCTV1, MBC TV2, MBCTV3, MBC Radio 1, MBC Radio 2, MBC Radio 3, Radio Plus, Radio 1 and Top FM. According to the study the electronic media was as powerful as the written press. While the influence of different written media ranked between 93% and 35%, that of the electronic media ranked between 87.5% and 60%, as shown in Figure 11. As in the case of the written press, the electronic media was also judged as being both informative and manipulative as shown in Figure 14. The percentage to which respondents ranked the electronic media as informative ranged between 7% - 22% (Figure 12), while the range for being manipulative was between 53% - 76% (Figure 13). Hence here also the respondents considered the electronic media to be more manipulative than informative.

INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA
 Respondents considered both electronic and written media to be informative and manipulative and influential. However they considered the electronic media to be more. The top most popular and influential stations were Radio Plus, MBC TV1 and Radio1. The most informative channels were MBC TV1, MBV TV3 and Radio Plus. MBC TV1 ranked highest in being informative. MBC R1, MBC TV 1, and Radio 1 were considered more manipulative.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the existing Radio/TV has been influential in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign. In response to this question, like the newspapers, almost all the Radio/TV stations were found to be influential in shaping the public opinion.

FIGURE 11

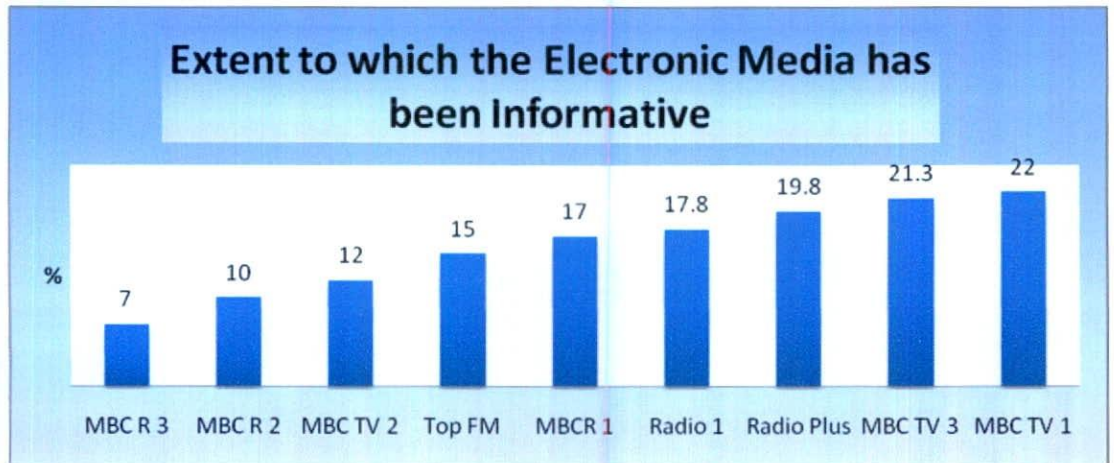


According to the study, the Radio Plus ranked at the top as the most influential radio. Among the respondents, 87.5% pointed out Radio Plus, 82.5% respondents considered MBC R 1, 70.3% stated MBC TV 3, 66.0% mentioned MBC R 2, 61.8% identified TOP FM and 60.0% treated MBC R 3 as influential in shaping opinion of voters during general election campaign, as shown in Figure 11.

6.1.g MOST INFORMATIVE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the existing Radio/TV Stations have been informative & manipulative.

FIGURE 12



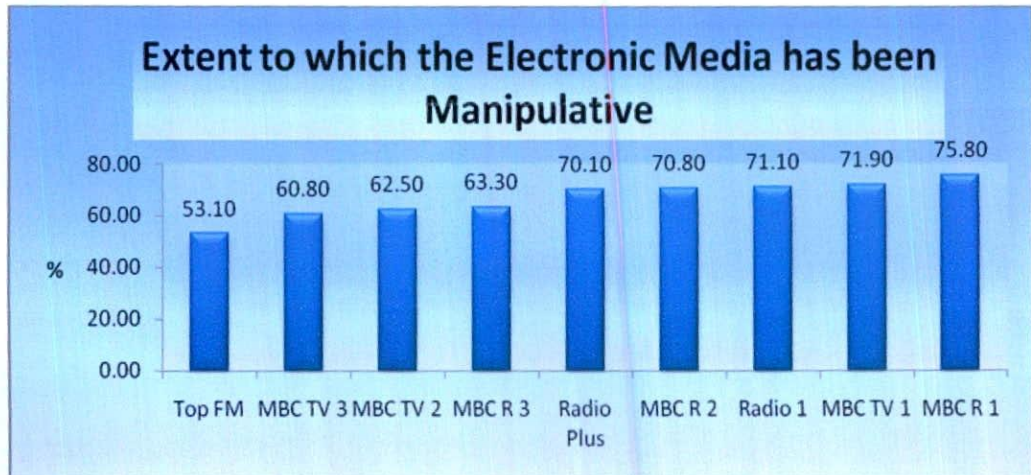
In response to this question, MBC TV 1 was ranked at the top as informative channel followed by MBC TV3. Among the Private Radios, Radio Plus was considered more informative by the respondents. MBC R 3 was considered as the least informative channel as shown in Figure 12.

6.1.h MOST MANIPULATIVE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Basically Respondents considered all electronic media to be manipulative. MBC R1 and MBCTV1 ranked the highest in terms of manipulation of public opinion. Interestingly, Radio 1 the private radio station and MBCTV1 the government supported TV station were almost at the same level in terms of

manipulative media, as shown in Figure 13. The least manipulative electronic media was considered to be Top FM.

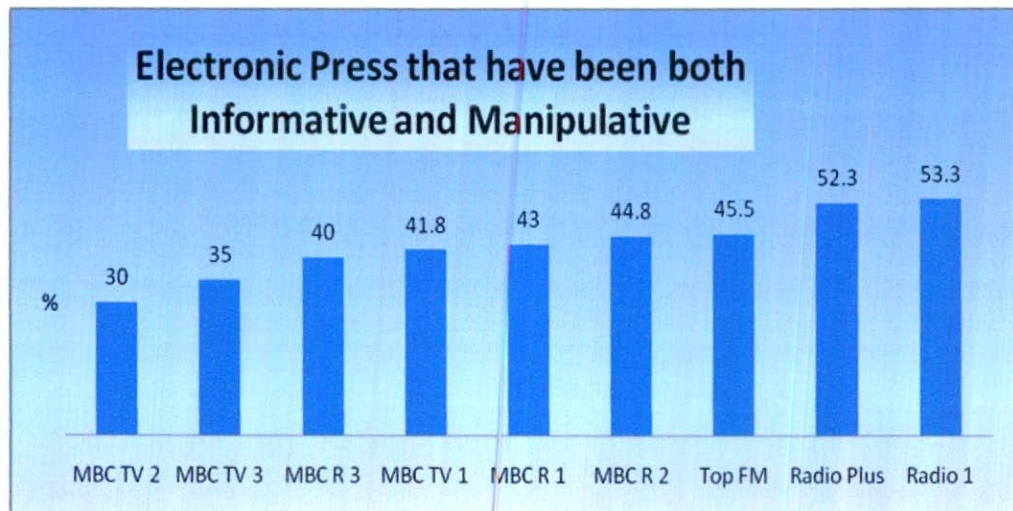
FIGURE 13



6.1.i ELECTRONIC MEDIA THAT WERE BOTH INFORMATIVE AND MANIPULATIVE

Interestingly when compared with the written press, the electronic media were considered equally informative at almost the same ranking. All electronic media were considered to be both manipulative and Informative (Figure 14). Radio 1 and Radio Plus scored highest media and was considered to have highest acceptability rate.

FIGURE 14



However in terms of “acceptability” as defined earlier in this chapter, the electronic media had a comparatively much higher acceptability rate than the written press. This might be because the electronic media, had a distinctively another more important function as an entertainer. Ownership of a radio and TV was also attributable to “house furnishing”.

6.1.j. MEDIA PARTISANSHIP

Journalist will always claim to be independent and objective. However, as famed columnist Walter Lippmann stated, pure objectivity is impossible. *“The truth is that in our world the facts are indefinitely many, and that no reporter can collect them all, and that no newspaper could print them all...and nobody could read them all. We have to select some facts rather than others, and in*

doing that we are using not only our legs bur our selective judgment of what is interesting or important or both"⁴¹.

Almost all media are to some degree partisan. A partisan media is one which is biased in favor of a political party. There are those which are overly partisan and are directly financed by political parties. There are others which declare themselves as independent and are not directly financed by political parties and promote a fairly balanced argumentation which succinctly conceals partisanship. In Mauritius during the 1970's, newspapers like "Le Militant", "Le Populaire" and "The Nation" were partisan and financed by political parties, openly declare themselves as organ of such and such parties. These newspapers were short-lived as they limited themselves to selective audiences. Those who declare themselves as impartial and independent have a wider audience and strive better. In this study the term partisan media will be attributed to those media that favor a political party or alliance against others.

According to the study, MBC TV, Le Matinal, MBC R, Sunday Vani, Le Socialist and Radio 1 were ranked as the most partisan media. The least partisan media were Radio Plus, Top FM, L'Express and 5 Plus as shown in **Figure 15.**

⁴¹ Public Opinion, by Walter Lippmann, (Chapter 1), New York: Macmillan,1982,

FIGURE 15

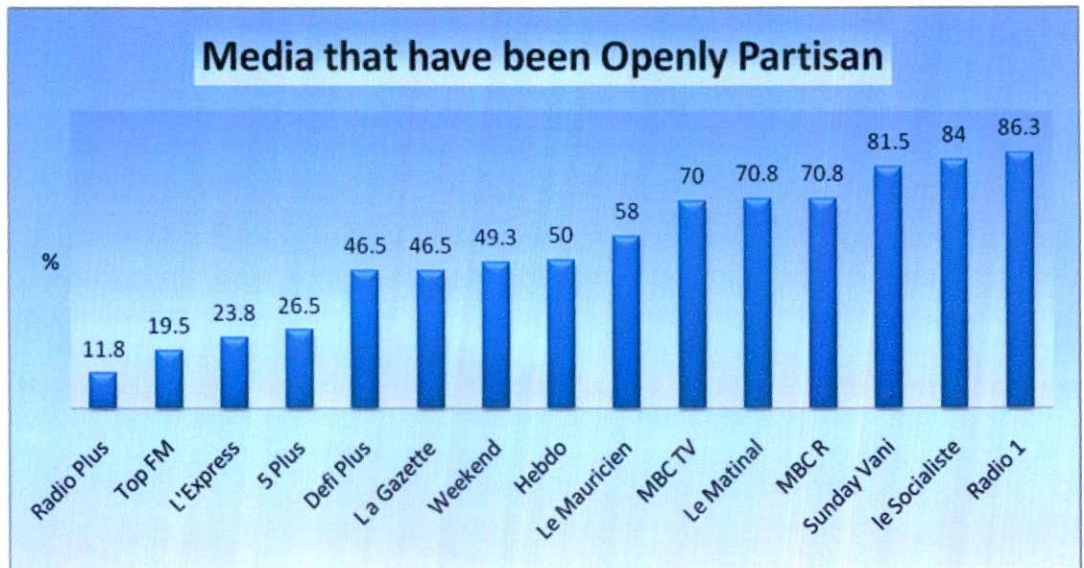
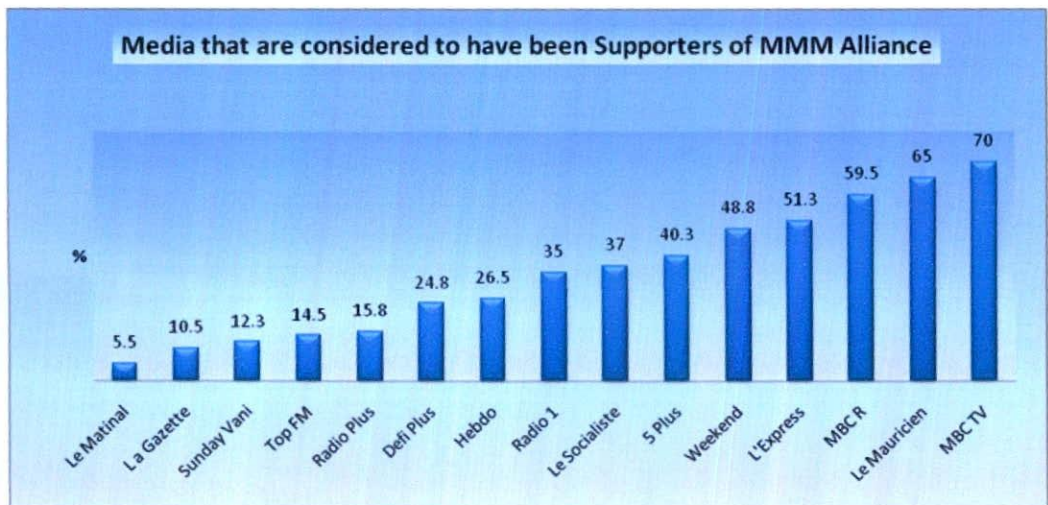


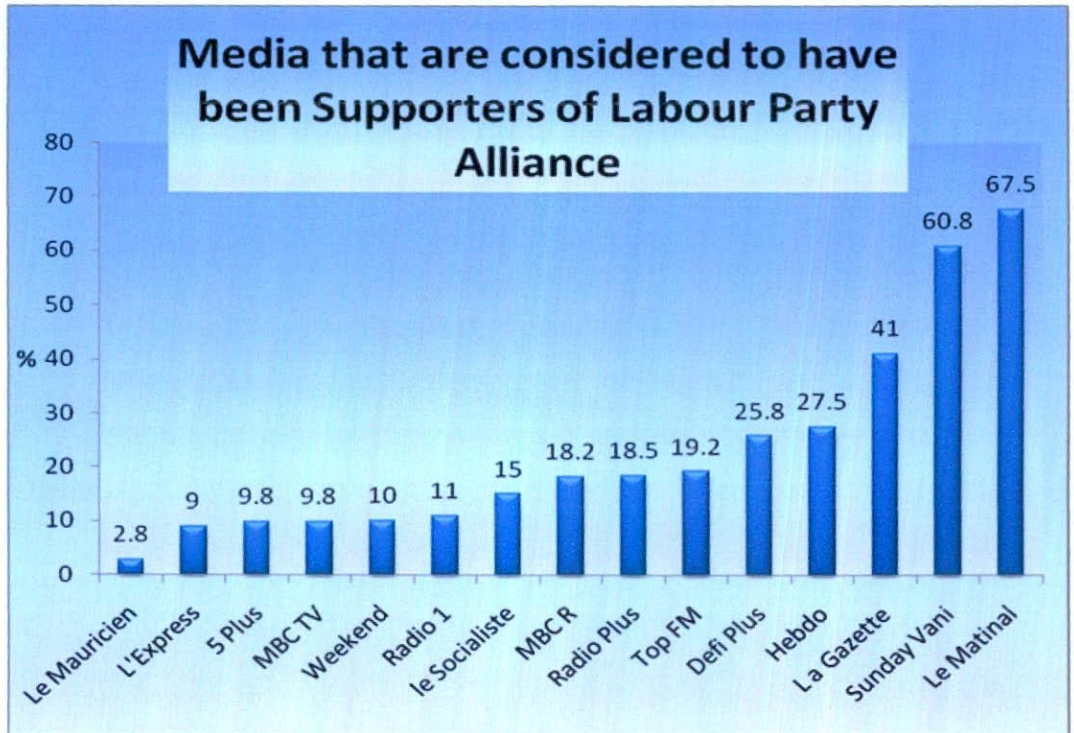
Figure 16



MBC TV, Le Mauricien, MBC R, L'Express and Weekend were considered to have supported MMM Alliance, as shown in **Figure 16**, while Le Matinal,

Sunday Vani and La Gazette were considered to have supported Labour Party Alliance, as shown in Figure 17.

FIGURE 17



6.1.k PARTISANSHIP OF THE WRITTEN MEDIA

This study will now address the partisanship of the following 10 written press, Le Mauricien, Le Socialiste, Hebdo, Défi Plus, 5 Plus, L'Express, Weekend, Sunday Vani, La Gazette and Le Matinal. Respondents were asked to state which papers they considered as openly partisan and supporting which of the two main blocks contesting the general election in 2005.

6.1.k.i. "Le Mauricien": Partisan Status

According to the study, 58.0% of the respondents considered the "Le Mauricien" as openly partisan while 40.5% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-21). This finding is surprising as this newspaper had an acceptance rate of 57% among the respondents, as shown in section 6.1.e.i.

TABLE-21: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "LE MAURICIEN"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	232	58.0
Not Openly Partisan	162	40.5
No Response	6	1.5
Total	400	100.0

The high acceptance rate of this newspaper could be attributed to the quality of information, the quality of its presentation and coverage, the quality of the journalists. The readers seemed to accept the newspapers for the reasons cited above despite acknowledging its partisanship. Indeed Le Mauricien had set a high quality standard to its presentation and innovated often to cover wide areas of news item.

PARTISAN STATUS OF LE MAURICIEN

Le Mauricien was considered to be partisan of the MMM/ MSM alliance and is mostly supported by the Christians. While the newspaper had an acceptance rate of 57%, 58% considered the newspaper to be openly partisan.

About two-third of the respondents (65%) identified the newspaper as a supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while only 2.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, less than two in every ten respondents (19.3%) considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-22)

TABLE-22: PARTIES WHICH LE MAURICIEN SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	260	65.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	11	2.8
Independent and Neutral	77	19.3
No Response	52	13.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the “Le Mauricien” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. The study showed 75.5% of the Hindus compared to 56.3% of Christians and 50.0% of Muslims mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 30.4% of the Christians compared to 13.0% of Hindus and 20.0% of Muslims considered the “Le Mauricien” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-23).

TABLE-23: PARTIES WHICH LE MAURICIEN SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians%	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	75.5	56.3	50.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	2.9	0.9	5.0
Independent and Neutral	13.0	30.4	20.0
No Response	8.7	12.5	25.0
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.ii. "Le Socialiste": Partisan Status

According to the study, 84.0% of the respondents considered the "Le Socialiste" as openly partisan while 12.0% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table- 24). Again, 37% of the respondents identified the said newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while only 17% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance

PARTISAN STATUS OF LE SOCIALISTE
 84% of respondents considered Le Socialist as partisan of MMM/ MSM which is surprising. However an equal % did not respond which might also indicate that the respondents could not clearly identify its partisanship as it was not a popular newspaper and which changed ownership. While most of Hindus considered the newspaper as in favor of MMM/MSM alliance, most of the Muslims consider the newspaper to be in favor of Labour/PMXD alliance. The uncertainty is explained by the high percentage of no responses.

(Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, nearly one in every ten respondents (9%) considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-25).

TABLE 24: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "LE SOCIALISTE"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	336	84.0
Not Openly Partisan	48	12.0
No Response	16	4.0
Total	400	100.0

TABLE 25: PARTIES WHICH "LE SOCIALISTE" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	148	37.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	67	16.8
Independent and Neutral	36	9.0
No Response	149	37.2
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Hindus were more likely to consider the "Le Socialiste" as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 43.8% of the Hindus compared to 35.7% of Christians and 21.3% of Muslims mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast,

9.6% of the Hindus compared to 8.9% of Christians and 7.5% of Muslims considered the “Le Socialiste” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-26).

TABLE-26: PARTIES WHICH “LE SOCIALISTE” SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	43.8	35.7	21.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	12.5	15.2	30.0
Independent and Neutral	9.6	8.9	7.5
No Response	34.1	40.2	41.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

6.1.k.iii."Hebdo": Partisan Status

According to the study, exactly half of the respondents (50.0%) considered the "Hebdo" as openly partisan while 36.8% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-27).

TABLE-27: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "HEBDO"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	200	50.0
Not Openly Partisan	147	36.8
No Response	53	13.3
Total	400	100.0

Again, 26.5% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 27.5% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 23.3% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-28).

*PARTISAN STATUS OF
HEBDO
Hebdo was considered as a
supporter of MMM/MSM
alliance and had more the
favor of Christians.*

TABLE 28: PARTIES WHICH “HEBDO” SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	106	26.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD	110	27.5
Independent and Neutral	93	23.3
No Response	91	22.8
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that Christians were more likely to consider the “Hebdo” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. As found by the study, 30.4% of Christians compared to 25.0% of Hindus and the same percent of Muslims mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 25.9% of Christians compared to 24.5% of Hindus and 16.3% of Muslims considered the “Hebdo” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-29).

TABLE-29: PARTITES WHICH “HEBDO” SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus	Christians	Muslims
	%	%	%
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	25.0	30.4	25.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD	26.9	29.5	26.3

Independent and Neutral	24.5	25.9	16.3
No Response	23.6	14.3	32.5
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.iv. "Défi Plus": Partisan Status

According to the study, nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) considered the "Défi Plus" as openly partisan while 42.3% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-30)

PARTISAN STATUS OF DÉFIS PLUS

Défi Plus was considered more independent; and the respondents' opinions were equally divided between its partisanship towards each of the two main political blocks.

TABLE 30: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "DÉFI PLUS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	186	46.5
Not Openly Partisan	169	42.3
No Response	45	11.2
Total	400	100.0

Again, 24.8% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 25.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 30.3% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-31).

TABLE-31: PARTIES WHICH “DEFI PLUS” SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	99	24.8
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	103	25.8
Independent and Neutral	121	30.3
No Response	77	19.3
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Christians were more likely to consider the “Défi Plus” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 32.1% of Christians compared to 24.0% of Hindus and 16.3% of Muslims mentioned that the said newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 32.1% of Christians compared to 30.8% of Hindus and 26.3% of Muslims considered the “Défi Plus” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-32).

TABLE-32: PARTIES WHICH "DÉFI PLUS" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus%	Christians%	Muslims%
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	24.0	32.1	16.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	26.9	26.8	21.3
Independent and Neutral	30.8	32.1	26.3
No Response	18.3	8.9	36.3
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.v. "5 Plus": Partisan Status

According to the study, 26.3% of the respondents considered the "5 Plus" as openly partisan while 66.0% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-33)

PARTISAN STATUS OF 5 PLUS
Majority of respondents (66%) considered 5 Plus as not openly partisan. However 40% considered the paper to be in favor of MMM/MSM alliance, and affirmed by all ethnic groups.

TABLE-33: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "5 PLUS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	105	26.3
Not Openly Partisan	264	66.0
No Response	31	7.7
Total	400	100

Again, 40.3% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 9.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 20.3% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-34).

TABLE 34: PARTIES WHICH “5 PLUS” SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	161	40.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	39	9.7
Independent and Neutral	81	20.3
No Response	119	29.7
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the “5 Plus” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 43.8% of Hindus compared to 38.4% of Christians and 33.8% of Muslims mentioned that the said newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 31.3% of Muslims compared to 29.8% of Hindus and 28.6% of Christians considered the “5 Plus” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-35).

TABLE 35: PARTIES WHICH “5 PLUS” SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	43.8	38.4	33.8
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	12.5	5.4	8.8
Independent and Neutral	13.9	27.7	26.3
No Response	29.8	28.6	31.3
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.vi. "L' Express": Partisan Status

According to the study, 23.8% of the respondents considered the "L' Express" as openly partisan while 70.7% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-36).

PARTISAN STATUS OF L'EXPRESS

Majority of respondents considered L'Express as not openly partisan, but favoring MMM/MSM alliance. The percentage of respondents among the different ethnic groups that considered the newspaper as independent ranged between 15-25%.

TABLE-36: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "L' EXPRESS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	95	23.8
Not Openly Partisan	283	70.7
No Response	22	5.5
Total	400	100.1

Again, over half of the respondents (51.3%) identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while only 9.0% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 20.3% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-37).

TABLE 37: PARTIES WHICH "L' EXPRESS" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	205	51.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	36	9.0
Independent and Neutral	81	20.3
No Response	78	19.5
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the “L' Express” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 61.1% of Hindus compared to 42.5% of Muslims and 39.3% of Christians mentioned that the said newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 25.0% of Muslims compared to 23.2% of Christians and 15.4% of Hindus considered the “L' Express” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-38).

TABLE-38: PARTIES WHICH “L' EXPRESS” SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	61.1	39.3	42.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	9.6	7.1	10.0
Independent and Neutral	13.9	30.4	22.5
No Response	15.4	23.2	25.0
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.vii. "Weekend": Partisan Status

According to the study, 49.3% of the respondents considered the "Weekend" as openly partisan while 40.8% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-39).

PARTISAN STATUS OF WEEKEND
 Nearly half the respondents considered Weekend being in favor of MMM/MSM alliance. The paper had more the favor of Christians than the other ethnic groups.

TABLE-39: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "WEEKEND"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	197	49.3
Not Openly Partisan	163	40.7
No Response	40	10.0
Total	400	100

Again, nearly half of the respondents (48.8%) identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while only 10.0% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 16.0% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-40).

TABLE-40: PARTIES WHICH “WEEKEND” SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	195	48.8
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD	40	10.0
Independent and Neutral	64	16.0
No Response	101	25.3
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the “Weekend” as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. As indicated by the study, 60.1% of Hindus compared to 41.1% of Christians and 30.0% of Muslims mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 33.0% of Christians compared to 16.3% of Muslims and 6.7% of Hindus considered the “Weekend” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-41).

TABLE-41: PARTIES WHICH "WEEKEND" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians%	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	60.1	41.1	30.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	5.3	9.8	22.5
Independent and Neutral	6.7	33.0	16.3
No Response	27.9	16.1	31.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

6.1.k.viii. "Sunday Vani": Partisan Status

According to the study, 81.5% of the respondents considered the "Sunday Vani" as openly partisan while 12.8% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-42).

TABLE-42: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "SUNDAY VANI"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	326	81.5
Not Openly Partisan	51	12.8
No Response	23	5.7
Total	400	100

Again, only 12.3% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 60.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 7.0% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-43).

PARTISAN STATUS OF SUNDAY VANI

A huge majority considered Sunday Vani as openly partisan and in favor of Labour/PMXD alliance. A very negligible percentage among different ethnic groups considered Sunday Vani as independent and neutral.

TABLE-43: PARTIES WHICH "SUNDAY VANI" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	49	12.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	243	60.7
Independent and Neutral	28	7.0
No Response	80	20.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Christians were more likely to consider the “Sunday Vani” as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD) than others. As indicated by the study, 67.0% of Christians compared to 65.0% of Muslims and 55.8% of Hindus mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 10.0% of Muslims compared to 7.7% of Hindus and 3.6% of Christians considered the “Sunday Vani” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-44).

TABLE-44: PARTIES WHICH "SUNDAY VANI" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	14.9	12.5	5.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	55.8	67.0	65.0
Independent and Neutral	7.7	3.6	10.0
No Response	21.6	17.0	20.0
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.ix."La Gazette": Partisan Status

According to the study, 46.5% of the respondents considered the "La Gazette" as openly partisan while 47.3% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-45).

PARTISAN STATUS OF LA GAZETTE
La Gazette, like Le Socialist was not well known and the respondents did not state categorically whether the paper was openly partisan or not. However more respondents identified the newspaper as supporter of MMM/MSM alliance

TABLE-45: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "LA GAZETTE"

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Openly Partisan	186	46.5	46.5
Not Openly Partisan	189	47.3	93.8
Total	25	6.2	100.0

Again, only 10.5% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 41.0% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 16.5% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-46).

TABLE 46: PARTIES WHICH "LA GAZETTE" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	42	10.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	164	41.0
Independent and Neutral	66	16.5
No Response	128	32.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Christians were more likely to consider the “La Gazette” as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD) than others. As indicated by the study, 50.9% of Christians compared to 41.8% of Hindus and 25.0% of Muslims mentioned that the said newspaper had a tendency to favor Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 25.0% of Muslims compared to 20.5% of Christians and 11.1% of Hindus considered the “La Gazette” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-47).

TABLE-47: PARTIES WHICH “LA GAZETTE” SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	12.0	3.6	16.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	41.8	50.9	25.0
Independent and Neutral	11.1	20.5	25.0
No Response	35.1	25.0	33.8
Total	100	100	100

6.1.k.x. "Le Matinal": Partisan Status

According to the study, 70.8 % of the respondents considered the "Le Matinal" as openly partisan while 24.5% of the respondents indicated the newspaper as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-48).

*PARTISAN STATUS OF LE
MATINAL
A vast majority of
respondents considered Le
Matinal as openly partisan
and in favor of Labour/PMXD
alliance.*

TABLE-48: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "LE MATINAL"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	283	70.8
Not Openly Partisan	98	24.5
No Response	19	4.7
Total	400	100

Again, only 5.5% of the respondents identified the newspaper as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 67.5% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, only 4.2% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-49).

TABLE 49: PARTIES WHICH “LE MATINAL” SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	22	5.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	270	67.5
Independent and Neutral	17	4.2
No Response	91	22.7
Total	400	100

The study also revealed that the Muslims were more likely to consider the “Le Matinal” as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD) than others. As indicated by the study, 70.0% of Muslims compared to 69.2% of Hindus and 62.5% of Christians mentioned that the newspaper had a tendency to favor Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 8.7% of Muslims compared to 4.5% of Christians and 2.4% of Hindus considered the “Le Matinal” as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-50).

TABLE-50: PARTIES WHICH "LE MATINAL" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported Alliance MMM/MSM	3.4	8.9	6.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	69.2	62.5	70.0
Independent and Neutral	2.4	4.5	8.7
No Response	25.0	24.1	15.0
Total	100	100	100

6.1.I. PARTISANSHIP OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

In this section the partisanship of the following electronic media will be analyzed, namely MBC Radio, MBC TV, Radio Plus, Radio 1 and Top FM

6.1.I.a. "MBC Radio": Partisan Status

According to the study, 70.8 % of the respondents considered the "MBC Radio" as openly partisan while 24.5% of the respondents indicated the radio as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-51).

*PARTISAN STATUS OF MBC RADIO
MBC Radio was considered as
openly partisan by a vast majority
and favoring the MMM/MSM
alliance.*

TABLE-51: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "MBC RADIO"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	328	82.0
Not Openly Partisan	45	11.3
No Response	27	6.7
Total	400	100.0

Again, 59.5% of the respondents identified the radio as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 18.2% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, only 6.0% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-52).

TABLE-52: PARTIES WHICH "MBC RADIO" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	238	59.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	73	18.2
Independent and Neutral	24	6.0
No Response	65	16.2
Total	400	100

The study also revealed that the Christians were more likely to consider the "MBC Radio" as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 65.2% of Christians compared to 61.5% of Hindus and 46.3% of Muslims mentioned that the MBC radio had a tendency to favor Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 13.7% of Muslims compared to 5.4% of Christians and 3.4% of

Hindus considered the "MBC Radio" as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-53).

TABLE-53: PARTIES WHICH "MBC RADIO" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	61.5	65.2	46.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	16.3	21.4	18.7
Independent and Neutral	3.4	5.4	13.7
No Response	18.8	8.0	21.3
Total	100	100	100

6.1.1.b. "Radio Plus": Partisan Status

According to the study, 11.8 % of the respondents considered the "Radio Plus" as openly partisan while 86.8% of the respondents indicated the radio as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-54).

TABLE-54: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "RADIO PLUS"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	47	11.8
Not Openly Partisan	347	86.8
No Response	6	1.4
Total	400	100.0

Again, 15.8% of the respondents identified the radio as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 18.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 37.5% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-55)

PARTISAN STATUS RADIO PLUS

A vast majority considered Radio Plus as not openly partisan. Respondents considered Radio Plus to be more independent and neutral and this cut across all ethnic groups. Though Radio Plus was owned by Muslims, it had more the favor of Christians (48%) than Hindus and Muslims (both at 35%).

TABLE-55: PARTIES WHICH "RADIO PLUS" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	63	15.8
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	75	18.8
Independent and Neutral	150	37.5
No Response	112	28.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Christians were more likely to consider the "Radio Plus" as the supporter of Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD) than others. 25.9% of Christians compared to 18.3% of Hindus and 10.0% of Muslims mentioned that the radio had a tendency to favor Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 43.8% of Christians compared to 35.1% of Hindus and 35.0% of Muslims considered the "Radio Plus" as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-56)

TABLE-56: PARTIES WHICH "RADIO PLUS" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	21.2	7.1	13.8
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	18.3	25.9	10.0
Independent and Neutral	35.1%	43.8	35.0
No Response	25.5	23.2	41.3
Total	100	100	100

6.1.1.c: "Radio 1": Partisan Status

According to the study, 86.3 % of the respondents considered the "Radio 1" as openly partisan while 13.7% of the respondents indicated the radio as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-57).

TABLE-57: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "RADIO 1"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	345	86.3
Not Openly Partisan	55	13.7
Total	400	100.0

Again, 35.0% of the respondents identified the radio as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 11.3% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 25.8% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-58).

TABLE 58: PARTIES WHICH "RADIO 1" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	140	35.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	45	11.3
Independent and Neutral	103	25.8
No Response	112	28.0
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus

were more likely to consider the "Radio 1" as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. As indicated by the study, 41.8% of Hindus compared to 32.1% of Christians and 21.3% of Muslims mentioned that the radio had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM Alliance. In contrast, 36.6% of Christians

compared to 28.8% of Muslims and 26.0% of Hindus considered the "Radio 1" as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-59).

PARTISAN STATUS OF RADIO ONE

A vast majority (86%) of respondents considered Radio one as openly partisan. It was also considered in favor of MMM/MSM. It was more favored by the Christians with 37% of them considering radio one as independent and neutral.

TABLE-59: PARTIES WHICH "RADIO 1" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	41.8	32.1	21.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	7.2	6.2	10.0
Independent and Neutral	26.0		28.8
No Response	25.0	25.0	40.0
Total	100	100	100

6.1.1.d: "Top FM": Partisan Status

According to the study, 19.5% of the respondents considered the "Top FM" as openly partisan while 80.5% of the respondents indicated the radio as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-60).

TABLE 60: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "TOP FM"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	78	19.5
Not Openly Partisan	322	80.5
Total	400	100.0

Again, 14.5% of the respondents identified the radio as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 19.2% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). On the contrary, 40.8% considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-61).

TABLE-61: PARTIES WHICH "TOP FM" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	58	14.5
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	77	19.2
Independent and Neutral	163	40.8
No Response	102	25.5
Total	400	100

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the "Top FM" as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 26.0% of Hindus compared to 15.0% of Muslims and 9.8% of Christians mentioned that the radio had a tendency to favor Alliance

PARTISAN STATUS OF TOP FM

A vast majority of respondents (80%) considered Top FM as not openly partisan. Very few considered Top FM as being in favor of one or the other political block.

Interestingly, despite Top FM being owned by Hindus, it is more accepted by Christians and Muslims.

Social (Labour/PMXD). In contrast, 59.8% of Christians compared to 42.5% of Muslims and 29.8% of Hindus considered the "Top FM" as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-62).

TABLE 62: PARTIES WHICH "TOP FM" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	18.8	5.4	16.3
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	26.0	9.8	15.0
Independent and Neutral	29.8	59.8	42.5
No Response	25.5	25.0	26.2
Total	100	100	100

6.1.1.e: "MBC TV": Partisan Status

According to the study, 70% of the respondents considered the "MBC TV" as openly partisan while 30% of the respondents indicated the radio as not openly partisan. (Ref: Table-63).

TABLE-63: PARTISAN STATUS OF THE "MBC TV"

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Openly Partisan	280	70.0
Not Openly Partisan	120	30.0
Total	400	100.0

Again, 70.0% of the respondents identified the radio as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance while 9.8% of the respondents considered it as the supporter of Social Alliance (Labour/PMXD). Only 5.8% of respondents considered it as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-64).

TABLE 64: PARTIES WHICH "MBC TV" SUPPORTED

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	280	70.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	39	9.8
Independent and Neutral	23	5.8
No Response	58	14.5
Total	400	100.0

The study also revealed that the Hindus were more likely to consider the "MBC TV" as the supporter of MMM/MSM Alliance than others. 74.5% of Hindus compared to 68.8% of Christians and 60.0% of Muslims mentioned that the radio had a tendency to favor MMM/MSM alliance. In contrast, 8.9% of Christians compared to 7.5% of Muslims and 3.4% of Hindus considered the "MBC TV" as independent and neutral. (Ref: Table-65).

PARTISAN STATUS OF MBC TV

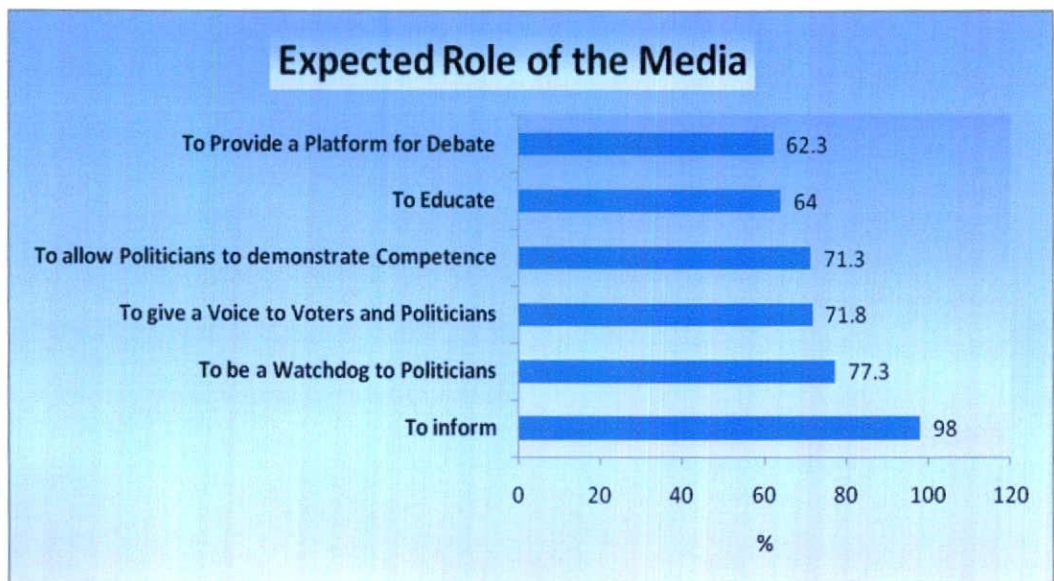
Majority of respondents (70%) considered MBC TV as openly partisan and in favor of MMM/MSM alliance. It had a low acceptance rate among all the different ethnic communities

TABLE-65: PARTIES WHICH "MBC TV" SUPPORTED BY ETHNIC GROUP

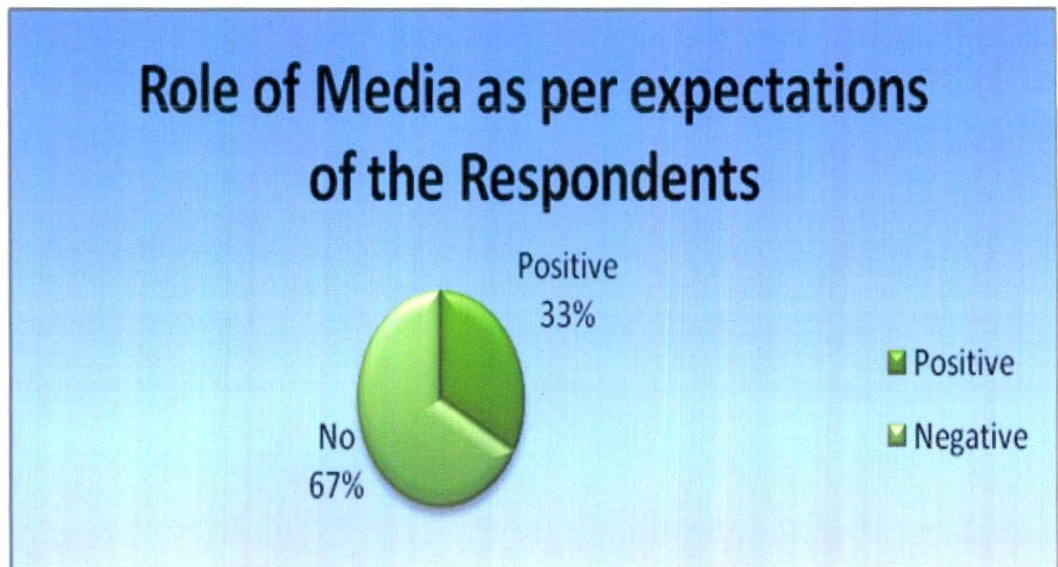
Responses	Ethnic Group		
	Hindus %	Christians %	Muslims %
Supported MMM/MSM Alliance	74.5	68.8	60.0
Supported Alliance Social (Labour/PMXD)	9.6	11.6	7.5
Independent and Neutral	3.4	8.9	7.5

6.1.m EXPECTED ROLE OF THE MEDIA

According to the study, the role of the media was to inform, to be a watchdog to politicians, to give a voice to voters and politicians, to allow politicians to demonstrate their competence, to inform, educate and to provide a platform for debate, as shown in Figure 18. Respondents were asked to list the role of the Mass Media, especially during General Election Campaign. In response to this question, almost all the respondents (98.8%) thought that the role of mass media was to inform readers, viewers and the listeners.

FIGURE 18

The majority of the respondents (67%) considered that the media did not perform their role as per their expectations as shown in Figure 19.



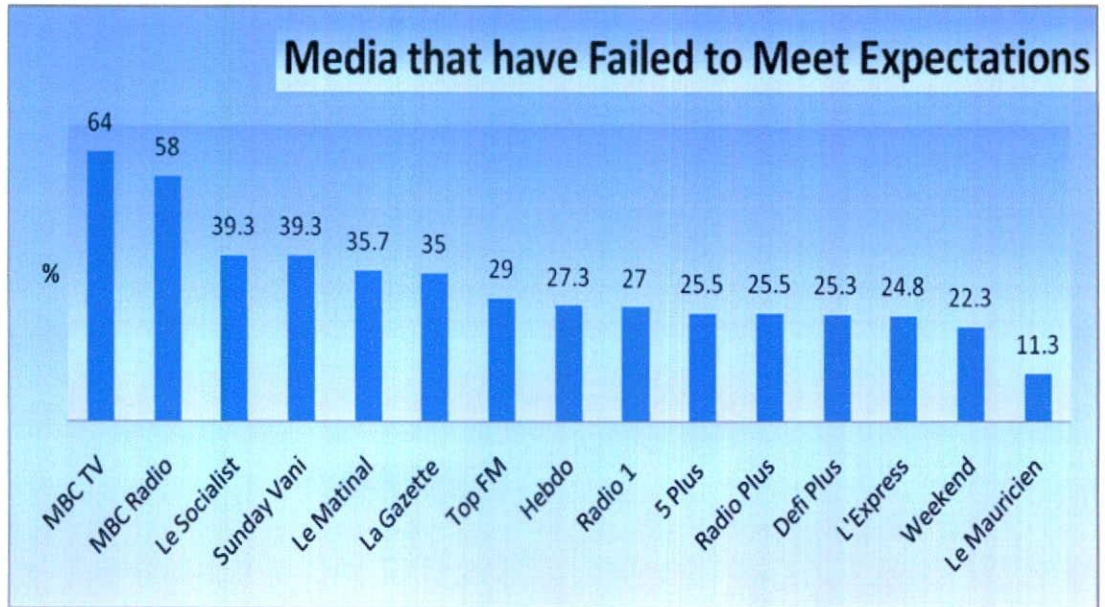
MBC Radio and TV were those that were considered to have by a large extent failed to meet the expectations of the respondents.

Furthermore, 77.3% considered mass media as a watchdog to the politicians and that ensured that political debates were fair and just, 76.8% believed that it's the responsibility of mass media to ensure that people vote according to competence and not to their belongingness to a particular ethnic group, 71.8% pointed out that the mass media should ensure that all politicians and voters voice their opinion freely, 71.3% feel that mass media should influence the voters to vote according to competence of politicians and not according to party they belong, 62.3% believed that mass media should create a platform for voters to voice their opinion.

The respondents were more satisfied comparatively with the performance of Le Mauricien. The latter together with Weekend, l'Express, Défi Plus and 5 Plus were the most favorable media in terms of respondents' expectations as shown in Figure 20.

6.1.M.i MEDIA THAT HAVE FAILED TO MEET EXPECTATIONS

Respondents were further asked to list the written/spoken press that failed to meet their expectations. In response to this question, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (64.0%) mentioned "MBC TV" while only 11.3 of them pointed out Le Mauricien that failed to meet their expectations. Besides, 58.0% pointed out "MBC Radio", 39.3% mentioned t Le Socialiste and Sunday Vani, 35.7 mentioned Le Matinal and 35% stated La Gazette. It is to be noted that Le Mauricien, Weekend, L'Express, 5 Plus, and Radio Plus were more accepted among the respondents. (Ref: Figure 20).

FIGURE 20

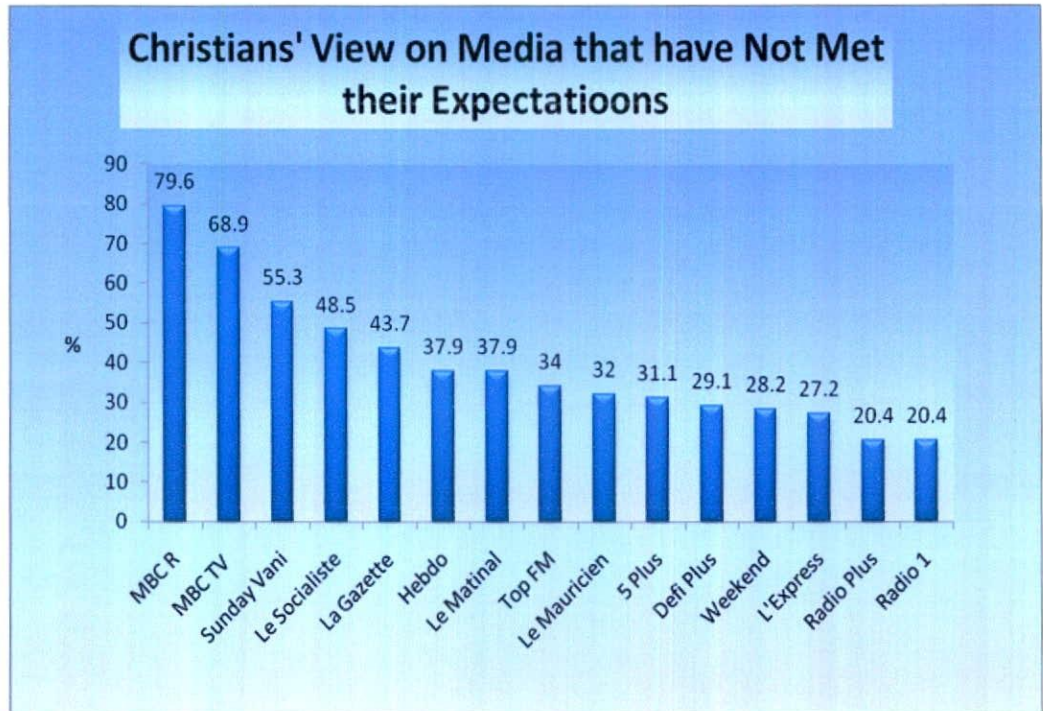
6.1.m. ii EXPECTATIONS FROM MEDIA BY ETHNIC GROUPS

The Christians considered that MBC R, MBC TV, Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and La Gazette are those that have failed mostly in meeting their expectation. They considered that Radio 1, Radio Plus, L'Express, Weekend, Défi Plus, 5 Plus and Le Mauricien to have fared better than other media. However, Le Mauricien did not get the favor of Hindus. Muslims considered MBC TV, MBC R, Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and Weekend as not having met their expectations. Christians considered MBC R, MBC TV, Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and La Gazette as not having met their expectations. The study also revealed that Radio 1, Radio Plus, L'Express and Weekend were the most preferred among Christians; Défi Plus, Radio Plus and 5 Plus among

Muslims; and Top FM, Radio Plus and Le Matinal among Hindus, as shown in

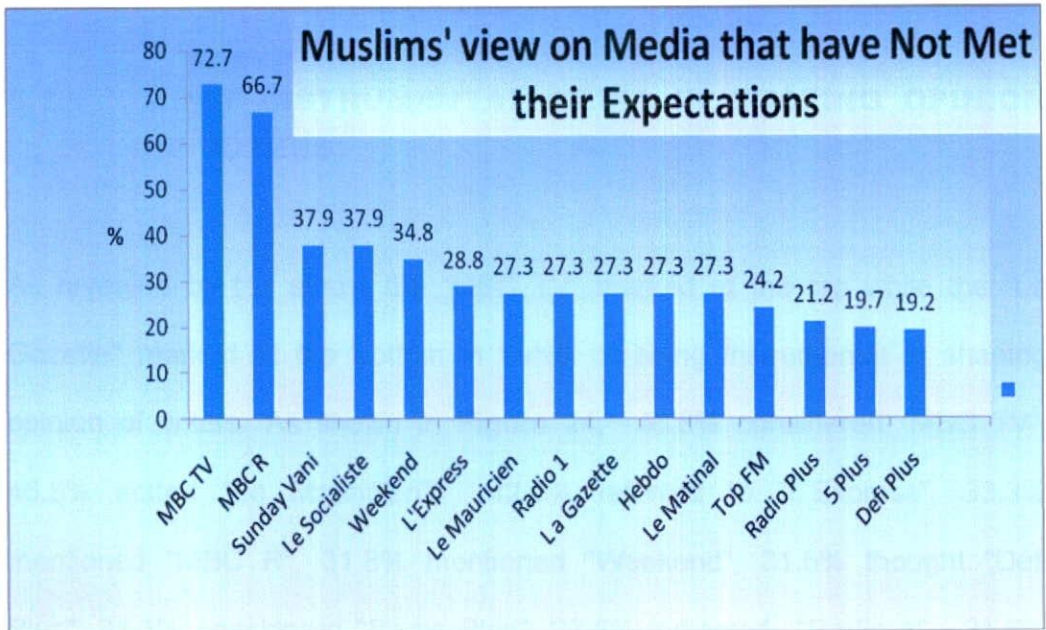
Figures 21, 22 and 23.

FIGURE 21



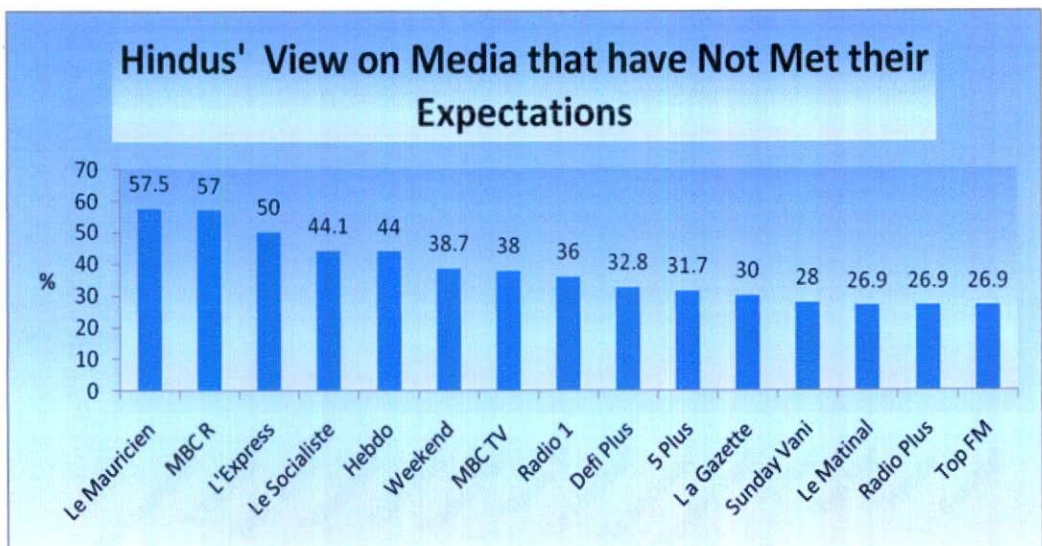
The Muslims rated MBC TV and MBC R as the worst by 66.7%- 72.7% in terms of meeting their expectations, and they considered Défi Plus, 5 Plus , Radio Plus and Top FM as more acceptable.

FIGURE 22



The Hindus considered Le Mauricien, MBC R, L'Express and Le Socialiste not to have met their expectations. However, they were favorable comparatively to Top FM, Radio Plus, Le Matinal and Sunday Vani.

FIGURE 23

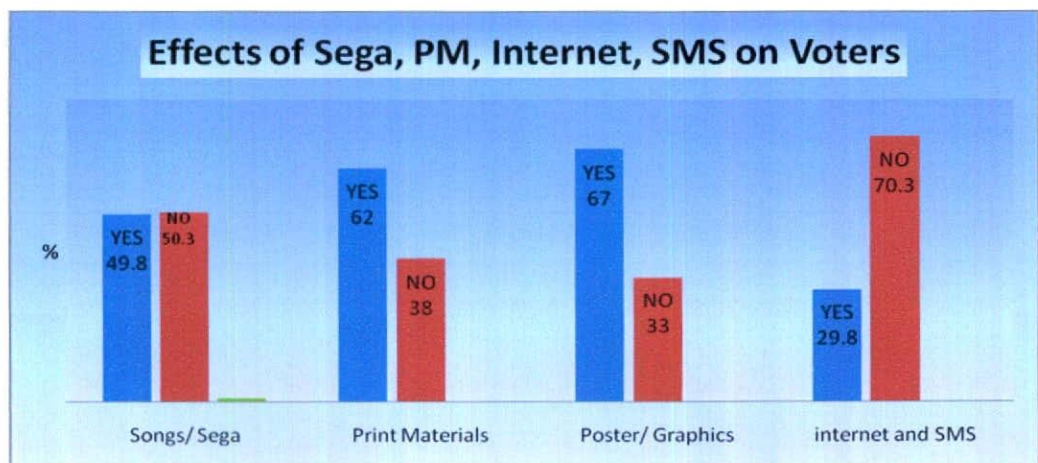


It should be noted that a media channel like MBC TV that almost all have found partisan and manipulative, was still considered by respondents as influential in shaping public opinion. MBC TV, Le Mauricien, L'Express, MBC R, Weekend, Défi Plus and Radio Plus were considered instrumental as opinion shapers. These data were in congruence with the data on influential media channels. as pointed out above.

6.1.6 THE IMPACT OF SONGS AND OTHER WIDE SCREEN PRESENTATIONS

Respondents were asked whether the use of songs and other wide screen presentations have had an effect on opinion of voters. In response to this question, over half of the respondents (50.3%) replied negatively while slightly less (49.8%) replied positively, as shown in **Figure 25**. A low percentage of respondents considered Internet and SMS having any effect on voters; 70% of them considered that these did not have any effect on voters.

FIGURE 25



Respondents were further asked whether the print materials like brochures on the candidate's profile, samples of voters' ballot papers with photographs of the candidates and other flyers and leaflets have had an effect in shaping opinions of voters. In response to this question, about two-third of the respondents (62%) replied positively while over one-third (38%) replied negatively. (Ref: Figure 25)

6.1. p CONCLUSION ON FINDINGS FROM ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Respondents considered the most influential media channels to be newspaper, radio and TV. Among newspapers, L'Express, Weekend and Le Mauricien were considered to be most influential and informative, and among the electronic media, Radio Plus, MBCTV 1 and Radio 1 were considered the most influential and informative. The most manipulative newspapers were considered to be Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and La Gazette. In terms of partisanship, the respondents did not qualify Hebdo, Top FM, Radio Plus and Défi Plus as explicitly partisan. However all other newspapers, radio and TV channels were qualified as openly partisan. Sunday Vani, La Gazette and Le Matinal, were considered to be supporters of the Opposition parties, namely the Labour Party/ PMXD alliance (also called Social Alliance). All the influential newspapers and the MBC Radio and TV, Radio 1 were considered by the respondents as supporters of the Government alliance. There has indeed been an almost complete mass media support to the Government alliance at the electoral campaign.

Respondents had very high expectations from the media as educator, informer, watchdog, and provider of platform to both politicians and electorates. However the respondents did not consider the media to have met their expectations. The respondents were particularly negative about MBC Radio and TV which they ranked highest in terms of inability to meet their expectations. Radio 1, Radio Plus, L'Express and Weekend were the most preferred among Christians; Défi Plus, Radio Plus and 5 Plus among Muslims; and Top FM, Radio Plus and Le Matinal among Hindus. It is to be noted that Radio Plus got the favors of all ethnic groups.

SECTION 2

6.2 Findings and Analysis from Interviews with Specific Audiences (Journalists and Politicians)

Besides collecting information from the public, interviews with politicians and journalists were considered crucial to this study. It was felt important to know what journalists thought about themselves and their role, and also to gauge the perception of politicians who have been involved and dealing with journalists in the context of an election campaign. Accordingly 30 politicians and 20 journalists were interviewed. These included present and past Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, Leaders of Opposition, Ministers, Junior Ministers, Parliamentarians, Municipal Councilors, political activists, Editors in

Chief, editors, reporters, news casters and other journalists from both the written and spoken press. All the interviews were conducted by the researcher himself and these were conducted between 2007-2009. Among the interviewees, there were journalists who were previously politicians, and others were politicians who were previously journalists.

The questions to the politicians aimed at gathering information from them on the extent to which they view the influence of the media during election campaign, their personal experience in relating with the media, and their perception on informative and manipulative media. An Interview guide was developed to structure the interview, with the usual introductory courtesy remarks, explanation on the purpose of the interview and a listing of 15 questions. The interviewees were asked to speak out their opinions and were assured of confidentiality.

The questions to politicians, though not put in the same order all the time during interviews, related to the degree of equitability and fairness in reporting political events, editorials, opinions and views expressed by journalists and members of the public in the press, the accessibility of the press to the public etc. The interviews were conducted in December 2007 / January 2008, August 2008, December 2008 / January 2009. Understandingly, though the interviews with high ranking politicians were very cordial and enriching, their appointments proved very tedious.

Interviews with the journalists were also based on the same guidelines as those of the politicians, but these were customized for each group and person. The journalists were more easily accessible, as they also wanted to get as much information from the interviewer. Two of the journalists published articles in their respective newspaper on the work of the interviewer and one had a full cover page report on the interviewer's work as a special guest at a special edition entitled "rendez vous". The journalists considered that they have the important role of informing and educating the readers and all of them qualified themselves as very professional and stated having done their job in respect of highest ethical standards and human rights.

Most of the politicians expressed the wish not to be cited in verbatim, with an explanation that if cited they would manage their tongue and would not be able to voice opinions freely. Some agreed to mention their name as one of the interviewees without however quoting them. One very well known politician who held very high office in the government in 1980s, and was a former Deputy Prime Minister stated that he would speak freely only if he is not cited; or else some of his thoughts would be withheld. A former Prime Minister wished not to be quoted as he was not prepared for the interview as such. The sitting Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare Hon. Indira Seebun and the former Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Hon. Ashock Jugnauth did not object to be cited. While journalists did not object naming them and citing them, they were almost all very vague and spoke highly of their role as journalists in a functional democracy like Mauritius.

Among the 30 politicians interviewed, efforts were made to conduct exclusive case interviews with very high profile politicians who were former and sitting Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, ministers and policy makers who are still very renowned politicians and have considerable influence in society.

Excerpts of these case interviews follow:

6.2.a EXCERPTS FROM CASE INTERVIEW 1: FORMER PRIME MINISTER (FPM)

The Former Prime Minister is one of the oldest sitting parliamentarians and is the leader of one of the most important political parties in Mauritius. During the period of election in 2005 and before, he was the Prime Minister of Mauritius and the coalition parties which he led during the election campaign unfortunately lost the election. His Group did not get the majority of votes. He was however elected in his constituency and is at present the leader of opposition in parliament. He is a reputed and well respected politician in Mauritius. He has written many press articles and is well versed in the political history of Mauritius on which he lectures and writes frequently.

- **Researcher (R):** Thank you Sir for giving me time to talk to you briefly in connection of my thesis that I am writing on the impact of Mass Media on the electorate during the election campaign of 2005. I would like firstly to ask if I can cite you in my thesis.

Former Prime Minister (FPM): It is indeed a pleasure meeting you and tell me how is Bangladesh? They recently had election there and it was an

interesting situation where 2 women were contesting. I went on the internet and got a few statistics which showed that the newly elected lady got a substantial number of votes!

- **R:** Yes indeed and once I get back to work in Bangladesh, I will collect more statistics and send you.

FPM: Ok send me by email. Well if you cite me then I would have asked for a more prepared questions and answers session and hence in this case you better not cite me.

- **R:** Ok I will not. How do you assess the role of the press in Mauritius?

“People read newspapers and it is our duty to put things right when we found that some journalists are off track”, Former Prime Minister.

FPM: Well they are doing a marvelous job. In a democracy like Mauritius I find the press doing very well and this is rare in many parts of the world. There is no press censure and they are all allowed to say and write what they want. But of course there are some “brebis galleuses” (bad apple), but this you should expect.

- **R:** When you were the Prime Minister, you initiated the liberalization of the air and accordingly came up the private radios. How do you find the media environment now?

FPM: the private radios are doing a great work and we are happy the media landscape has been more open and everybody is not getting access to the media to voice their opinions.

- **R:** Do you think that the TV also should be liberalized?

FPM: Of course our national TV is very bias towards the government and we want a TV that gives opportunity to everybody.

- **R:** During the election campaign of 2005, were you happy with the press?

FPM: Yes I was happy. Everybody was doing their bits of work. There were those who were for the government and others were against. A few journalists were nasty towards us and we denounced that openly in public.

- **R:** Do you think the press exerted an influence on the people during election campaign in 2005?

FPM: I believe yes they did. People read newspapers and it is our duty to puts things right when we found that some journalists are off track. There were some that were openly in favor of our opponents and we had to keep track so that people get a fair and balanced view of things. But overall, they were doing their role well.

- R: And now?

FPM: Now the MBC is doing a dirty job and is being grossly partisan.

6.2.b. EXCERPTS FROM CASE INTERVIEW 2: FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (FDPM) AND JOURNALIST

This case interview is a record of an interview that the Researcher conducted with a politician who held one of the highest posts in the government in the 1980s and who has been a seasoned politician and journalist for years. He is remembered for having toppled down one of the giants of the Mauritian politics. When asked whether he would like his name to be

“Today’s press is sick. Members of the press who write in favor of Government have got free air ticket from Air Mauritius, and have been appointed ambassadors abroad. This is a fact”, Former Deputy Prime Minister

cited in this research work, he pointed out that if he is cited he would weigh all his words and would not be able to speak openly on issues that are true but that could harm the sentiments of some.

- **Researcher (R):** Thank you for accepting to receive me in your house in such a short notice this early morning despite your busy schedule. Well Sir, you have been in politics for years and...

Former Deputy Prime Minister (FDPM): Well I have retired officially from politics, and as you can see from the pile of documents and papers in this room, I have even been forced to close my office.

- **R:** I would like in the first instance to ask you whether I can quote you in my study.

FDPM: I do not mind at all you quote me, however if I am quoted, I will manage what I say. I would not tell you bluntly what I feel. If you want me to open up, then do not quote me.

- **R:** That's fine. You will not be quoted. My first question is: Do you consider the press manipulative in Mauritius

FDPM: let me go back to the period 1948-1960, when writing in newspapers was reserved for a class of people and the spade was connected to a category of person, not the pen. In 1968, the fight for independence was on racial ground. I will not forget those days, nor forgive anybody! 70% of the population were living in the ghetto and were not allowed to write. The press was monopolized by a group of Franco-Mauritian people. Today people of Asian descents speak and write very good French, which was at that time reserved for a class of people. And all this was monitored by the private sector and the Catholic Church. It was unfortunate that at that time language was mixed with religion. Even today all the press are racist and manipulative. Look the way they have treated the Air Mauritius Affair that happened this year. This reminds me of " 'Saris' nu pa ouler" ('Saris' we do not want) of 1968.

- **R:** What about today's press?

FDPM: Today's press is sick. Members of the press who write in favor of Government get free air tickets from Air Mauritius, and have been appointed ambassadors abroad. This is a fact.

- **R:** Do you think that the press has an influence as an opinion shaper?

FDPM: All the manipulations of the press have not worked at all. The people vote with heart and emotion!! They read but act by what they feel is good, and not by what Gibert Ahnee, Jean Claude de L'Estrac or Jean Claude Antoine write.

- **R:** Do you think that the privatization of the radio has done more good than harm?

FDPM: Yes of course this is a good step in democracy. However some are abusing this power. Take the case of Ajay Ganess, the former minister, who was harassed for renovating his office, while others are doing away with millions and millions. His personal life has also been exposed in the public.

- **R:** Do you think that the press in Mauritius is informative or manipulative?

FDPM: They are both, at times more manipulative. Read some editorials you would see. However there are some that are really professionals and I have many friends in the press and we share very good relations. We are in a fragile democracy and we need to be careful of manipulative press that can make us believe a lot of nonsense.

6.2.c EXCERPTS FROM CASE INTERVIEW 3: SITTING MINISTER OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELFARE (MOW) HON. INDIRA SEEBUN

The sitting Minister of Women's Right and Child Development and Family Welfare was at her first sitting in Parliament after her election in 2005, and has been privileged to be nominated minister despite not having any previous parliamentary experience before. The interview was conducted in her office in December 2007. She did not hesitate to answer the questions and in general she considered the press to have been fair to her during the electoral campaign. She conceded that she was given more exposure by the press after she became minister not so much when she was campaigning. She however cautioned that the press needed to be managed carefully as they can either make or destroy a politician.

- **Researcher (R):** I thank you Hon Minister to grant me time to discuss with you about the press in Mauritius. Do you mind if I cite you name for the interview?

Minister of Women (MOW): Not at all, you can quote me.

- **R:** How do you rate the influence of the press as opinion shapers during election?

MOW: They are very influential and most particularly newspapers like L'Express, Le Mauricien and Weekend that have a big readership.

“The media has never been kind to me and they are very ruthless. They can make or break you and so you need to be careful” Indira Seebun, Minister of Women’s Right Child Development and Family Welfare.

- **R:** Which type of media do you think is more influential, the electronic or the written press?

MOW: Television is more influential. Almost all people watch television in Mauritius. The private radios are more concerned with spicy and sensational news.

- **R:** But the TV is more supportive to the Government!

MOW: Indeed but they have always been so and supports all government that comes. However they are more responsible in their work than private radios.

- **R** what has been your personal experience with the media?

MOW: The media has never been kind to me and they are very ruthless. They can make or break you and so you need to be careful. You should never provoke them. We need to respect the media and weigh your words when you talk to them.

- **R:** When you run for election in 2005, what has been the role of the media?

MOW: The media in 2005 speculated a lot and spoke of different election poll. They have indeed been against us. However, this has not worked and even on the eve of election, they gave our opponents as winner so that to influence those who were not decisive in their choice and these could have very well tossed the balance. They were either playing a game, or they made a wrong judgment. However this did not work and we eventually won. They do not have the right to do this on the eve of the election and must allow democracy to work.

- **R.** Do you find the press to be manipulative?

MOW: Much of the editorial during the election were biased. Some are more sober and write in between the lines. However the readers are very rational and are intelligent. The press cannot fool them and they do not accept unconditionally what the press gives. The TV has played an important role

- **R:** A last word?

MOW: The press in Mauritius is doing a marvelous job. The ability to write is a gift from God and we should use this gift responsibly.

6.2.d EXCERPTS FROM CASE INTERVIEW 4: FORMER MINISTER OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE (FMH), HON. ASHOCK JUGNAUTH

The former Minister of Health and Quality of Life was **Ashock Jugnauth** and he agreed that his name be cited. Before 2005 A. Jugnauth was minister for five years until the election of 2005 in the MMM/ MSM government. He was elected in 2005 again, but his party did not get the majority. He sat in Parliament after 2005 as a member of the opposition. He however lost his seat in Parliament on alleged fraud in the election. He then exercised in private as a lawyer. The interview with the former Minister of Health and Quality of Life was conducted in his Solicitor's Office in December 2008. To date he is the leader of his own party.

“...there are those who are in favor of the government and those that are in favor of the opposition. All of them are in one way or other biased”, Ashock Jugnauth, Former Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

- **Researcher (R).** Do you think that the press in Mauritius is doing its role as expected?

Former Minister of Health (FMH): I think so. Well, there are some that jump on conclusion here and there without having proof, but on the

whole they are doing well. There are a few Editors in Chiefs like Gilbert Ahnee, Jean Claude De L'Estrac who people like to read.

- **R:** Do you think that they are more manipulative than informative?

FMH: They are both! They provide information but some editorials are really subjective and I want at times to write to them. Why people do not write back?

- **R:** is the press influential as opinion shapers?

FMH: Yes they are but the TV has more audience than newspapers.

- **R** Has the press during the election campaign of 2005 been tough toward you?

FMH: Not really, I have had a very cordial relationship with them and even when I was minister many of my friends from the press came to meet me in my office for clarification and interviews and I was always open. But of course you need to be careful as they may trap you with a question and you must know how to answer. But of course some will criticize, but that's normal, and this is their job.

- **R:** Do you think the press is biased?

FMH: Well listen, there are those who are in favor of the government and those that are in favor of the opposition. All of them are in one way

or other biased. “Le Militant” newspaper will always be in favor of Mouvement Militant Mauricien, and you cannot expect the contrary. Others will favor other parties and this is the game of democracy! Newspapers like “L’Express” and “Le Mauricien” are more neutral in their approach but can also be in favor of one against the other. There are journalists in the same newspaper who differ in opinion.

6.2.e CONCLUSION ON FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS

Findings from interviews with 30 politicians and 20 journalists were very productive in shedding light on the degree that the media were perceived as biased and manipulative. Almost all politicians (90%) generally felt that the written and spoken press in Mauritius was fair and just. They argued however that though almost all the media claimed to be independent, yet they were not. Ashock Jugnauth, the former Minister of Health and Quality of life considered that “All of them are in one way or other biased”. One former Deputy Prime Minister was very critical against a section of the press which he vehemently criticized as manipulative.

Interestingly, more than 75% of politicians did not condemn the “manipulative” press. They believed that those who were manipulative were in fact “partisan”, and that their choice of allegiance to any political party needed to be respected. Many politicians argued that “manipulative” press did trigger debate and that this helped to further inform and educate readers or listeners

and viewers. Almost all politicians (92%) stated that divergence in views should be welcome and that it helped to reinforce a functional democracy. One politician stated that ***“we are all partisans at some time or the other”***.

Politicians (80%) considered that it was difficult to demarcate clearly which section of the press was more or less manipulative or informative. They stated that all the press were both informative and manipulative, while some were indeed overtly manipulative.

In this study, it is the politicians who have been more vocal in terms of communal affiliation of audience to the press. While journalists themselves did not consider that the different press have different readership among different ethnic and communal groups, politicians stated that the communal choice of the media by the audience was obvious. 80 % of politicians believed that different communal groups had got different preferences for the media and this was based on ethnic background of the owners of the media channels. Many politicians stated that Hindus read ‘Sunday Vani’, and ‘Le Matinal’, Creole (Christians) read ‘Le Mauricien’ and ‘L’Express’ and Muslims read ‘Impact news’ and ‘Défi Plus’. Indeed these newspapers were owned by these different ethnic groups. However in this study, analysis of the questionnaires administered to the public, as explained in the previous section, did not really reflect this association. This is possibly explained by the fact that politicians are more conscious of ethnic sensitivity and differences among the electorates, and that these could be determining in winning or losing an

election, especially in a constituency where there is a marked difference in the composition of the different ethnic groups among the electorates.

Interestingly, one politician who has been also a journalist stated that in order to understand the influence of the press on the public, it is important to see what the public listen, read and watch. "Everybody does not listen, watch or read the same media; everybody always makes consciously or unconsciously a choice on the newspaper to read and on issues of his/her interest within the newspaper. Some listeners tune to a particular radio station and stick to it all the time", stated a politician.

Some politicians were more blunt in accusing "a section of the press" to be communal. 85% of politicians identified Le Matinal, Le Socialist, Sunday Vani, Le Quotidien, La Gazette, Le Militant as partisan; and Le Mauricien, L'Express and Weekend to be "fairly" independent. Le Défi Plus was considered "sensational press", which "favored inquisitive reading". However, almost all politicians interviewed labeled the chief editors of Le Mauricien and L'Express as powerful writers but shrewd and who were not always independent in their editorials.

Former Politician/Journalist
"...to understand the influence of the press on the public, it is important to see what the public listen, read and watch. Everybody does not listen, watch or read the same media"

All the politicians and journalists agreed that the MBC/TV/Radio have been and will always remain a pro-government organ, given the government's hold on the station. Politicians however acknowledged that the MBC/TV broadcast

had a huge audience given its high coverage and that cable TV was predominantly inaccessible to the majority. 90% of politicians did not consider Cable TV to have any impact on the local politics. Cable TV was primed for its international news among the elite, and for its films among the middle class. Politicians recognized that for the average Mauritian, the primary source of both national and international news was the MBC/ TV broadcast. 90% of politicians considered that the French daily Evening News Bulletin on MBC/TV 1 was the mostly watched among the audience, and that the mostly read newspapers were Le Mauricien, L'Express and Le Weekend.

Politicians' View
"... those who are manipulative are in fact "partisan", and their choice of allegiance to any political party needs to be respected"

One former Prime minister who supported free press proposed the immediate liberalization of the TV landscape so that private local TV channels could emerge.

More than 90% of Journalists considered that the press was mostly fair but agreed that partisan press did exist. Journalists within the same newspaper took care to avoid contradicting fellow colleagues. One journalist in the written press condemned vehemently his chief editor as being discriminatory and manipulative in the choice of articles he wishes to release for print, be it from the public or colleagues working for the same newspaper. 92% of the journalists interviewed however contended that they did their work professionally and in respect of the right of all individuals.

68% of politicians believed that readers were more interested in "News' items than in opinions expressed. 75% of politicians considered that the public in Mauritius did not question the validity of information given by the press, and yet did not blindly accept opinions expressed in the press. They even considered that opinions in the press did trigger discussions among the public, at place of work, in the community and at home. 25% of politicians expressed their concern on a section of the press that they considered not only partisan but also racist.

SECTION 3

6.3 FINDINGS FROM CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EDITORIALS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN NEWSPAPERS

During the general election in 2005 there were 16 newspapers almost all in French with the exception of 2 that were in English. Among the dailies the most widely read newspapers were **Le Mauricien**, **L'Express**, and **Le Matinal**; and among the weeklies, the **Weekend** and **5 Plus** were the most influential and widely read. These were confirmed during interviews with politicians and journalists, and also by the responses from questionnaires administered among the general public as shown in Figure 12. General Elections were held on the 3rd July 2005 and hence the analysis of Content of editorials and opinions printed in the 5 main newspapers cited above have been undertaken for the period January 2005 to July 2005. A total of 639 editorials and opinions expressed in these 5 newspapers have been analyzed in terms of the theme discussed and the specific issues highlighted and commented. The focus has been essentially on areas that are likely to throw more light on the hypotheses made in this study and keeping in mind its objectives also. The following will now highlight the main findings from the content analysis of these 5 newspapers cited above. In order to avoid researcher's bias in analyzing the editorials and opinions expressed in newspapers, and to give a more balanced judgment of the analysis, a **Panel of Reviewers** was set up, constituting of 1 politician, 1 journalist, 1 statistician

and 1 teacher (representing the general public), as explained in section 6.B.1.

The findings were shared with the panel and their opinions were requested on each of the findings from the opinions expressed in the five newspapers. Individual discussions were held with each panel members on several occasions followed by 3 Panel meetings. The suggestions and recommendations of the Review Panel were incorporated while analyzing the findings.

Below are the findings from the content analysis of each of the five newspapers.

6.3.a Le Mauricien

Le Mauricien was the most widely read newspaper in Mauritius. It is perceived as a serious newspaper and is widely circulated all around the country. It is written in French and its Editor in Chief in 2005 was Gilbert Ahnee who has established himself as a well read editorialist and whose writings have also been very often subject of controversy from politicians.

From 5th January 2005 to 30th July 2005, 143 editorials were signed by the Chief Editor Gilbert Ahnee, 8 articles by Jean Clement Cangy and 1 by Geoges Alexandre and 1 by Robert d'Argent. One Editorial on the 26th January 2005 was not signed. Hence 92% of the Editorials and opinions expressed were from the Chief Editor and the theme varied from politics to

social, cultural, educational, financial, environmental and international issues. Unlike other editorialists, he has had the credit of having commented on a variety of issues from the Judiciary and the Constitution of Mauritius, the Small Island Development states, the China and India perspectives, to the Catholic Church and the Pope. It should be noted that while treating international affairs he has not missed to relate these with the local context, and this is indeed very appropriate. He has in almost all cases treated or referred to national issues. Other journalists of *Le Mauricien* have been totally eclipsed by the Chief Editor; hence giving other journalists very little scope for free expression, unlike the director of *l'Express* who has been more open even to diverse opinions. The Chief Editor of *Le Mauricien* took the lion share in expressing opinions. He completely appropriated the newspaper as against the case of the Chief Editor of *L'Express* and others.

73% of the issues discussed by the Chief Editor related to politics, almost all on local issues. His editorial titles are very evocative like "*Pena narien*" (There is nothing) of 3rd February 05, or perhaps also obscure like of 3rd March 05 "*Kitfoi dimin*" (the meaning of which is obscure and which may mean "kitfoi dimain", (perhaps tomorrow) or anything, or still "*Moralité Pa rampli vant*" (Morality does not fill the stomach) of 21st March 05, "*Aap Swagat hain Manmohanji* (*Welcome Manmohanji*) of 30th March 09, "*Please talk sense*" of 11th May 05, "*Sa tigit la...*" (*That little...*) of 20th May 05, "*Syndrome Quartier Militaire*" (*Quartier Militaire Syndrome*) of 21st May 05, "*As extinct as Choonee...*" of 6th June 05, "*En attendant Godot...*" (*Waiting for Godot...*) of

21st June 05, "*Sanzman bizin kontinie*" (Change should continue) of 29th June 05, "*Yes minister...*" of 12 July 05. His choice of title for editorials very often provoked inquisitiveness.

He claimed strongly and loudly as being independent and yet showed partisanship and bias in favor of MMM. This has been expressed by the Chief Editor of *Le Matinal* in an editorial of 11th July 05 entitled "*L'ultime insulte*". The latter claimed that Gilbert Ahnee together with other "sections of the press" published false opinion polls prior to the election to indicate unjustly that the MMM/MSM was winning the election.

The editorial of *Le Mauricien's* Editor in Chief titled "*Soyons Clairs...*" (*Let us be clear...*) of 11 July 05, in response to the editorial of *Le Matinal* of the same day highlighted the presumed role of the media. He urged the press not to be partisan so as to avoid the fate of partisan newspapers in the past like *Advance* and *Cerneen*, which had to close down.

In defense to the allegations of publishing false opinion polls, he stated that this also happened in India in the 2004 election when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the then ruling Hindu led Bharatya Jantata Party (BJP) lost the election. Indeed most analysts believed the NDA in India would win the election in 2004; this assessment was also supported by opinion polls. The economy of India in 2004 showed steady growth, and the Foreign

Exchange Reserve in India stood at USD 100 billion (7th largest in the world and a record for India). Because of this, the NDP was supposed to have been on a wave of the so-called “feel good factor” typified by its promotional campaign “India Shining”. All was set for the NDP to win the election. However the result showed the rival National India Congress winning the election instead with a comfortable majority of 335 seats out of 543 in parliament. Opinion polls were proved wrong. In Mauritius the section of the media which published polls which were proved wrong shyed away from blame on the excuse that even in India opinion polls were proved wrong in the 2004 election.

Both Editors (Le Mauricien and Le Matinal) showed open partisanship. The Editor in Chief of Le Matinal declared overtly his support to the Labour/PMXD alliance while the support of that of Le Mauricien to the MMM/MSM alliance was implicit.

Though the newspaper did provide a “Forum” page exclusively for readers to voice their opinions, surprisingly few responses from the readers questioned the contents of the editorials were published. The passivity of the readers is a matter of concern not only in “Le Mauricien” but also in other newspapers. It is possible that the criticism from the readers on the editorials could have been totally censored by the Chief Editor himself, as has been reported by a

journalist from his own press when questioned. However, this cannot be asserted, given the absence of any concrete evidence.

There was one rare published article signed by RAJ and who wrote against the views of the Editor in Chief of *Le Mauricien*. RAJ cautioned the Chief Editor to be careful not to disrepute unnecessarily other people, and not to influence opinions at the risk of questioning ethic and professionalism. RAJ wrote that *"the power without responsibility is the prerogative of the harlot, not of the press, whose role is to educate and not to titillate people's appetite for rumor and scandal"*. The Chief Editor severely reprimanded RAJ in his response entitled *"Questions de fond"* on 25th February 05. The opinion of *"the one whose identity is known but who signs with the pseudonym RAJ"* was considered *"assez insultante"* (quite insulting) wrote the Chief Editor, and the editor contended that whatever is published or not, is in public interest. He stated that *"Le Mauricien does not censor press critics whose point of view seems constructive. We do not have lessons to learn from anybody, not here. Look elsewhere"*, and this could as well be "quite insulting", and provocative arrogance. His statement insinuated that *Le Mauricien* does censor press critics which it considered as "non-constructive". It is true that **'What is of interest to the public, is not always public interest'**

Though favored by Christians more than other ethnic groups, as revealed by this study, *Le Mauricien* had a comparatively good audience, and was

considered to do quality reporting and was well read. It did very often “set the agenda” for discussion, especially through the editorials.

6.3.b. L' Express:

There were 151 editorials and opinions expressed by journalists and others in L'Express between 2nd January 05 and 30 July 05. 118 (78%) of the opinions expressed were political. 20 of the total opinions emitted related to Social, 10 to Economics, and 2 to Media influence. As against Le Mauricien where all the editorials and opinions were dominated by the Editor in Chief, in L'Express the task was shared among a variety of journalists like Nazim Esoof, Raj Meetarban, Deepa Bookun, Jean Claude de L'Estrac (the Director of the Newspaper), Stephane Saminaden, Ariane Cavalot-de l'Estrac, and Akilesh Roopun.

The articles written by Nazim Esoof were very diverse. He was more eloquent on major political issues, as he wrote quite questionably in "Surencheres" on 21st April 2005, that "*Il ne sert a rien d'editorialiser sur les grandes idées des petits partis politiques*" (It serves nothing to write editorials on big ideas of small political parties). He has been thought provoking as on 17th April 05 at "*Au-dela des hommes*" and critical as at "*Les Versions de Berenger*" on 26th March 2005.

Raj Meetarban had been very political especially when commenting on the budget speech on 5th April 05 at "*Un Budget pour séduire*". He contended that the government utilized the "feel good factor" and proposed to make the country a "duty free island" essentially to gain votes. In his editorial "*Sans*

éclat” he was quite critical to the leader of the Labour alliance who, he stated had lost his charismatic appeal and looked stressed on a televised political program on 24th June 2000. He showed concern on diverse issues of public interest.

Jean Claude de Estrac, the Director of the newspaper, has been overtly political. Having been a popular politician and a senior minister in the past and having been an ardent supporter of militancy against colonial oppression and dictatorship, he is a well read editorialist. His writings did not conceal his political views that he publicly voiced when he was an active politician. He remained a supporter of the MMM party despite having dissociated with the party after his broil with its leader. Analyzing the possible result of the election he contended that the final result would be determined by those who were still “indecisive” and were uncertain of whom to vote. He wrote in an editorial on 26th June 2005 on “*Seulement des intentions*” that the “indecisive voters” would weigh in favor of the MMM alliance, implying that the election would eventually be won by the MMM alliance. Then result proved him wrong. His writings also overtly betrayed his conflict with the leader of the MMM whom he never spared to nick at any occasion. On Election Day, 3rd July, his Editorial “*Je Vote pour...*” he appeared insincere when he wrote he would vote for... “Mauritius” after having stated that the campaign undertaken by the Labour Party alliance has not worked well and that the MMM alliance positions itself as better placed (“*se positionne comme la mieux placée*”) to win the election. The result of the election proved him again wrong and the Labor Party alliance won. However, as an ardent supporter of free press he continued to

campaign for an independent press, free from manipulation. Unfortunately most of his writings went above the head of the average reader, given the very high flown language he used.

Nazim Esoof translated the positioning of L'Express in his article "Non!" of 27th June 2005. "*We know we are not sheltered from possible intention for manipulation...but no, Mr. the politician, the task of the journalists, at least those from 'L'Express' is not dependent on the positioning of the shareholders of the press company...*". This is against Eric Alterman's assertion (Chapter 3) that it is the owner of the media company that decides the quality of news. While Nazim Esoof agreed that there are independent journalists as opposed to partisan journalists, he contended that the journalists of 'L'Express' had a sense of ethical responsibility and did their work in all freedom to give the most needful information to the readers. Raj Meetarban reinforced the contention on 21st July 05 at "*Une expression plurielle*" and stated that there were at 'L'Express' journalists of diverse opinions and who write independently. Nazim Esoof, after the result of the General Election was declared at "*Communication Politique*" on 7th July 05, attributed the defeat of the MMM alliance to a failure of Communication and Electoral Strategy.

The fact that 'L' Express" had many journalists with varied opinions indeed gave the newspaper greater credibility and acceptance. Nazim Esoof who was neither the Chief Editor nor a deputy, wrote more (51 articles) than Jean Claude de L'Estrac (10 articles) and even more than Raj Meetarban (39 articles). Deepa Bookun wrote 14 small and spicy articles which made

pleasant reading. Many others wrote opinions from 3-5 times during January 2005 and July 2005. 'L' Express' proved to be more diverse, less controversial and more subtle in treating sensitive issues and hence more acceptable. This opinion has been justified by the **Reviewers Panel** set to review the findings of the analysis of editorials and opinions expressed in newspapers, as explained above in section 6.B.1. The respondents indeed considered L'Express as the most influential newspaper as shown in Figure 8. The image of its Director also weighted a lot. He has been a long time seasoned politician and a senior Minister and is known for his orations and writings, and as such respected.

6.3.c. Le Matinal

Le Matinal had a total of 230 editorials, opinions and views expressed of which 126, that is 55% were political. The Chief Editor of the newspaper Kiran Ramsahaye signed 60 editorials but the newspaper had also 115 unsigned editorials which could also be attributed to the Chief Editor, hence giving him 76% of total number of articles on opinions and views published from January 2005 to July 2005. While the majority of editorials related to local politics, the editorials distinguished from others in the number of International Issues dealt that did not have any direct bearing on local politics. 47 social, 33 international, 6 educational issues were treated. From January to April 05, all editorials were either signed by Kiran Ransahaye or unsigned. From May 05, opinions were also signed by Jean Max Baya and Harish Chundunsing, who contributed 18 and 10 articles respectively. Sanjana Bagmal Cadervaloo

wrote 2 articles after the election in July 05. All the journalists wrote on local politics. While the Chief Editor expressed his opinions overtly in favor of the Labour Party alliance, the other journalists of the newspaper were less vocal and more nuanced, but which however did not conceal their allegiance to the labour party alliance.

The newspaper also gave prominent space to Bijay Madhoo who wrote 7 political articles. Bijay Madhoo is known to have been always pro-labour party alliance (Social Alliance) and he has written all the 7 articles to glorify the labour alliance, especially its leader. His statement about the number of people attending the public meetings at Rose Belle, the constituency of the Deputy Prime Minister Pravin Jugnauth from the MMM/MSM Alliance, at *“Rough Sailing for Pravin Jugnauth?”* of 15th June 05 implicitly referred to L'Express newspaper as being in favor of MMM alliance, when he wrote ironically : *“..even L'Express has reported that Labor had 3000 people to MSM/MMM 1000”*. He claimed in his article entitled *“Where is the wave?”* of 22nd June 05 that there was a *“wind of change blowing in favor of the Social Alliance led by Navin Ramgoolam”*

On the 1st January 05, Kiran Ramsahaye showed his political affiliation in his article *« Guerre Ouverte »: “l'électeur moyen opte pour le changement plutôt que la continuité.”* (the average voter opts for change rather than continuity). His newspaper had indeed continuously advocated for change in Government and became openly partisan in favour of the Labour Party alliance. After the victory of the Labour Party alliance at the 2005 General Election, he wrote

vehemently against a section of the press that he thought supported the MMM alliance on 11th July 05 at “*L’ultime insulte*”. He stated proudly that “*the voice of the people is the voice of God.*” The Chief Editor of *Le Mauricien* felt targeted and wrote back on the same day to condemn the statement of Kiran Ramsahaye at “*Soyons Clair*”, reported above in section 6.3.a. Other editorials by Harish Chundensing have been illustriously critical to the MMM alliance, particularly to its leader Berenger as shown at “*Le fiasco de Berenger*” (*The flop of Berenger*) on 27th May 2005.

6.3.d. Weekend

Weekend is a weekly and has had 44 editorials and opinion articles from January to July 2005, mainly by Gerard Cateaux, Jean Claude Antoine, Josie Lebrasse. Gerard Cateaux wrote 27 editorials and constituted 61% of the total number of articles, against 25% for Josie Lebrasse, and 13% for Jean Claude Antoine. With the exception of only one very interesting article on the role of the Media during election campaign entitled “*Le temps d’une champagne*” of 22nd May 05, almost all articles of Gerard Cateaux were on International affairs. While he swanked on a free press in Mauritius, he also deplored that “*there are parallel powers which try to prevent us from informing.*” In dealing with internal affairs, he touched a variety of issues from Small Island Development States (SIDS) conference to Gordon Brown, the war in Irak, the Kyoto Agreement, the Dominos Theory and terrorism. Surprisingly, he avoided reporting on local politics. He commented on the Constitution, the

judiciary and the Pope Jean Paul II. He had the merit to support patriotically the Mauritian candidate Jayen Catharee to the post of Director General of World Trade Organisation for the promotion of North South Cooperation in “*Jayen le tiers-mondiste!*” on 27th March 05 and as a very old respected teacher condemned vehemently young male students at their unbecoming behavior at a girl school on “*La generation voyou!*” on 13th February 05, an issue that was taken over by Josie Lebrasse in “*C’est ca l’élite...*” on 13th February 05. He left the political debate to Jean Claude Antoine and Josie Lebrasse, both perceived to be supporters of the MMM alliance.

Jean Claude Antoine’s article on 6 March 05 on “*Le boycott*” quoting the statement of the leader of Labour Alliance Dr. N. Ramgoolam that the Weekend newspaper was “*racist and supports openly the government and the MMM*” betrayed his opposition to the Labour Party Alliance. He has been very critical to the leader of the Labour Alliance with whom he claimed to communicate on phone regularly and whom he declared had not changed at all from his old bad habits in “*Il n’a pas changé*” (*He has not Changed*) on 29th May 05.

Josie Lebrasse was a fervent and open supporter of MMM Alliance and her writings testified. She never missed any opportunity to target any individual, institution or group close to the Labour Alliance from controversial social worker Dhundev Bauhadoor, the politicians Xavier Duval, Anil Baichoo, Madan Dulloo to Sheila Bappoo ... in her articles “*Itinéraire d’un enfant gâté..*”

of 24th April 05, ‘*Et ca reparat...*’ of 8th May 05 and “*Quelle honte*” of 19th June 05, among others.

6.3.e. 5 Plus

5 Plus was a weekly newspaper. There have been 51 editorials and opinions printed by 5 Plus between January to June 05 of which 30, (59 %) were from Darlmah Naeck the chief editor. 11 and 10 articles were written by Jean Claude Dedans and Michaella Seblin respectively. 92 % of the opinions were on politics and a few on economic and social issues.

From January to February 05, the opinions and editorials of 5 Plus have all gone against the leader of the MMM alliance on the latter’s remark on the former minister Anil Bachoo who crossed the floor from MMM alliance to the Labor alliance. The statement from the leader of the MMM that Anil Bachoo was “*asser limité sur le plan intellectuel et politique*” (quite limited on the intellectual and political front) was vehemently criticised by Michaella Seblin at “*Derapages in (controles)*” and by Darlmah Naeck at “*Qui a dit un ‘Non Event’?*” on 6 February 05, and by Jean Claude Dedans at “*Bachoo, Choonee et Berenger*” of 20th February 05. In March 05, the editorials condemned politicians who used religions platform at Ganga Talao (Pilgrimage site for Hindus) to win votes; in April the issue was essentially on Economy with the depreciation of the Mauritian Rupee, the presentation of the Budget, the “duty-free Island” proposal by the government; in May the discussion centered on

the choice of candidates and the respective weightage of other parties in the two main alliances.

In June the political issues discussed were summarized by Michaella Seblin as *"Inquietude, Deception, Espoir"* (Anxiety, Deception and Hope) on the 12th June 05. By mid June, the general opinion expressed in the newspapers was that both alliances showed confidence in winning the election. In the editorial of 26th June *"Sept jours pour gagner ou..."* the chief editor made a balanced analysis of the performance of the two main blocks. On the Election Day, 3rd July, the three opinions expressed in the newspaper namely, Darlmah Naeck's *"Le feu sacré"*; Jean Claude Dedan's *"Penible fin de champagne"* and Michaella Seblin's *"Jour J"*, made a very objective analysis of the whole campaign with success and failures from both sides. Jean Claude Dedans concluded, *"...que le perdant apprenne de sa défaite et que le vainqueur honore les promesses qu'il a faites a l'électorat. Le reste est élémentaire et folklorique"* (...that the loser learns from his defeat and the winner honors his promises that he has made to the electorates. The rest is elementary and folkloric). 5 Plus has been all throughout the electoral campaign very fair and just, and has not shown any open partisanship.

6.3.f Conclusion on Findings from Content Analysis of Editorials and Opinions in Newspapers

Analysis of Content analysis in the 5 newspapers was conducted with support and assistance from the Panel of Reviewers who together with the Researcher connected the findings with the findings from the other survey

instruments so as to ascertain their validity. 639 opinions and view expressed in 5 most popular newspapers were analyzed to determine:

1. The extent of Subject Coverage
2. Whether the political Ideology and parties' manifesto and proposed policy decisions were addressed during reporting
3. The nature of news coverage and fairness in reporting
4. The degree of engagement of the electorate to the newspaper contact

Below are the conclusions:

The extent of Subject Coverage

In agreement with Jaswant S. Yadava (Politics of News), referred to in Section 3.B.4, 25 % of all news coverage in newspapers was on international affairs and the rest were on national items. With the exception of the editorials of "Weekend" newspaper which focused mostly on international affairs, all the other newspapers concentrated on local politics. While the issues addressed varied from education to economics, society, judiciary, and international affairs, they were all related to local politics. All the newspapers had their own political agenda which was also identified from the analysis of questionnaires with the general public and interviews with politicians and journalists. Jaswant S Yadava, (referred above) rightly stressed the power of the press in their ability "to set their own agenda and control dialogue". It was confirmed from analysis of news coverage and opinions and editorials printed in the press

that Le Mauricien, L'Express, 5 Plus, Weekend were in favor of the MMM/MSM Alliance while Le Matinal was in favor of the Labour/ PMXD alliance.

Addressing Political ideology and Party Manifestos

None of the newspapers did refer to the political ideology and any party manifesto. There was no discussion at all on the broad areas of political ideology and policies proposed by the different political parties and alliances. The discussions were on specific issues and incidents with almost no mention of the nature of society that the political parties are proposing to the nation. Indeed though the proposals from different political parties could have commonalities, the specific actions and policies proposed by the main political blocks would have alerted the public opinion and could have effectively served as informed checks by the electorate.

Nature of Coverage and Fairness in Reporting

The issues covered were very sporadic and there were absolutely no follow up on any issues addressed. Each day a new issue was reported. No specific issue was profoundly analyzed so as to enable the readers draw a conclusion on any policy that needed any specific attention. As pointed out in section 4.D.1, Patterson considered that it is not only important to know what has been communicated to the public, who communicated and how, but also what

has been the response from the public, that is the degree of engagement from the public.

As explained in chapter 3 the media is expected to provide a free “**Market of Ideas**” where contradictory voices should be entertained. However analysis from the survey points that in general though there have been opinions expressed by readers in some newspapers, these have been scanty and sporadic, and the written press has not really been an effective “ Market of Ideas”. The reasons could be that the readers have already made their opinions and do not care about what the press opined, or that the press did not released all “ideas” from readers.

Another leading newspaper released an opinion poll at the eve of the election announcing the victory of the government led alliance, which was proved wrong by the result of the election. However, the timing of the release of the opinion poll by the press is judged strategic.

On the eve of the election in 2005 in Mauritius, the press considered the result to be unpredictable as both political alliances were fervently supported with almost equal enthusiasm from voters. About 10% of the voters were however still considered indecisive and not having taken any decision as which side to vote. Their votes were considered crucial in deciding the winning team. The release of a “false” opinion poll was meant essentially to influence the

indecisive voters to vote for what would be considered the winners, as it was believed that the indecisive voters would always prefer being on the winning side. Jaswant S Jadhav rightly pointed out that the media has the power to “misinform cunningly and to misinform mischievously”⁴². Indeed Eric Alterman pointed out (Chapter 3, What Liberal Media? Truth about Bias and the News): “The Media can under the right conditions, make or break a candidate with voters through the manner they choose to portray him or her”

Another newspaper declared openly supporting the opposition alliance and its editor in chief went in open conflict with another editor in chief, accusing each other as unfair partisanship.

Degree of engagement of the electorate to the newspaper contact

The press did open their newspapers to a certain degree to the electorate. However the degree of engagement by the electorate to the written press was very limited. The newspapers seemed to publish those articles from the public which they feel are in congruence with what they are proposing. In Mauritius, all journalists working for a particular newspaper would write the same language and would not contradict each other internally. There may be nuances within the writings of different journalists working for a newspaper,

⁴² “Politics of News” by Jaswant S. Yadava, published by Naurang Rai, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, India, 1984

but these do not go against the opinions expressed by the Chief Editor or the Editorialist of that newspaper.

Readers' views were not very apparent in the newspapers publications. Only 5% of the total opinions expressed were from readers. The reasons for this apparent lack of interest and engagement from the readers were not documented. It is possible that the readers' views were screened and those that were against the opinions expressed by the newspaper were rejected and not printed. This has been also revealed from interviews with journalists. The case of the Reader RAJ cited above who wrote against the opinions expressed by the Chief Editor of *Le Mauricien*, and who was vehemently criticized by the latter could also indicate that readers might also not have been encouraged to express their opinions.

As explained in Chapter 3, the Information Processing Theory (Schema Theory) postulates that people have limited capacity to assimilate all media messages and their opinions are already framed by past experiences, beliefs and perceptions, which are called "schemas". In the case of Mauritius this could also be a plausible explanation why the electorate did not get engaged so much on opinions expressed in newspapers in 2005 during the election campaign.

SECTION 4

6.4.a SYNTHESIS OF DATA ANALYSIS

As explained earlier, a media contact involves the transmission of a Message and this may have no engagement or may create a positive or a negative engagement from those receiving the message. The engagement of the receiver can trigger other engagement from the provider of the initial message. According to McQuail, *“the sender of a message usually has more authority, prestige or expertise than the receiver. The relationship is not only asymmetrical, it is often calculative or manipulative in intention”*⁴³.

The nature of the engagement from the receiver or the provider of a message depends on the perceptions that each has on each other, that is:

1. Whether the receiver perceives the provider of a message as being fair, equitable, comprehensive, objective and serious, as pointed out by Michael Robinson. **(The Robinson Approach)**
2. Whether the provider perceives the receiver as **“Naïve”**, as did Walter Lippmann, or **“Alert”**, as did John Dewey, and explained in Chapter 4. The perception of the media on the electorate determines how the media addresses the electorate, as explained by Thomas Patterson. **(The Patterson Approach)**

⁴³ Denis McQuail: Mass Communication Theory, SAGE Publications, London, 1983, p. 55

As shown in Figures 6, 7 and 8, the most influential media channels in Mauritius were the newspapers, Radio and TV and they have had a rating of 90% to 95%. Magazines, Internet, CD audio, VCD and DVD ranked between 14% to 39%. Among the newspapers L'Express, Weekend and Le Mauricien ranked high as the most influential newspapers and among the electronic media, Radio Plus, MBC TV1, Radio 1 ranked highest as the most influential.

Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste, and La Gazette among the newspapers and MBC R1, MBCTV1 and Radio 1 among the electronic media were considered the most manipulative press. Radios 1, Le Socialiste, Sunday Vani, MBC R, Le Matinal, and MBC TV were considered to be openly partisan. Those who were considered to be supporters of the MMM Alliance (Government) were MBC TV, Le Mauricien, MBC R, L'Express, Weekend and 5 Plus; those who were considered to be supporters of the Labour Alliance (Opposition) were Le Matinal, Sunday Vani, La Gazette. The majority (67%) considered that the media in general and in particular the MBC TV and MBC R did not meet their expectations.

Hence the general perception was that the press in Mauritius was both informative and manipulative. The most powerful and influential press were considered to be in favor of the MMM Alliance forming the then government. However despite support from a wide section of the most powerful press channels, the MMM Alliance lost the election. The 2005 election in Mauritius showed that despite the presence of a strong press, a strong media contact, a powerful media network, a strong bias of the majority of the press in favor of a

political group, the electorates voted against the wishes of the majority of the press. All the major press channels including the powerful TV channels campaigned directly or indirectly in favor of the government alliance (the MMM/MSM Alliance) and yet the latter lost the election. Voters had cast their votes not by what they read and heard in the media, but by what they thought best to serve their interest and this has been determined by factors other than the agenda setting of the press. Below is an analysis of the perception of the electorate on the media and vice versa.

6.4.B The Perception of Electorate on Media

- **FAIRNESS AND EQUITY**

All media in Mauritius were both informative and manipulative. Electronic media were however judged as more manipulative than print media. Just like MBC TV 1 are considered to have totally supported the MMM alliance, Le Matinal, Sunday Vani and La Gazette have openly supported the Labor alliance. Newspapers which are popular and considered influential like Le Mauricien, l'Express and Weekend are said to have supported the MMM alliance. Hence no newspaper has indeed been fair in its coverage of election campaign though almost all claim to be independent. Private radios have opened up their air time to all parties, but are still perceived as having been unfair in political coverage.

Equity is related to fairness. The editorials and opinions expressed in most newspapers which are considered influential have all been mostly in favor of the MMM alliance, with the exception of *Le Matinal*. The editorials and opinions expressed in *Le Mauricien* and *Le Matinal* were entirely dominated by their respective Chief Editor as against *l'Express* and *Le Weekend*. The Chief Editor of weekend abnegated on local politics and concentrated on foreign affairs which had little bearings on the electors during the electoral campaign. The exchange of arguments between the Editor in Chiefs of *Le Mauricien* and *Le Matinal* after the result of the election reflected partisanship of both. The interpretation of indecisive votes by *L'Express* and comments made on the opinion polls conducted by a section of the press on the eve of the election did not show equity in judgment and fairness to all parties, indicating blatant intention to influence those who were still indecisive on voting. The overtly excessive coverage of MBC TV 1 of the MMM/MSM alliance public meetings at the expense of the Labour Alliance was another example of lack of equity on the main electronic media, which was however considered very influential in shaping public opinion.

▪ **COMPREHENSIVENESS**

An analysis of the 639 editorials and opinions expressed in 5 major newspapers show that 400 articles (62%) on opinions published have been on political issues. Of a total 639 editorials and opinions, 92% in *5 Plus*, 78% in *L'Express*, 73% in *Le Mauricien*, 55% in *Le Matinal*, and 43% in *Weekend* treated political issues. The Editor in Chief of *Weekend* wrote almost all his articles on international affairs ranging from war, terrorism, trade and

commerce. His opinions hence had almost no bearings on local politics. However other journalists from Weekend were almost always vocal on local politics. The editorials of Le Matinal also commented on a variety of international issues. International issues did not have significant bearings on the electorates in shaping their opinion as voters in the general election. The electorates were more concerned about local politics and on how their quality of life would be improved. L'Express who had a bigger pool of reporting journalists, had the credit of treating different issues from different perspectives. However only 111 of all articles (17 %) in the newspaper related to social issues, 62(10%) on international affairs, 31 (5%) on economics, 19 (3%) on Education and only 2 articles on environment. Most of the articles related to comments made by politicians and did not propose any recommendations nor any concrete solutions to address any issues. Weekend, l'Express and Le Mauricien were considered by all as being more informative.

▪ **OBJECTIVITY**

Readers have expressed their opinions on the objectivity of the press like RAJ and Teeren Appasamy in Le Mauricien. Prominent space has been given to Bijay Madhoo in Le Matinal, and interviews have been published on various political figures. Le Matinal has been openly in favor of Labour Alliance and has declared so. Sunday Vani and La Gazette are perceived to favor the Labour Alliance. None of the other newspapers or spoken media has declared openly being partisan, and yet MBC TV, Le Mauricien, L'Express and Weekend newspapers have all been reported by the respondents as being

partisan and manipulative. Weekend was accused by the then leader of Opposition as being bias against his party and as being “*racist and supports openly the government and the MMM*”. This also reflected the perception of many readers on the newspaper, as revealed from the analysis of questionnaires administered to the general public. Accordingly Weekend responded through an article of its journalist Jean Claude Antoine on 6 March 05 entitled “*Le boycott*” criticizing the statement of the leader of opposition. Almost all journalists (including prominent ones like Gerard Cateaux, Gilbert Ahnee, Nazim Esoof, Raj Meetarban and Jean Claude de L’Estrac) claimed that they had been fair, independent and objective.

The electorate’s perception on the objectivity of the different newspapers may be interpreted by what they considered as manipulative press. Though all the electorate considered the press to be manipulative, there were also variations from different ethnic groups as to the extent that the different newspapers were judged as manipulative.

The Hindus considered Le Mauricien, L’Express, Weekend, and Le Socialiste as more manipulative and also as having not met their expectations. They considered Le Matinal, La Gazette, and Hebdo as less manipulative and having met their expectations. Among the electronic media, Hindus preferred Top FM and Radio Plus. The Christians considered Sunday Vani, La Gazette, le Matinal and Le Socialiste as more manipulative and Le Mauricien and Défi Plus as the least manipulative and having met their expectations. Among the electronic media, Christians preferred Radio 1.

Muslims considered Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and Weekend as more manipulative and Défi Plus as the least manipulative newspaper. Muslims considered Défi Plus, 5 Plus and Radio Plus as having met their expectations. Among the electronic media, Muslims preferred Radio Plus.

▪ **SERIOUSNESS**

The general discussions in the media on the various issues be it political, economic, educational, social, international have been of high standard and serious. The press reported all incidents and happenings with professionalism and did not spare anybody showing unbecoming behavior, nor failed in highlighting excess of zeal and inappropriate actions be it from young male students harassing female students, excessive expenditure on state owned limousines, the first lady's involvement in political campaign, the prime minister's and other ministers' use of religious platform for political gains, to the weakness of the Constitution and the Judiciary. While a great majority of electorates considered Le Mauricien, l'Express. Weekend, Le Matinal and MBCTV1 as manipulative and partisan these media channels still have a fairly good audience, and this is because of the fact that they were perceived as "serious" and making good coverage. Similarly, Sunday Vani and La Gazette did not enjoy the same audience due to the fact that they were limited in their coverage of events. The MBC TV 1 was still regarded as a main source of information to many despite being perceived as partisan and having a government bias.

6.4.C The Perception of Media on Electorate

The perception that the media has on the electorate determines the content, type and ways that a media contact takes place. Given that the electorate in Mauritius is mostly literate, that radio, TV and newspapers were widely available and accessible to all, the media cannot afford to treat the electorate as naïve and stupid, as contended by Lippmann. The electorate can neither be considered as completely “enlightened”. Mauritius despite having a high literacy rate and comparatively a higher standard of living than many developing countries does not have a highly intellectual population. The press considered themselves as having to perform the essential function of informing and educating. Some journalists agreed that censoring news items is necessary in some situations to protect their integrity, those of informants, and those who are vulnerable but also to preserve peace and harmony in society. They considered that what is of interest to the public is not always of public interest.

Some newspapers provided space for readers to voice their opinion like, *Le Mauricien's* page entitled “FORUM”. However, it seemed that the articles are screened and censored by the editorial team. The Chief Editor's assertion that **“we do not have lessons to learn from anybody”** put him close to Lippmann's assumption that the public is stupid and that they need constantly to be “tamed”. But this did not translate the general perception of the press on the public.

The high intellectual discussions of international affairs of Gerard Cateaux in Weekend connected himself with highly intellectual readers and not with the average readers of the newspaper. However Jean Claude Antoine from the same newspaper came very close to the average reader. Jean Claude de l'Estrac from L'Express appealed to an argumentative reader and was more an Agenda Setting writer. He targeted a specific audience with an open betrayal of a never dying political animal. Kiran Ramsahaye from Le Matinal wrote in blatant support to the Labour alliance and was conscious of his readers' reaction. He however like other journalists considered himself independent and objective.

The spoken media also opened their airtime to listeners and viewers. The two private radio stations were more open to public participation. Live telephone conversations on radios provided opportunities for the public to voice their opinions on political affairs freely and without any censorship. This showed that radio stations did consider opinions from the public as important and essential for a "balanced" debate on political issues. However the MBC TV though opening its airtime to different political parties has been partial to the government in news coverage and this has been denounced by all other parties.

The media has neither looked upon the voters as naïve and stupid nor as alert and enlightened. The political landscape has not totally been open or closed. All the media have been manipulative and informative, some more, others less. It should be noted however that some editorials were written in very high

flowed classical French and have been beyond the reach of the average readers. This could also explain their low impact as opinion shapers.

6.4. C. The Engagement of the Electorate and the Media

There has been low engagement between the electorate on the written press. However, there has been appreciative engagement between the electorate and the electronic media. These were translated mainly by

- ❖ Low reactions of the readers to “Editorials”, “Opinions” and “News” released by newspapers
- ❖ High reactions of Journalists to opinions expressed by politicians, members of public and other journalists
- ❖ High reactions from the public at live and recorded program at the Radio and TV

The engagement has been obviously both negative and positive, and this, as pointed out by most of the politicians interviewed, reflected the benefits of a functioning democracy. There have been diverse and contradictory opinions expressed by many in the print and electronic media. The press in general has been very vibrant in emitting contradictory opinions on the Prime Minister, the President, the Leader of Opposition, the First Lady, and other politicians. 75% of politicians interviewed considered that the public in Mauritius did not question the validity of information given by the press, and yet did not blindly accept opinions expressed in the press. They agreed that opinions in the

press did trigger discussions among the public at place of work, in the community and at home.

The press did its role marvelously well in respect of the right of all individuals and in respect of religion, culture, caste, class, creed, political affiliation and gender. No press has nurtured any racial and religious discrimination likely to question peace and harmony in the country. A section of the press has been denounced by a few as partisans. The MBC TV, Le Mauricien, Weekend and L'Express were considered in favor of the MMM alliance and Le Matinal, Sunday Vani , La Gazette in favor of the Labour Alliance, and yet none from the press has failed to promote peace, justice, liberty and harmony. Being partisan does not imply questioning basic values; and as rightly said by a politician ***“we are all partisans at some time”***. We cannot claim that the media has grossly manipulated facts in all instances and created what Robinson called “malaise” (Chapter 3) among the population. Nor can we state that the media has “mobilized information” (Mobilization Theory, Chapter 3) to enable effective participation of all concerned citizens to political discussions.

6.4.d. The Agenda setting and priming effect of the media on the electorate

As pointed out by Trenaman and McQuail, “evidence strongly suggests that people think **about** what they are told but at no level do they think **what** they are told.” Indeed evidence from this study shows that the public have been exposed to a variety of issues ranging from education, society, religion, environment, economy and which have provoked discussions on these issues but not exactly on what has been reported. There have been some very sporadic references to what the editors of newspapers stated with no relevant significance. As a result the impact of editorials on the audience has not been very important. It is also noted that some editors use very high flown languages in their editorials and this went beyond the reach of the average readers. It seemed that editors wrote for selected readers and missed the average common readers.

Evidence collected in this study indicated that journalists did set the agenda for discussion. The journalists made the audience politically oriented, as in almost all cases of editorials and opinions analyzed in this study more than 85% of all issues addressed were on politics. Issues related to ecology, science and technology, sustainable development, human rights, were almost absent in the discussions. However, none of the editorialists have “primed” the political manifestos of political parties. Political manifestos have been sold by the parties themselves, with little involvement of the journalists.

Framing is a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact. Journalists have indeed framed events and incidences, very often by estimating the number of people attending political parties meetings and by commenting on incidences at these meetings.

However as revealed by different studies, it is difficult to delineate a causal relationship with substantive proof between the intentions of the journalists and public opinion. Journalists from different media channels set their own agenda while reporting and expose the public with different sets of opinions, very often contradictory too. Collectively the journalists form a set of varied opinions and hence affect the public differently. Most popular newspapers like *Le Mauricien*, *L'Express* and *Weekend* together with the state owned MBC TV were perceived to have an "agenda" promoting the MMM/MSM alliance, and yet the MMM/MSM alliance lost the election. This questioned the real impact of the media in influencing public opinions in Mauritius. The study did not show any significant variation from different age groups, educational background or gender of the respondents on the effect of the media on the electorate.

The important role that the media plays in a democracy cannot be underestimated. As explained earlier it is possible that there were flaws in the ways the media communicated, using a style and language that were not within the reach of the common voters. It is possible that the media has wrongly set the agenda and primed news events. It is also possible that other channels of communication, like public gatherings, individual and door to door

campaign, and community participation and involvement had overcome influence from press and media channels.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political communication emerges from the interaction between the media, politicians and the public and this entails a whole set of complex intricacies that influence the process of producing and transmitting messages to the public. Any change in behavior related to the messages transmitted by the media cannot be ascertained through a linear correlation. This study has shown that different media channels act differently on their respective audiences but the end results are so varied and diverge that the real impact of the media on the audience in shaping opinions and changing behavior during an election campaign remains undetermined, at least in the context of Mauritius.

It could be that the country has turned into a media-saturated environment, where both the spoken and written press has become a pervasive part of the political life. The popularity of live radio shows in the country indicates the growing interest of the public to media contact. At no instance would a media message be thrown away as garbage. Government always and as everywhere in the world, lashes over a '*section of the press*' that it believes goes against its interest. This is because the power of the media is recognized and very often feared, whether as an informer, educator, manipulator, entertainer, protector, or watchdog.

This study assessed the power of the media as an opinion shaper in the role of a political actor. The key finding of this study is that despite an almost total support of both the written and spoken media to the ruling political alliance during the 2005 election campaign in Mauritius, the latter lost the election.

As demonstrated in the literature review, the media has the power to “make or break”. Then, how is it that the media could not “make” it in Mauritius during the 2005 general election? As pointed out earlier in this study, the Mauritian public is highly literate and fairly “alert” on political issues and easily captures the bearings of reports from the media. Almost all the respondents to the questionnaires administered among the public in this study considered the national broadcast (MBC/TV) to be bias, manipulative and propagandist in favor of the ruling alliance; and yet almost all did not miss its daily evening news bulletin, which they considered as their main source of information. The “alert” public takes and rejects what it wishes from the media. One politician stated during the interview: *“All the manipulations of the press have not worked at all. The people vote with heart and emotion!! They read but act by what they feel is good...”* (6.2.b).

Another factor which has come up during the analysis of contents from editorials is that all the issues dealt by different editorialists were isolated and unconnected. Editorialists did not act in concert to promote any issue, but commented separately on different political events. All issues were dealt once and without follow up, and as a result lost punch in shaping opinion of public.

Had there been a more concerted and systematic approach from the media, it could have been otherwise. It must however be stated that public opinion is not dependent on only the media contact or exposure, but has a multitude of other influencing factors. The success at an election is a combination of mixed strategies which involve also and perhaps in the case of Mauritius more importantly the traditional patterns of social loyalties and clientelism. Political parties have highly efficient local machineries, with considerable mobilization capacity during election time when thousands of people from all walks of life join the campaign trail. Interestingly this study reveals that modern media-centered campaign is not necessarily the most effective route for winning an election. It has shown that internet, CD or other visuals did not produce desired impact. While media should act in concert and synergistically, it should also be supported by other factors like interpersonal contact, organized public and private meetings and intensive canvassing.

The conceptual framework in this study drew a link between the media and the electorate from the perspective of the transmitter to the receiver of political communication. In transmitting information, the study found a high degree of bias and manipulation from the transmitter of information and this has been validated by the perception that the public has on the media. There has indeed been a high degree of engagement from the transmitter and a disproportionately lesser engagement from the receiver. This also reinforces the fact that the public formed their opinion not only by engaging with the media, but also by engaging through other means. Engagement of the public to the media contact has been low. It is possible that the media, especially the

written press have not opened up enough to the public to enable greater participation in political discussions, or that there had been a general suppression of counter-editorial views.

7.a Conclusion

This study was based on 4 hypotheses and these related to the degree and impact of the engagement of the media and the electorate, the effect of press opinions on the public, the agenda of the press, and the association of different ethnic groups with the media. To test the hypotheses, this study developed a series of objectives to understand the influence of the mass media through their editorial contents, the expected role of the media as perceived by the public, the perception of the voters, journalists and politicians on the role, expectations and influence of the media, and the degree of independence of the media. A Conceptual Framework was developed to link the concept of engagement of the electorate with a media contact and relate the outcome of the engagement with how the media and the electorates perceive each other. Different concepts and approaches developed by Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, Michael Robinson and Thomas Patterson were utilized in the development of the Conceptual framework. To gather information pertaining to the above, three survey instruments were utilized, namely questionnaires administration among general public, Content analysis of Editorials of 5 major newspapers, and Interviews with politicians and Journalists. Below are the main findings and conclusions.

▪ **Influence of the media on the electorate**

The influence of the media on the electorate is tremendous. All respondents unanimously stated that both the print and electronic media have had important influence on the public. Respondents have rated radio/ TV and Newspaper from 90% to 95% as influential in shaping public opinion. Newspapers like L'Express, Le Mauricien, Le Matinal and Weekend and electronic media like MBC/TV1, Radio Plus and Radio 1 have had very high acceptance rate. With the exception of Radio Plus which was considered more independent, all the others which have had high acceptance rate were also considered to be bias and manipulative. This shows that the audience does accept the media as "informative" and does not reject them as "manipulative".

All journalists interviewed claimed independence and fairness in reporting and deny any form of bias. However the journalist Nazim Esoof conceded in his article on 27th June in L'Express, "*we are not sheltered from possible intention for manipulation*". Indeed findings show that Le Mauricien, L'Express , Weekend had strong bias in favor of MMM/MSM alliance while Le Matinal, and Sunday Vani had strong bias in favor of Labour/PMXD alliance. Défi Plus and 5 Plus were considered to be fairly neutral with no overt bias for any political party. Among the electronic media, the MBC (Radio and TV) and Radio 1 was considered to be openly bias in favor of MMM/MSM alliance. Radio Plus was however considered more neutral and less bias.

The findings of this study confirmed that indeed the media is influential in shaping public opinion. However the study also showed that the audience cannot be taken as “acquired” despite the existence of a strong media. When the audience is fairly “alert”, the media should show more concern on their collective strategy to make change happen. The engagement of the media should be matched by the engagement of the audience, and this was absent during the election period. The level of participation from the public in the media, especially on newspapers was negligible. There had been however appreciative attempts from private radios to involve the audiences in talk shows.

The media during the election campaign in 2005 had been very vibrant and zealous, and yet their impact as opinion shapers had not been explicitly indicated. There has not been any clear indication that the media has had a significant impact in harnessing the opinion of the electorate during the election campaign. As explained earlier there has been an absence of concerted effort from the media.

The public voted according to their own conviction and not by opinions emitted by the media, even though the latter deliberately set the agenda, prime and frame news events. One politician/journalist even added during the interview that *“all the manipulations of the press have not worked at all. The people vote with heart and emotion!! They read but act by what they feel is good”*.

▪ **Role of the media during the electoral campaign**

The public considered that the media has been both informative and manipulative. All the media were considered as both informative and manipulative. The electronic media were considered as more manipulative than the print media, especially the MBC/TV. Among the written press Défi Plus was considered as the most independent newspaper while Sunday Vani, Le Socialiste and La Gazette were considered as the most manipulative. Among the electronic media Radio 1, MBC TV1, MBC R1 were considered as the most manipulative. Radio Plus was considered as the least manipulative. l'Express, which was in favor of the MMM/MSM alliance, released the report of a poll survey conducted by "themselves" on the eve of the election forecasting the MMM/MSM alliance as the winner of the election. The MMM/MSM alliance lost. The intention of L'Express was indeed politically motivated and unfair. The public who had high expectations from the media, claimed that the press failed to meet their expectations.

The perception of the public on the media in terms of fairness, equity, comprehensiveness, objectivity and seriousness has been in general poor, indicating a poor level of confidence and thrust of public on the media. The perception of the journalist on the public is that the public may not altogether be enlightened. They were wrong. They believed that "*what is of interest to the public is not always public interest*". Very often the editorials have used languages that were beyond the reach of the average readers.

▪ **Importance of the media to politicians**

Politicians showed their reverence to the media and considered the media to be assuming their role fully. They did not condemn partisan journalism and considered it to be welcoming in a democracy. Media has indeed an important role to play in politics and this is undeniable. It should however be stressed that shaping opinions in the political arena is determined by other actors too, as contended by Christiane Eilders⁴⁴, in her thesis. She claimed that the media is one of the various political actors taking part in the political discourse and concluded that *“If one wants to judge the impact of media on politics, the relative chances of the other institutionalized and non-institutionalized actors to voice their opinions in public debate have to be considered”* (explained in Chapter 3). Politicians argued for greater liberalization of the media, especially the TV channels, for greater openness and fairness in media reporting.

▪ **Impact of Editorials on electorate**

Most of the editorials and opinions expressed in 5 leading newspapers in 2005 election campaign were political in nature and some were quite harsh against not only some politicians but also to those who wrote against their opinion, as reflected by the Gilbert Ahnee, the Chief Editor of Le Mauricien

⁴⁴ Christiane Eilders: author of thesis on *“Impact of Editorial Content on the Political Agenda in Germany: Theoretical Assumptions and Open Questions Regarding a Neglected Subject in Mass Communication Research”*, Berlin, 1997

who wrote on the 25th February 2005 that his newspaper “*does not censor press critics whose point of view seems constructive. We do not have lessons to lean from anybody, not here. Look elsewhere*”.

It is true that some of the editorials were very relevant to the issues on the political agenda. However, it was observed that there was no general agreement among the editors on any particular issue to constitute a “building block” that could have been more effective in shaping public opinions. No editor contributed constructively together with any other editor to advance a cause. Issues have been treated by every editor independently of a cause. Most of political issues were related to incidents, events, declarations by politicians and very rarely on any cause.

Furthermore once an issue has been dealt in an editorial, there was rarely any follow up articles that would create a momentum that is likely to shape political opinion constructively on that particular issue. Literature review has shown that for greater effectiveness, the frequency of hammering on a particular issue is important. In the analysis of editorial, there has not been any single instance where an editor has constantly stressed on an issue of concern, or on which the editor has opened a debate that has been sustained in the media. This has not sustained the interest of the readers who have been exposed indeed to a variety of issues from different editors but without any strategy for opinion shaping.

▪ **Perceptions of different ethnic groups on the media.**

Hindus considered Christians owned/directed media groups as more manipulative and Hindus owned/directed media groups as less manipulative. Christians similarly considered Christians owned/directed media groups as less manipulative and Hindus owned/directed media as more manipulative. Muslims considered Hindus/ Christians owned/directed media groups as more manipulative than Muslim owned/directed media groups. This showed that each ethnic group tended to align themselves with their own siblings. However, when the acceptance rate was analyzed, contradictory views were recorded. Défi Plus which was owned by Muslims had an acceptance rate which was greater among Christians (61%) and Hindus (58%) than among Muslims.(45%). Similarly Hebdo which was owned by Christians had an acceptance rate which was more among the Hindus and Muslims (46, 40% respectively) than among the Christians (29%). Weekend which was owned by Christians had an acceptance rate which was highest among Hindus than other ethnic groups.

Similarly among the electronic media, though Radio Plus was owned by Muslims, and yet had more the favor of Christians (48%) than Muslims (35%) and Hindus (35%). Top FM was owned by Hindus but had more the favor of Christians and Muslims.

Hence it was inappropriate to conclude that different ethnic groups associated themselves with media channels which were presumed to safeguard their interest. It can however be argued that different media channels have different vested interests which have been substantiated in the literature review. These interests are guided by political, social and economic considerations. It is difficult to discern which consideration(s) gain(s) prominence on the other and at what particular time.

This is indicative of the fact that the readers, listeners or viewers do generally choose their newspapers, radio and TV according to what they consider or perceive to match their own interest, and yet do not make blind choices.

7.b Recommendations

Acknowledging that the media is a powerful medium of communication and that it has not been proved to have been really instrumental in shaping public opinion, and considering that the public view the media as partisan and not really fair, equitable, comprehensive, objective, and serious;

It is recommended that

- The media promotes more professionalism that would minimize partisanship and bias and provide quality information that would not foster unrealistic and unnecessary fears and mistrust

- The media avoids serving vested interest and instead serves to support citizenship and strengthen democracy
- That the media gives more space to the audience to interact and gets more engaged in discussion without any form of censorship from the media moguls
- That the media strengthens its watchdog and surveillance function and uncover all unlawful and inappropriate actions from all sections of the society
- That the media continuously innovates, diversifies their staff as per gender and ethnic balance and provides information that are unknown and of interest to all sections of the society irrespective of ethnic background
- That a strong movement for media literacy emerges, that would educate people of all ages about the media system and how it operates, promote civic journalism to teach people and provide information that would effectively assist the citizens make political decisions.
- That a media reform be undertaken in Mauritius that would build capacity of journalists and create a conducive media environment that would promote greater entente between the media and the people
- That the media landscape is further liberalized, the National TV station be completely privatized and incentives be provided for private national TV channels to emerge.

- That further research be undertaken to understand the complexity of the racial and religious considerations in the voting process and know whether one would be prepared to vote for someone from another ethnic background. This would also throw light on how “enlightened” is the electorate. As Mauritius is a multi cultural and multi racial country, the involvement of socio-cultural organizations and religious community groups could also be another significant factor in influencing the choice of candidates for election.
- That a comparative study of the impact of the media on the electorate from different countries with similar background could be undertaken. This would enable discern other factors that are likely to influence people voting during election.
- That the impact of other forms of communication can also be subject to further research. This study reveals that the media effect on the electorate has not been really significant and hence purportedly the other forms of grassroots communication like individual door to door campaign and public and private meetings through the party machine could have been the driving force in the choice of voters..
- That the impact of internet, blog and other social media usage could be another area for further research. This study is limited to newspapers, Radio and TV and has not extensively studied the impact of the internet and other social media which are now becoming popular and constitute an important source of political information sharing.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE ON MASS MEDIA AS OPINION SHAPERS DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN 2005 IN MAURITIUS

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is conducted to find out the influence of mass media in shaping public opinion during electoral campaign. It is hypothesized that given the high literacy rate, and the widespread presence of both the written and spoken media in Mauritius, politicians do use the mass media to inform, pass on opinions and views to convince the electorates to vote for them and their respective political party. It is possible that a section of the press or the whole press is partisan and manipulative and either openly or in disguise enters the political game.

Hence this study has the objective to gather information from a wide section of the population, from the highly educate to the less educate, and from different social strata to gauge their perception and understand the influence

of the media during a general election campaign, with specific reference to the general election of 2005.

I humbly request you to fill the questionnaire below. I would like to give assurance that your views and opinions will be strictly confidential and will not be available to any other individual besides the investigator. Please do not indicate your name on any part of the questionnaire. The findings of this study together with other information obtained from interviews of members of the public will form the basis of the thesis that the investigator wishes to present for his PhD course.

I thank you for your support and kind assistance.

H S. Jooseery

Investigator

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. What is your age?

- 1. 18-25 years
- 2. 26-35 years
- 3. 36-45 years
- 4. 46-55 years
- 5. 56-65 years
- 6. 66-75 years
- 7. 76 years and older

2. Please indicate your Gender

- Male
- Female

3. Which of the following describes you best?

- Student
- Employed
- Self employed

Retired

Not employed

4. If you are employed, please specify in blank space below

In Government:

.....

In Private Sector:

.....

In Para-statal Body,

Corporation.....

In self employed position

.....

5. Where do you live in Mauritius?

1. Urban area

2. Rural area

6. Please indicate the highest level of education you completed

Primary schooling

Secondary schooling

University graduate

Post graduate and above

7. What is your family size?

1 person

2 persons

3 persons

4 persons and more

8. What is your ethnic group?

Indian/ Hindu Asian descent

Muslim Asian descent

Creole African descent

Christian Mixed population

European descent

Chinese descent

Other, specify

9. Did you vote at the last general election in 2005?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If no, please indicate why?

- a) Was not in country
- b) Did not have time
- c) Was not interested
- d) Did not know whom to vote
- e) I was not eligible to vote
- f) Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....
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.....

10. Indicate the extent to which the following media has been influential in shaping opinion of voters during last general election campaign :

MEDIA	Most influential	Quite influential	Influential	Less influential	Not influential
Newspaper					
Radio					
TV					
Magazines					
Internet					
CD audio					
VCD/DVD					

11. Indicate the extent to which the following newspapers have been influential in shaping opinion of voters during the last General Election campaign:

Newspapers	Most influential	Quite influential	Influential	Less influential	Not influential
Le Mauricien					
Le Socialiste					
Hebdo					
Défi Plus					
5 Plus					
L'Express					
Weekend					

Sunday Vani					
La Gazette					
Le Matinal					

12. To what extent the newspapers have been informative and manipulative?

Newspapers	Only Informative	Only Manipulative	Both Informative and Manipulative	More Manipulative	More Informative	None
Le Mauricien						
Le Socialist						
Hebdo						
Défi Plus						
5 Plus						
L'Express						
Weekend						
Sunday Vani						
La Gazette						
Le Matinal						

13. To what extent the following Radio /TV stations have been influential in shaping opinion of voters during last general election

Radio	Most influential	Quite influential	Influential	Less influential	Not influential
MBC 1					
MBC 2					
MBC 3					
RADIO PLUS					
RADIO 1					
TOP FM					
MBC TV 1					
MBC TV 2					
MBC TV 3					

14. To what extent the Radio/ TV Stations have been informative and manipulative?

Radio/TV	Only Informative	Only Manipulative	Both Informative and Manipulative	More Manipulative	More Informative	None
MBC 1						
MBC 2						
MBC 3						
Radio Plus						
Radio 1						
Top FM						
MBC TV 1						
MBC TV 2						
MBC TV 3						

15. To what extent the following Magazines have been influential in shaping opinion of voters during last general election

Magazines	Most influential	Quite influential	Influential	Less influential	Not influential
Business Magazine					

Weekend					
Scope					
Défi Jeune					
Défi Sexe					

16. Which of the following do you think were in favor of either of the two main blocks campaigning for general election? If you tick either column 1 or 2, tick also either 4 or 5.

Newspapers Radio/TV stations	1. In favor of MMM/M SM Alliance	2. In favor of Alliance Social (Labour/ PMXD)	3. Independent and Neutral	4. Openly Partisan	5. Not openly Partisan
Le Mauricien					
Le Socialiste					
Hebdo					
Défi Plus					
5 Plus					
L'Express					
Weekend					
Sunday Vani					
La Gazette					

Le Matinal					
MBC Radio					
Radio Plus					
Radio 1					
Top FM					
MBC TV					

17. What do you think should be the role of the Mass Media, especially during General Election campaign? You may wish to tick as many as you desire.

1. To inform readers, viewers, listeners
2. To educate readers, viewers, listeners
3. To influence readers, viewers, listeners
4. To create a platform for politicians to influence voters
5. To create a platform for voters to voice their opinion
6. To make voters vote according to competence of politicians and not according to party they belong

7. To make voters vote for a political party and not for an individual competence
8. To ensure that people vote according to competence and not to their belongingness to a particular ethnic group
9. To ensure that all politicians and voters voice their opinion freely
10. To be a watchdog to the politicians and ensure that political debates are fair and just
11. Others (Please specify)
- 18. Do you think that the written / spoken press perform the roles you listed in question 17 above?**
- Yes
- No
- 19. Please tick which of the written/ spoken press do you think failed to meet your expectations you listed at question 17? You may tick as many and make a remark if you desire.**

Newspapers Radio/TV stations	Tick in this column	Your remarks if any
Le Mauricien		
Le Socialiste		
Hebdo		
Défi Plus		
5 Plus		
L'Express		
Weekend		
Sunday Vani		
La Gazette		
Le Matinal		
MBC Radio		

Radio Plus		
Radio 1		
Top FM		
MBC TV		

20. Which of the following media do you think has/have been instrumental in shaping opinion of voters? Please give an explanation to your choice

Newspapers Radio/TV Stations	Tick in this column	Your explanation (how/why)
Le Mauricien		
Le Socialiste		
Hebdo		
Défi Plus		

5 Plus		
L'Express		
Weekend		
Sunday Vani		
La Gazette		
Le Matinal		
MBC Radio		
Radio Plus		
Radio 1		
Top FM		
MBC TV		

21. Do you think the use of songs/ segas and other wide screen presentations have had an effect on opinion of voters?

Yes

No

22. Do you think print materials like brochures on the candidate's profile, samples of voters' ballot papers with photographs of the candidates and other flyers and leaflets have had an effect in shaping opinions of voters?

Yes

No

23. Do you think graphics, posters on walls, messages on banners, have had impact on the voters' decision?

Yes

No

24. Do you think that the internet messages, phone messages and voice mail of politicians have had an effect in changing the opinion of voters?

Yes

No

25. Any other comment you would like to make.

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Thank you for your patience and assistance.