YOUNG ADULTS SOUTH AFRICANS MOTIVATIONS FOR WATCHING AND THEIR RECEPTION OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED TELEVISION NEWS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

BY

MUSAWENKOSI WISEMAN NDLOVU

STUDENT NUMBER: 951050641

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE CENTRE FOR CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR RUTH TEER-TOMASELLI

2008
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Centre for Culture, Communication and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Musawenkosi Wiseman Ndlovu

1 AUGUST 2008

SIGNATURE

Copyright © Musawenkosi Wisman Ndlovu and University of KwaZulu-Natal
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late sisters: Thobe, Nomathamsanqa and Nobethu.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to: My supervisor, Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli for her positive attitude and guidance, to the University of Cape Town’s Research and Development Fund for partial financial assistance. Without the support of my friends and family this work would not have materialised, I am forever indebted.
YOUNG ADULTS SOUTH AFRICANS MOTIVATIONS FOR WATCHING AND THEIR RECEPTION OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED TELEVISION NEWS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

ABSTRACT

An accumulative body of international scholarly work into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. However, because of its research focus and general orientation, this body of work has so far paid little or no attention to young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, let alone in the South African context. For the present work, an understanding of young adults South African’s aesthetical reception of television news is central to the appreciation of the relationship between them and television news- a relationship, which in turn, magnifies on the relationship between young adults and the general public sphere. The work argues that though scholars in South Africa have been studying the relationship between youth and news media since the late 1980s, the local youth-news media research area still lacks theorisation from- and application of- reception aesthetics, including its appropriation by media and cultural studies. This has limited understandings of youth-news media relationship that are grounded in reception aesthetics’ and cultural studies’ differential immanent accommodation of socialisation theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics and structuralism-based semiotics. Under apartheid, in cultural, journalism and mass communication studies, insights that would have resulted from amalgamation of these theoretical paradigms got impaired not only by bias in favour of each, but also by politicisation of reception theory and semiotics. In the post-apartheid, no attempt has been made to reconcile textual, contextual and reader-oriented theoretical paradigms. Against this background, this work, grounded in reception aesthetics and its appropriation by media and cultural studies, is an interpretation of young adult South Africans’ reading of locally-produced television news texts. It concludes that these human subjects’ textual perception and readings are products of ideologically-situated socialisation as much they are polysemic.

Given that global youth-news media studies note a decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news, and that South African-specific studies produce contradictory results in this regard, this work highlights the importance of television news in the public sphere, more especially in the public sphere of a developing country like South Africa. The importance of television news is underscored against the view that the greater the numbers of young adults who attend to television news the better are the chances of the survival of the public sphere. Since the country’s public sphere is mediated, among other influential players, by television news broadcasters, the work focuses on how these news broadcaster themselves conceptualize their role. This helps with evaluation of whether the role of their news products is congruent with information and news needs of a developing country’s public sphere in which they are embedded. Apart from this, in order to understand the relationship between South Africa young adults and locally-produced television news, the work looks at television news as a particular genre. Then, when the television news has been looked at in the context of a developing country and also
focused on as a genre, the arrangement of a contemporary South African television news and current affairs environment is looked at.

The study notes that Politics is often singled out, by most studies in the youth-news media discourse, to be the first major casualty of youth’s disinterest in television news. Not only because television news consumption and political knowledge are mutually reinforcing variables, but also because youth’s abandonment of television news threatens the survival of the public sphere and the democratic process. Despite the importance, then, of a symbiotic relationship between youth, politics and television news (and other news media), South African scholarly discourse has so far focused either only on youth and news media or on youth and politics, not on all the three variables at once. Against this background, this work examines the relationship between South African youth, politics and television news. It notes a dominant perspective in the post-apartheid mainstream media and scholarly discourse on youth, politics and news media which holds that youth are becoming less interested in the country’s political affairs. This dominant perspective, the work argues, owes its being to the dominant views on youth and politics in the global discourse on the subject and to the way that South African youth have historically defined as political subjects. Lastly, the work argues that while there are strong indications that youth are loosing interest in politics, this change cannot be attributed to their relationship with local television news, as it is the case in other societies.

The observes that between 1987 and 2003 several academic works, particularly in the context of South African journalism and mass communication scholarship (JMCS), have explored the relationship between South African youth and news media in the research area of the global and the local. This study explores conceptual and methodological frameworks through which they have investigated this relationship. It concentrates primarily on the exploration and framing of the relationship; choice of medium of study; construction of youth identity; and preferred research methodologies and theoretical approaches. The investigation is contextualised within ontological, epistemological, and political-ideological debates in local JMCS, and in global discourses on youth and news media. The study concludes that post-1994 local studies largely adopted qualitative research methods, critical social theory, and cultural studies, rather than socialization and functionalist theories. The studies also defined youth in sociocultural, rather than in political, terms. Limitations of South African research on youth and news media are noted.

In noting the limitations that define South African research on youth and news media the study notes that very little exist in the news discourse regarding congruence- or lack of- between mainstream conceptualization of television news and youth-oriented perspectives on news, despite growing concerns over young adults’ growing disinterest in mainstream television news. This work, then, sets out to explore whether conventional means of conceptualizing mainstream television news such as news values and definitions accommodate youth-oriented perspectives on news. A basic youth-oriented “requirement of news, [in this context], is that it should enable [youth] to make sense of their own social and political circumstances in such a way that they feel empowered to criticize and change them”. Upon review of various ways through which news is defined, the work observes that, historically, news conceptualizations have sidelined youth-oriented perspectives, largely because news media audience in general has been excluded in the conceptualization of news. Though now there are emergent youth-oriented perspectives on news, news itself, in its practical orientation, still excludes youth interest; but this is because news has never enabled anyone, women or men [or youth] to understand their own
circumstances. The general purpose of the last section of the work is to report on the sample of South African young adult participants’ formulations and argumentations about their motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and e.t.v. They had to response to the following questions:

First, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial news, and weather news events? Second, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves? Are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger newscasterners? Third, are young people who are between the ages of 18-24 more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics)?
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE
   Exploring young adult South Africans’ reception of locally-produced television news texts: introductory remarks

CHAPTER TWO
   Reading South African youth’s reading of television news texts: a reception aesthetics qualitative approach

CHAPTER THREE
   Understanding and reading South African television news

CHAPTER FOUR
   Exploring the relationship between South Africa youth, politics and television news texts

CHAPTER FIVE
   South African journalism and mass communication research on youth and news media: a reflection

CHAPTER SIX
   Do mainstream news values, definitions and theories accommodate youth’s conceptualization of news?

CHAPTER SEVEN
   Young adults South Africans’ reception of locally-produced television news texts: the results

APPENDIX A
APPENDIX B
APPENDIX C
APPENDIX D

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PAGE
6
34
57
85
107
122
149
195
196
197
198
206
CHAPTER ONE

Exploring young adult South Africans’ reception of locally-produced television news texts: introductory remarks

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract

An accumulative body of international scholarly work into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. However, because of its research focus and general orientation (see below), this body of work so far has paid little attention to young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, let alone in the South African context. For the present work, an understanding of young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news is central to the appreciation of the relationship between them and television news- a relationship, which in turn, magnifies on the relationship between young adults and the general public sphere. Then, for this reason, in part, this chapter introduces (and is part of) a broader research study whose principal objective is to explore young adult South Africans’ motivations for watching and reception of South African-produced (hereafter: locally-produced) television news texts. The chapter identifies the broader study’s fundamental research problem and, in this regard, it focuses on the research problem itself and, second, through an introductory appraisal of predominantly South African-specific academic works that have so far been conducted in what this study refers to as ‘youth-news media research area’. Accompanying this identification of the research problem, and reasons for undertaking this study, is a set of theoretical approaches (socialization, reception theory and semiotics), and qualitative research methodology, that are a collective framework within which the study is largely enveloped. The chapter concludes by providing an outline of other chapters that constitute the entire study.

Key words

Identification of research problem, reasons for undertaking the study, objectives, theory and methodology, assumptions, sub-problems, research questions, outline of chapters
Introduction
(Identification of the research problem)

An accumulative body of international scholarly work¹ into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. This concern about the decline of news viewing among young people features predominantly among studies published in the last twenty years of the twentieth-century (see for example: Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Barnhurst, 1998; Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Egan, 1999; Evans & Sternberg, 1998; Matlack, 1992; The Age of Indifference: A study of Young Americans and How They View The News, 1990; TV News Viewership Declines: Fall Off Greater for Young Adults and Computer Users, 1996). Buckingham’s research study, though, which was published in 1997 observes that “...young people's turn away from news journalism dates back at least twenty years” (from the year of the publication of the study) (Buckingham, 1997a: 344).

Of this body of international scholarly works that primarily attends to the youth-news media relationship, those singular works that are constitutive of a South African-specific literature in the collective are quantitatively scarce and between themselves have produced contradictory results (see, CHAPTER FIVE). Lacking between them, as few as they are, is consensus regarding whether or not local youth are losing interest in news media or more specifically television news. For example, there is a section of work in the South African literature that concludes that local youth’s interest in television news and current affairs is declining (du Plooy-Cillier & Bezuidenhout, 2003; Pepler, 2003). On the other hand, a significant section in Larry Strelitz’s (2002) research study, though a lone voice, concludes differently. Strelitz’s work, while directly questioning Buckingham’s (1997) and Katz’s (1992) conclusions about youth-news media relationship (and, therefore, universality of their conclusions), also contradicts du Plooy-Cillier and Bezuidenhout’s (2003) and Pepler’s (2003) works—since the latter also reach similar conclusions as Buckingham and Katz. Strelitz (2002:325) observes that:

¹ This body of work is constituted of public and private surveys as well as academic research.
The relatively high readership of newspapers and the continuing salience for youth of news contradicts the claims that made by Katz (1992:33) and Buckingham (1997:348) that young people are no longer interested in conventional news media.

The few above-mentioned studies reveal at least three notable factors in the youth-news media discourse. They first point to the fact that the majority of research works, be they South African-specific or not, hold the view that young adults' interest in news journalism is waning. Second, they indicate that there are studies, few as they may be, that question the empirical generalisability of these conclusions. Third, irrespective of their outcome differences, these studies collectively reveal a seemingly common 'epistemological' concern in the youth-news media discourse; that is, a preoccupation with whether or not young adults are loosing interest in news media. Regarding this third factor, the present study is different. It regards the very scholarly inclination to explore whether or not youth are loosing interest in news media as inadequate for explaining youth-news media relationship (as illuminating and indispensable this intellectual exercise is), particularly in the South African youth news media discourse. The explanation of how this exploration is 'inadequate' is taken further below, in part, as a recurring expansion on the research problem, and also as justification for the necessity for this study.

Reasons for undertaking this study

Predominant research focus (in various specific forms) on whether or not youth are losing interest in news media (including television news texts) and its limitations in satisfactorily articulating youth-news media relationship provides some of the main, but loosely connected reasons for undertaking the present study. The first of these reasons regards the role in the youth-news media discourse of semiotic and reception theories and/or their resultant triangulation-reception aesthetics. In this regard, for example, there is a notable tendency, particularly in the local discourse, to totally disregard integration of reader-oriented theory (reception theory) and text-oriented theory (semiotic theory) as interpretive frames in articulating youth-news media relationship; this is despite proven
collective value of these approaches, not only in literal studies but also in media and cultural studies (cf. Machor & Goldstein, 2001; Fiske, 2001). This limits both qualitative and quantitative lenses through which this relationship could also be looked at; for this reason, in part, reception aesthetics and semiotics approaches are a combined theoretical framework for this study as shall be demonstrated in its unfolding.

The second reason regards the status of socialization theory in the youth-news media discourse (Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; Booysen, 1991). There is a notable failure, more especially by post-1994 local works to provide a comprehensive account of the influence of various socializing networks on young adults' reading of television news and the (subsequent) ideologically-situated-ness of their reading (and by extension perception). This failure produces a socio-culturally abstracted account of youth-news media relationships; the problem is that by de-contextualizing the relationship between young adult readers and television news texts from the broader South African socio-cultural milieu, the most integral mediator and determinant of the relationship is removed. Naturally, television news production and consumption are practical cultural encounters that occur in and are mediated by a historically-structured social system.

The present study affirms this view by arguing that research into youth-news media relationship, particularly in the South African context, should commence from considerably exploring the manner in which ideologically-situated young adults read or receive news media texts. This is not only necessary because for its epistemological logic against the forgoing observation; but also because of the sheer deficit of local studies that cover this ground by providing an expansive and systematic information on how local youth make sense of locally-produced news media. An appreciation of local young adults' interpretation of news media messages is essential for expanding an understanding on causes for their interest or dis-interest in news media (which is what many studies, as noted above, are primarily concerned with).

Other main reasons for undertaking this study do not necessarily relate to the above-mentioned inadequacy, but rather to what is revealed by reviewed literature for the present work. So, apart from the dearth of a specific body of scholarly work on how local youth make sense of news media, reviewed literature for this study generally leads to the conclusion that there is still very much as a necessity for South African-specific
research into youth-new media relationship, be it academic, public survey or media industry-based. Ideally, this would be a kind of diverse research that contributes to the global youth-news media discourse through articulating various layers of relationships and interactions between the country’s youth and news media. What makes this essential is that the current ‘state of play’ in the international youth-news media discourse so far is skewed; it predominantly reflects the nature of relationships and interactions between youth and television news (and other news media) in American and in some European societies\(^2\) (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Barnhurst, 1998; Booysen, 1989 & 1991; Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Guntett & Hill 1999; Gunter & McLeer 1990; Matlack, 1992; Vincent & Basil 1997). Prospectively, South African-focused research contributions (and those of other regions yet peripheral to the discourse) could lead not only to theoretical and empirical research broadening, but also to the general decentralization of the scope of the discourse.

Then, one of the crucial tasks of the proposed research direction, as it is a self-imposed responsibility of this study, is to propose theoretical and methodological directions that, at the same time, reflect fully on the state of play in the discourse. In this regard, the other reason for undertaking present study is to pay particular attention to the youth-news media discourse’s general conclusions, popular commentaries and scholarly propositions that are advanced by various participants. The primary reason for this lies in what these general conclusions, popular commentaries and scholarly propositions are themselves about. Their common aim, among other things, is to propose various types of (in the language of this study) codes of content and codes of form that youth supposedly would prefer from television news texts. Because of this common objective this study was of the position that they ought to be methodically subjected to evaluations by young adults themselves. Subsequently, this position determined the nature of the interviewer questions in the focus group interviews. Subjecting these general conclusions, popular commentaries and scholarly propositions to the evaluations by people for whom they are proposed would give strong indications of their practical applicability, usability and adaptability to the actual production of television news texts that would, in part or as a whole, be targeted at the youth or young adult audiences.

---

\(^2\) This is not meant in any way to generalise about youth and/or news media in these areas.
The study moves from the premise that generally there is a need in the discourse for methodological assessment of some of the general conclusions, popular commentaries and scholarly propositions that are advanced with respect to the types of formats and content that youth are said to want from news media. Critiques grounded in methodology could potentially ‘sift out’ those over-abstract scholarly propositions, general conclusions and commentaries that are far removed from reality and have limited empirical and qualitative validation (cf. Buckingham, 1997b; du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003; Egan, 1999; Pepler, 2003).

In linking the objectives of this study to its projected outcomes, this study is of the view that there is a need for research-supported and theoretical ‘solutions’ with respect to whether or not dominant and conventional understandings and definitions of news ought to be re-conceptualized (see CHAPTER SIX). Beyond thinking at a theoretical level, there is also a need for research-supported, applicable (practical) solutions with respect to whether or not conventional practices of production should be re-examined (cf. Buckingham, 2001:01; Buckingham; 1999:124; Raeymaekers, 2004:223; Tsedu, 2002:01). In other words, there is a need for theoretical and pragmatic approach that subsequently assist news practitioners in formatively (pre-) planning, gathering, selecting and presenting television news broadcasts that are either designed specifically for youth and/or meant to also accommodate youth interest within the prevailing mainstream television news provisions framework for general audiences.

The other main reason for undertaking this study regards the broader socio-political space within which young adult news readers and television news programmes virtually meet or are supposed to. In this space, television news programmes that seek to accommodate young adults’ interests, needs, and motivations through structure and content would not only be commercially prudent, but would also be democratic. Accommodation of young adults’ needs and reading by television news organizations (and other institutions) reflect the principles that underpin South Africa’s yet fourteen-year old democracy. These democratic principles suggest that all people have a right of access to sufficient information to enable them to make informed decisions and choices about their lives. On this premise, then, “news needs to be relevant to people and their situations to meet this requirement. People, including youth, also need to have access to a
diverse range of information and opinion in order to make such informed choices” (Lloyd, 2001:2). Responding to this researcher’s questions on the subject in question, Libby Lloyd (2001:2) further noted that:

*If we are to make sure that South African youth can make informed decisions, there are many questions though which need to be asked about news itself. Clearly it is important to make sure that young audiences are interested and get involved in issues that make the news. Is it however the answer to produce news bulletin specifically for the youth, or should editors rather be searching why the youth don’t watch the news?*

Lloyd (2001:2) questions:

*Is there not a need to ensure that all news bulletins are geared towards meeting the information needs of a diverse audience and are relevant to different audiences? Should the producers of news not be interrogating how they define what is newsworthy and the angles they take on stories to make sure they cater for the youth audiences?*

Lloyd’s (2001) reasoning strongly relates to the range of practical and conceptual options that are explored in this study (see reasons for undertaking this study above). These relate to strategies conventional television news practitioners could opt for as part of their well considered response to young adult’s disinterest and interest in the news texts; that is- if the social and commercial intention is to sustain, revive and accommodate young adults’ motivations for watching news.

Local news networks could opt for re-conceptualization of their news values and definitions to accommodate news reading, needs and motivations of young adults. Lloyd (2001:1) calls for debate on this aspect. She suggests that there is a necessity for debate on whether it is necessary to have news bulletins specifically aimed at the youth, in addition to mainstream information programming; or whether, on the other hand, mainstream news bulletins need to ensure that they are crafted in such way that they also appeal to the youth. It is in the context of the reasons for undertaking this study that its principal objectives are conceived.
The Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research study is to describe and explore young adult South Africans’ motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and etv. In determining this process of reception, the study focuses on those specific codes of content and form that the selected purposive sample of young adults preferably watches on television news. Since the act of reception is understood in this study to be recurring, those various aspects of codes of form and content that young adult watch or prefer to watch on television news are, in this study, called motivational factors that drive young adults to watch television news, again and again.

This main objective is subdivided into two distinct principal objectives. In the first instance, the study describes specific motivations (or motivational factors) that drive South African young adult audiences to attend to the country’s mainstream television news broadcasts that are discussed in full in the subsequent appropriate sections of this study. By linking reading to motivations and vise versa, the study sees the act of being ‘motivated’ to ‘read’ news in particular way as both a social import born of socialisation and a personal choice that is interactive and active.

In the second instance, the study explores the degree to which South African young adults are likely or unlikely to be motivated to attend to television news broadcasts that would incorporate and be characterised by particular types of codes of content and codes of form that are also specified in the subsequent appropriate sections of this study. These codes of content and codes of form content are considered by some academic and media industry-based researchers to be motivational or potential motivational factors that could draw young adults into paying more attention to television news and information-orientated programmes (cf. Buckingham, 1997b; Egan, 1999). As strongly stated in the preceding sections, however, these scholarly perspectives, public commentaries and research findings are yet to be methodologically tested, let alone locally. Through focus group questions, this study put them into the ‘test’.

The outcomes based on the two above-mentioned principal and mutually-dependent objectives serve another collective purpose. They produce a pool of information that can be adapted and applied formatively by television news practitioners
in the processes of planning, gathering, selection and presentation of television news and current affairs broadcasts that are either specifically targeted at the youth audiences and/or at the general audiences, but where youth interests are equally taken into account (cf. Lloyd, 2001 above). Broadly, then, this study has both the theoretical and practical dimensions that are brought into life through application of the following theoretical and methodological frameworks.

**Theory and methodology**

The study's objectives and outcomes are realized through an integration of a particular set of complementary theoretical approaches: socialization theory, reception aesthetics and semiotics. Of these integrated theories, the reintroduction of social-psychology's socialization theory in the study of youth-news media relationship in South Africa (see, Booysen, 1991) is premised on the recurring presupposition in this study that textual reading and perception are socio-cultural imports; in other words, human subjects' reading and perception of texts, in this case young adult South African's reading/reception of locally-produced television news, are products of socialization and culturation.

This is the presupposition that dictated qualitative research method and methodological direction of this study in the conceptualization stage. On the presumption that reading, to a large degree, is a social import, the study began by first methodically selecting a **purposive sample** of South African young adults who regularly consumed local television news texts; in other words, the intention was to selectively recruit focus-group participants who had already been 'socialized' by social networks into believing, in the first instance, in the significance of television news texts. In second instance it was similarly presumed that these social networks (peers, family members, etc) also offer 'models' of viewing or reading television news (see Gunter & McLeer, 1990:36; Guntlett & Hill, 1999:86). This study's purposive sample (or focus group participants) was/is drawn from a group of students at two distinct South African universities.

Focus-group participants' responses, as manifestations of their reading of locally-produced television news, throughout this present study, are interpreted through
application of German-originating reception aesthetics *per se* and as appropriated compatibly by media and cultural studies. Reception aesthetics and its appropriation by media and cultural studies is an interpretive framework that is comprehensively grounded in structuralist semiotics and reader-oriented reception theory; as a result of this, this work’s interpretation transcends focus-group participants’ television news texts reading accounts and equally focuses on constituent elements of television news texts that they actively read.

Of these structural constituent parts of television news texts that focus-group participants were required to provide accounts for how they read them (or how they are motivated by), the study selectively focused on *codes of form* and *codes of content*. By codes of content specific reference is made to those iconographies of what appears in front of a television camera. These include décor, style of clothes, buildings, locations or settings (du Plooy, 2001:78-9); and by *codes of form* it is meant those iconographies created by camera shots, camera angles and different types of editing techniques that are repeated as conventions (du Plooy, 2001:78-9).

Methodical examination of the actual ‘act’ of habitual reading of each of these television news broadcasts, and with respect to the codes of form, the focus extends to readers’ conscious selection of various constitutive *news-categories* of an individual television news text. The news-categories that are referred to here are: national, international, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial, sports and weather, etc. Universally, conventional television-broadcasters situate daily newsworthy happenings or subjects into these news-categories. This concentration on conventional television news texts’ structural organization of daily news occurrences into news categories is not without reason; it ties in with the present study's critique of the epistemological tendency in youth-news media research to explore whether or not youth are losing interest in news media. Outcomes of these research studies often give a view of how young adults react to television news texts as totalities; they fail to provide comprehensive accounts of young adults’ orientation towards particular news-categories (say national, sport or international) of a complete television news text.

Another distinguishing feature of the present work is that its consideration of the reception of South African-produced television news in terms of both codes of form and
codes of content is divided into two categories. The first category explores the said purposive sample’s reception of SABC and e-tv news as existing daily broadcasts. The second category, on the other hand, explores the possibility of this same sample’s reception of an (imaginary) alternative television news broadcasts characterized by particular kinds of codes of form and codes of content. In this second category, it is explored whether the sample would be more inclined to watch television news broadcasts that incorporate specific types of contents, styles, identity, and settings. Importantly, these (imaginary) codes of form and codes of content constitute television news structures and contents different to what the sample is exposed to in the South African television news environment. The specific examples of these contents, styles, identity, and settings are presented in the relevant sections below and are drawn largely from Egan’s (1999) study.

Further on Research Methodology

This study’s principal objectives and outcomes are realised through application of qualitative research methodology as means of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The rationale for using qualitative paradigm as guiding research philosophy is fully accounted for in the chapter on Research Methodology. Qualitative research methodology’s appropriate methods of data collection and analyses are applied to meet the first objective in the following way. They are used to determine specific news categories that youth student focus group identify as motivational factors that draw them into a specific locally-produced television news broadcast. In other words, this objective used to discover motivations that distinctively (in this context) constitute and characterise the current state of television news reading habits and patterns of the South African young adult audiences that are targeted by the study.

Qualitative research methodology is also used in the first objective to investigate the extent to which these news-categories are consciously, preferably and selectively watched by the young adult sample. In the process of determining this, the first objective is formulated to establish the frequency and duration of news watching as a habit; and lastly, it determines the times at which the most preferred news programmes are watched. The news-categories referred to here include: national news, weather, sports, traffic,
business, provincial news, national news and international news (see, for example, Boyd, 2001:23-27; Lewis, 2003:19).

The main research question or research problem that the first objective is formulated to investigate is: which specific news-categories of locally-produced television newscasts motivate young adult South Africans to watch television news? Are South African young adults motivated by, for example, national news, weather, sports, traffic, business, provincial news, and international news? Or are they driven by the whole of these segments to watch television news? This is very much a ‘content-driven’ question. This question can be broken down and answered in many ways, if necessary. What kinds of young adults (in terms of class, gender, race, etc) are motivated mostly by these news segments? What are the implications of these choices for the business of news provision in South Africa and for the creation of an informed citizenry in the South African public sphere? It is these kinds of questions that All Media Product Survey (AMPS) and quantitative methodology –driven research have so far been unable to ask.

In the fulfilment of the second objective the study explores and sets out a relatively different, but mutually dependent purpose. The qualitative methodology’s methods of data collection and analyses are employed to explore the likelihood or unlikelihood to which the South African young adults can be motivated to view newscasts that incorporate and are characterised by particular types of content, style, identity, and setting in their overall character.

Specifically, the second objective functions to explore and assess, in the main, South African youth’s likelihood or unlikelihood to attend to news broadcasts with: brief summarised news stories; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; broadcasts with M-TV-type pop music; weather reports with animated/computerised graphics; fast-paced presentation; humour between presenters; humorous news stories; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics); human interests’ stories and with stories about people like (youth) themselves (cf. Egan, 1999).

The main research question/problem, therefore, that the second objective is formulated to investigate is: how likely or unlikely are South African young adults to be
motivated to watch television newscasts that incorporate specific types of content, style, identity, and setting? This is very much a 'style-driven' question.

To respond to these questions and to the main research problem or question (South African young adults' reception of South African-produced television news programmes on SABC and e.tv), the study makes the following assumptions about population parameter of its units of analysis.

**Assumptions**

According to Du Plooy (2001:54):

*The term ‘assumption’ can be used to refer to a postulate (a principle assumed to be true for the purpose of developing a theory) or a hypothesis (a principle or statement that is tested experimentally or by a series of observations).*

Assumptions are used in this study as premises and as tentative statements or explanations that are provisionally regarded as true (despite there being no proof) (Du Plooy, 2001:54). Assumptions are also provisionally regarded as true for purposes of identifying South African young adults' current motivations, likely and unlikely motivations for watching locally-produced television news programmes on SABC and e.tv. Lastly, assumptions are provisionally regarded as true for purposes of guiding the reasoning of the study in collecting formative information and of identifying subproblems (cf. Du Plooy, 2001; Leedy, 1997).

**THE FIRST ASSUMPTION** regards the news-categories presented above. The study assumes that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial news, and weather news events.

**THE SECOND ASSUMPTION** relates to the elements of identity and content. The study assumes that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves. In this assumption the study further assumes that young adults who are
between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger newscasters. The assumptions made here are grounded Social Identity Theory.

THE THIRD ASSUMPTION is largely about codes of content of prospective newscasts. The study assumes that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics).

Besides being used solely as postulates and for guiding the reasoning of the study in collecting formative information, the above assumptions are also linked to the investigated sub-problems presented below, and which, in turn, each corresponds and responds to a particular assumption among the set of assumptions made here (cf. Du Plooy, 2001: 54-55; Leedy, 1997: 5-6).

Sub-problems

It is also important to note that each sub-problem is presented in a form of a question in this section. This decision is influenced by Leedy's (1997:56) argument that “a question tends to focus the researcher's attention more directly on the research target of the sub-problem than does a declarative statement”.

FIRST SUB-PROBLEM: are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial news, and weather news events?

SECOND SUB-PROBLEM: are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves? Are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger newscasters?

THIRD SUB-PROBLEM: are young people who are between the ages of 18-24 more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are
characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics)?

Reasons for using above assumptions and sub-problems

Two issues need be presented firstly in this brief section. First, the sub-problems are interchangeably treated as research questions (Du Plooy, 2001: 56) also linked to the assumptions. (See below for the use of research questions instead of hypotheses). Second, it is logical and imperative that once the sub-problems to be or being investigated have been stated clearly and linked to the corresponding assumptions upon which the study rests, the rationale for their use is also presented for the purpose of indicating their relationship with the overall principal objectives directing the study. This rationale, however, for using the above assumptions and sub-problems is discussed in the chapter on methodology. Following is the rationale for using research questions instead of hypotheses.

Research questions

The utilisation of research questions (interchangeably treated as sub-problems) instead of hypotheses on this study, rests in a variety of social scientific research reasons and protocols, some of which are presented here. The first of these social scientific reasons is that this research study is unprecedented locally. Reviewed literature does not yield substantially adequate and coherent information, from which hypotheses can confidently and scientifically constructed (cf. Du Plooy, 2001; Leedy, 1997). In research areas marginally or not at all studied previously, research questions are also used to explore information. Circumstances of this nature in social science research further warrants that research questions be utilised as means of collecting more information/data about the phenomenon being studied (Du Plooy, 2001:72; Wimmer & Dominick, 1994).

Research questions are also used if the researcher is unsure about the nature and extent of the problem being investigated. As is the case in this research study, the extent
or the nature of the South African student youths’ motivations and probable motivations for watching-as well the reception of locally-produced television are not (yet) known. Against this background, therefore, the use of research questions is warranted and the use of hypotheses, which are supposed to be statements of truth (or stated as), would be inappropriate. The units of analysis of this study are youth which the study understands in the following way.

**Defining youth**

This study highlights the general concern over the decline of political culture (some say is precipitated by their lack of interest in news media) among the youth and argues that ‘youth’ has been an extremely politically-loaded term, which referred very much to a young political agent in South Africa. It has neither been a simple reference to young people or teenagers (Everatt, 1994:1); nor a simple reference to age cohort or developmental phase between adolescence and adulthood (Everatt, 1994:1).

This politically-centered conceptualization of local youth in various textual representations pose challenges for the post-apartheid South Africa that is changing, culturally, fast. The South African National Youth Policy already states that: “the challenge is to provide an environment and means whereby the concept of “youth” is re-defined” (South Africa, 2000:5).

The first challenge that results from a predominantly politically-centered conceptualization of youth is that post-apartheid and 21st century South African youth are generally understood, in contrasts to their previous counterparts, in terms of what IT IS NOT. There is a lack of social scientific research or theorization specifically aimed at re-conceptualizing post-apartheid South African youth, in its varied forms, on the bases what it characteristically IS in relation to the present context.

The second challenge concerns the possible redefinition of South African youth to be faced is that irrespective of one’s operational angle, theoretical approach, field of study or discursive frame, at this stage of fourteen years of South African democracy, the definition of South African youth finds the political influences of South Africa’s various past contexts inescapable.
There is a third challenge in re-defining South African youth. In this study, whose raison d'etre is not a definitive definition of youth and without the backing of appropriate social scientific scholarship, such redefinition carries a danger of being unscientific and its perceptual conclusions could obscure more on the youth subject than illuminate on it.

Further, re-defining South African youth is made even more difficult by already existing variety of operational meanings that exists in the South African specialists' fields, orientated towards policy-formulation, media-industry research, media product ratings, and the like.

The National Youth Act of 1996, for example, defines South African youth as persons in the age group 14 to 35. The Community Agency for Social enquiry (CASE) conceives the country's youth to be all South Africans of all population categories between 15 and 35 years of age. The South African Advertising and Research Foundation (SAARF), one of South Africa's respected media and programme rating company, classifies youth as those between the 15 to 35 age categories, which is the adult category in its quantitative enumerations.

These demographic classifications of local youth are not the only observable differences about youth definitions. Notable also in the local definitions of youth, as is the case in other areas and fields, is that researchers who are economically, politically, psychologically-orientated are more commonly likely to see young people as a problem than culturally-orientated researchers (Fornas, 1995: 2). Cultural researchers are more often motivated by optimistic curiosity about young people's creativity or by a sense of solidarity in the face of shared difficulties (Fornas, 1995: 2; cf. Moller, 1991- on founding South Africa's 'lost generation').

Fornas (1995:2) presents that youth can be defined through particular physiological development phase, psychological life phase, social institutions and culture. He posits that youth is a physiological development phase commencing in puberty ending when the body has more or less finished growing. For him, youth’s psychological life phase extends through the different phases of adolescence and post-adolescence.

On the other hand, for Fornas, youth is a social category framed by particular institutions such as school. It is also framed by certain rituals such as confirmation or
marriage; by legislation aimed at towards age limits and coming of age. Youth is also framed by social acts such as leaving home, forming a family, getting educated and find a profession.

Finally, Fornas (1995: 2) suggests that youth is “culturally determined in a discursive interplay with musical, visual and verbal signs that denote what is young in relation to that which is interpreted as respectively childish or adult”.

This study recognises and acknowledges all these varieties of youth definitions and conceptualisations. For the fulfilment of its primary objectives and for operational purposes, however, it places particular emphasis on the demographically-centred definition of youth. **This study specifically focuses on the core category of youth between the ages of 18 and 24.**

This demographic frame is highly represented in the South African tertiary academic environment where this study gathers most of its primary information and samples. Furthermore, the specific focus on the 18-24-year olds provides this study with its delimits and logistical focus and locates it well within other research studies that discover various aspects of either motivations, interests or needs in more or less this specific youth category.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organisation’s ‘the needs of youth’ study (2002:5), for example, recognises that “today there are over 1 billion young people aged 15-24 living on planet earth- almost 20% of total world population”. In Africa as well, “demographic trends reveal that African countries have extraordinarily high percentages of their populations between the ages of 15-25...” (*Social Science Research Council*, 2001:1).

Furthermore, the majority of local advertising and marketing companies that examine youth consumer motivations/needs/interests/habits/trends, also changeably classify youth as those within 16-24 age category (cf. Chronis, 2002; Paice, 2003). This study’s choice of concentrating, therefore, on those *young adults* who are between 18 and 25 age bracket is logical and appropriate since news motivations, probable motivations /needs/interests/habits of males and females within 18-24 category are more likely to be quite different to those who are 25 and 35.
Defining the 18-24-year-olds

It is essential that an additional, specific understanding of the 18-24-year-olds is provided, despite the fact that the collective category, youth is defined above and contexts for its examination provided. The 18-25-year-old demographic group constitute the core focus of this particular study. They are essentially the specific units of analysis. The two primary objectives upon which the entire study is premised are premised on them. Also, the student youth sample for the qualitative methodology is drawn from them as a particular demographic and socio-cultural group.

In the process of understanding the 18-24-year-olds better, it first needs to be said that South Africa is a relatively youthful country. “The 1996 census revealed that South Africa has higher number of young people than previously recorded” (The Status of the Youth Report 2002, 2002: 5). According to the 1996 census, “of the 40.6 million people living the country in October 1996, just 16.1 million or 40% were youth, i.e. people in the age bracket 14 to 35 years old” (The Youth of South Africa, 2001:1).

According to the 1996 census, Africans form the largest proportion of the youth in the country, with just less than on tenth of the youth Coloured, one tenth white and the remaining three percent Indian (The Youth of South Africa, 2001).

The census further reveals that about 21 percent of the youth in South Africa were in KwaZulu-Natal province, followed by Gauteng (20%) and Eastern Cape (14%). Only two percent of the country’s youth lived in the Northern Cape.

Proportionately, more youth are living in urban areas (57%) than the rest of the population (54%). Drawing from Statistics South Africa 1999 Household survey, The Status of the youth report (2002:6) observes that “the impact of the rural-urban migration emerges in the comparatively low percentage of African youth aged 20 to 34 living in the countryside”. The majority of the African youth, however, still live in less developed rural areas. Very few White and Coloured live in rural areas. Indian youth are the most urbanized in South Africa.

Compared to the older generations, the current South African youth are better educated. However, The Status of the Youth Report (2002:7) observes that “despite their relatively good education levels...young people are far more likely to face
unemployment than older people. The hardest hit are African work seekers aged between 16 and 24, with almost half facing unemployment”. Apart from unemployment as a socioeconomic problem, South African youth are also heavily represented among criminals and among HIV and AIDS infected persons.

From this information one can conclude that the post-apartheid and 21st century South Africa is a society that continues to find itself in the legacy of apartheid imagination, despite bold and concerted efforts to transform and realign the country for the better. The legacy of racial, gender, rural, urban, rich and poor inequality continue to define the socio-economic conditions under which various categories of youth live, within the South African youth demographic frame.

Socio-cultural Characteristics of the 18-25-year-olds

Egan’s (1999) research study defines 18-25-year-olds. It accounts for defining socio-cultural characteristics and trends of the 18-25-year olds by drawing conceptual and operational distinctions between the under 25s and the older Generation X (the twenty-five year-olds)-within the broader all-encompassing term- youth. Important in this distinction is that media buyers are understood to be relatively at ease in gratifying consumers needs and motivations of Generation X, since they know this generation’s needs and motivations. The problem, it is presented, is mainly with the satisfaction of under 25-year-olds’ needs and motivations.

Very important, however, is that and unlike in Egan’s study, 18-25-year olds in this study predominantly are members of the Generation X. This research study’s focus on 18-24-year olds is ultimately an examination of a demographic group that possesses cultural and socio-political characteristics of South African Generation X (cf. Ndlovu & Breet, 2003). Young people who are twenty-four during the data was being collected for this study -2004- were born in 1980; and this means, by South African generational classifications and profiling, they are members of Generation X. In South Africa the birth
years of generation X’ers range from 1970-1990 (Codrington, 1998:21). Of course, there are political, anthropological and sociological variations and factors that need to be considered in this profiling, which regrettably stretch beyond the said focus of this study (see Codrington, 1998).

What needs to be noted here for clarification purposes is that South African generation Xers could not vote in the country’s first national democratic elections in 1994 because they were under age. Only those born in/between 1979 and 1981 qualified to vote in the country’s second democratic national election in 1999. The 2004 national elections opened the opportunity for those Xers born in and between 1982 and 1986 to vote for the first time. The present concentrates on the category of young people who have had an opportunity, once or twice, to vote. It excludes those Xers who were born in and between 1987 and 1990; those who have not had an opportunity to vote and who are unlikely to be found in South Africa’s tertiary education environment at the time of data collection for this study.

The 18-25-year-olds, according to Egan, (Generation X in the South African context), thus far are difficult to describe by usual lifestyles and demographics: Baby Boomers and Echo Babies. “The under 25-year olds, globally, are of mixed race, varied view points and no generalizable qualities, at least as of early 1998. Their motto seems to be: I’ Am not like anyone else” (Egan, 1999:135).

The lack of generalisable characteristics among the under 25s in an American-conducted Egan’s study is a feature also identifiable among their counterparts in South Africa. According to Dixon (cited in Paice, 2003:16), editor of SL magazine, which targets 16-24-year-olds urban tertiary student market in South Africa: “there’s no way you can ever pin down exact trends among this group. They are, above all extremely, media savvy; they haven’t grown up like baby boomers where TV and radio were all new and wonderful”. The lack of generalisable characteristics among the under 25s create a problem for news providers and other television programme makers.

Challenges for news providers and other programme makers
The inability to identify generalisable qualities in this group has a potential of creating a problem for local advertisers and producers of television news. Egan notes (1999:134) that:

_The problem for producers and writers wishing to create programs for this group is that generalisations must be made. Economic success, gained from advertising, depends on gathering a large generalised audience. To attract such an audience in this day of audience-controlled media requires understanding target audience needs, interests and motivations, to know them as an anthropologist knows a cultural group._

The following _delimitations_ of the study clarify what this study undertakes and what it does not do.

**Delimitations**

Some theses writers outline particular theoretical models that underpin their works and define the ‘state of play’ in the specific fields in which their works arise before analyses are undertaken. This thesis does not subscribe to one particular theory of studying or analysing the relationship between television news and young adults. Each chapter discusses and describes a particular aspect of this relationship, paying particular attention to what motivates or could motivate young adults South Africans to read or receive locally-produced news broadcasts in a particular way. In other words, this work deliberately draws from a wide range of different theoretical positions, scholarly perspectives, commentaries, and other studies’ research conclusions to explain various aspects of the subject matter that it explores, and to stitch together an area of study that almost does not exist, locally that is.

_Second:_ this research study is not guided by hypotheses developed from previous research studies in the area of youth and television news research. Hypotheses require the support of the current knowledge about the phenomenon being studied (Du Plooy, 2001). The consideration, therefore, that prevents this study from being guided by hypotheses is that literature in the area of television news and youth has not produced cohesive and conclusive body of knowledge about this phenomenon upon which hypotheses can be formulated. As part of its objectives, then, this study develops formative information upon which future studies in this area of research can be based.
The third delimitation is that this study neither formulates a youth news theory nor a framework for such a youth-centric television news and current affairs theory, which could, upon further research confirmations of the assumptions on which that framework would be grounded, lead to a theory. The rationale for not formulating a fully-fledged youth news theory or framework thereof is that the construction of such a theory, like in the case of other theories, must be based, deductively or inductively, on hypotheses, axioms, concepts and variables (Baily, 1994; Mouton, 2001). These theory-building elements is absent in the literature that engages in youth-news discourse to provide a framework for developing such a theory or preceding hypotheses. As a consequence, therefore, this study is limited to the provision of formative information that can be taken up by other research studies in the discourse. The very same information can be applied by news practitioners in the production of television news programmes.

The fourth delimitation is that this is an exploratory study that employs a non-probability sampling procedure in the selection of its respondents in a qualitative research paradigm. It uses focus-groups in exploring young adults’ reception of locally-produced television news. As a consequence of the method selecting focus-group respondents, the extent of external generalisability of the outcomes of this study is limited.

CHAPTER ONE

Exploring young adult South Africans’ reception of locally-produced television news texts: introductory remarks

An accumulative body of international scholarly work into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. However, because of its research focus and general orientation (see below), this body of work has so far paid little attention to young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, let alone in the South African context. For the present work, an understanding of young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news is central to the appreciation of the relationship between them and television news— a relationship, which in turn, magnifies on the relationship between
young adults and the general public sphere. Then, for this reason, in part, this chapter
introduces (and is part of) a broader research study whose principal objective is to
explore young adult South Africans' reception of South African-produced (hereafter:
locally-produced) television news texts. In this process, the chapter identifies the broader
study's fundamental research problem; in this regard, the focus on the research problem
itself and, second, through an introductory appraisal of predominantly South African-
specific academic works that have so far been conducted in what this study refers to as
'youth-news media research area'. Accompanying this identification of the research
problem, and reasons for undertaking this study, is a set of theoretical approaches
(socialization, reception theory and semiotics), and qualitative research methodology, that
are a collective framework within which the study is largely enveloped.

CHAPTER TWO

Reading South African youth's reading of television news texts: a
reception aesthetics qualitative study

Though scholars in South Africa have been studying the relationship between youth and
news media since the late 1980s, the local youth-news media research area still lacks
theorisation from- and application of- reception aesthetics, including its appropriation by
media and cultural studies. This has limited understandings of youth-news media
relationship that are grounded in reception aesthetics' and cultural studies' differential
immanent accommodation of socialisation theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics and
structuralism-based semiotics. Under apartheid, in cultural, journalism and mass
communication studies, insights that would have resulted from amalgamation of these
theoretical paradigms got impaired not only by bias in favour of each, but also by
politicisation of reception theory and semiotics. In the post-apartheid, no attempt has
been made to reconcile textual, contextual and reader-oriented theoretical paradigms.
Against this background, this work, grounded in reception aesthetics and its appropriation
by media and cultural studies, is an interpretation of young adult South Africans' reading
of locally-produced television news texts. It concludes that these human subjects' textual

\[This\ \text{is\ in\ strict\ reference\ to\ South\ African\ journalism,\ cultural\ and\ mass\ communication\ studies\ to\ the}\]
\[exclusion\ literature\ studies\ (cf.\ Tomaselli\ and\ Shapperson,\ 1995).\]
perception and readings are products of ideologically-situated socialisation as much they are polysemic.

CHAPTER THREE

Understanding and reading South African television news

Given that global youth-news media studies note a decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news, and that South African-specific studies produce contradictory results in this regard, this chapter highlights the importance of television news in the public sphere, more especially in the public sphere of a developing country like South Africa. The importance of television news is underscored against the view that the greater the numbers of young adults who attend to television news the better are the chances of the survival of the public sphere. Since the country’s public sphere is mediated, among other influential players, by television news broadcasters, the chapter also focuses on how these news broadcaster themselves conceptualize their role. This helps with evaluation of whether the role of their news products is congruent with information and news needs of a developing country’s public sphere in which they are embedded. Apart from this, in order to understand the relationship between South Africa young adults and locally-produced television news, the chapter also looks at television news as a particular genre. Then, when the television news has been looked at in the context of a developing country and also focused on as a genre, the arrangement of a contemporary South African television news and current affairs environment is looked at. Lastly, the manner in which young adult South Africans consequently consume ‘from this genre and context’ is examined.

CHAPTER FOUR

Exploring the relationship between South Africa youth, politics and television news texts

Politics is often singled out, by most studies in the youth-news media discourse, to be the first major casualty of youth’s disinterest in television news. Not only because television
news consumption and political knowledge are mutually reinforcing variables, but also because youth's abandonment of television news threatens the survival of the public sphere and the democratic process. Despite the importance, then, of a symbiotic relationship between youth, politics and television news (and other news media), South African scholarly discourse has so far focused either only on youth and news media or on youth and politics, not on all the three variables at once. Against this background, this chapter examines the relationship between South African youth, politics and television news. It notes a dominant perspective in the post-apartheid mainstream media and scholarly discourse on youth, politics and news media which holds that youth are becoming less interested in the country's political affairs. This dominant perspective, the chapter argues, owes its being to the dominant views on youth and politics in the global discourse on the subject and to the way that South African youth have historically defined as political subjects. Lastly, the chapter argues that while there are strong indications that youth are loosing interest in politics, this change cannot be attributed to their relationship with local television news, as it is the case in other societies.

CHAPTER FIVE

South African Journalism and Mass Communication Research on Youth and News Media: A Reflection

Between 1987 and 2003 several academic works, particularly in the context of South African journalism and mass communication scholarship (JMCS), have explored the relationship between South African youth and news media in the research area of the global and the local. This thematic meta-study explores conceptual and methodological frameworks through which they have investigated this relationship. It concentrates primarily on the exploration and framing of the relationship; choice of medium of study; construction of youth identity; and preferred research methodologies and theoretical approaches. The investigation is contextualised within ontological, epistemological, and political-ideological debates in local JMCS, and in global discourses on youth and news media. The study concludes that post-1994 local studies largely adopted qualitative research methods, critical social theory, and cultural studies, rather than socialization and functionalist theories. The studies also defined youth in sociocultural, rather than in
political terms. Limitations of South African research on youth and news media are noted.

CHAPTER SIX

Do mainstream news values, definitions and theories accommodate youth’s conceptualization of news?

Should the producers of news not be interrogating how they DEFINE what is newsworthy and the angles they take on stories to make sure they cater for the youth audiences? (Lloyd, 2001:2).

Very little exist in the news discourse regarding congruence- or lack of- between mainstream conceptualization of television news and youth-oriented perspectives on news, despite growing concerns over young adults’ growing disinterest in mainstream television news. This chapter, then, sets out to explore whether conventional means of conceptualizing mainstream television news such as news values and definitions accommodate youth-oriented perspectives on news. A basic youth-oriented “...requirement of news, [in this context], is that it should enable ... [youth] to make sense of their own social and political circumstances in such a way that they feel empowered to criticize and change them.” Upon review of various ways through which news is defined, the chapter observes that, historically, news conceptualizations have sidelined youth-oriented perspectives, largely because news media audience in general has been excluded in the conceptualization of news. Though now there are emergent youth-oriented perspectives on news, news itself, in its practical orientation, still excludes youth interest; but this is because news has never enabled anyone, women or men [or youth] to understand their own circumstances.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Section A

Young adults South Africans motivations for and their reception of locally-produced television news texts: results presentation n
In this chapter on the presentation of research results, the general purpose is to report on the sample of young adult student participants’ formulations and argumentations about their reception of South African-produced television news programmes on SABC and e.tv. More specifically, the purpose is to explore the assumptions and sub-problems formulated in chapter one. The research results that are presented in this chapter and analysis are drawn and interpreted from the range of qualitative focus groups interviews into which the said sample of youth adults actively participated as discussed.

Section B

This last chapter identifies at least three areas that are likely to benefit from the conclusions and recommendations it makes. These specific areas are the field of mass communication that is focused on the examination of the relationship between youth and news media, particularly television news; the general public that is interested in the relationship between youth citizens and news media; and the television news industry that is interested in knowing how young adults feel about its news broadcasts. The chapter presents that the framing of the conclusions and recommendations of this research study has to be understood in view of the fact that more than one area of public life is the target of these conclusions and recommendations. Although effort is made to distinguish between those conclusions and recommendations that benefit one area more than the other, it is recognized that in reality there is an obvious interplay between these areas as this study has demonstrated. Recommendations raised in this study arise out a particular theoretical, paradigmatic and research methodology framework to which we turn in CHAPTER TWO below.
CHAPTER TWO

Reading South African Youth’s Reading of Television News Broadcasts: a reception aesthetics qualitative study

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract

Though scholars in South Africa have been studying the relationship between youth and news media since the late 1980s, the local youth-news media research area still lacks theorization from- and application of- reception aesthetics, including its appropriation by media and cultural studies. This has limited an understanding of youth-news media relationship that is grounded in reception aesthetics’ and cultural studies’ differential (immanent) accommodation of socialisation theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics and structuralism-based semiotics. Not only in this way is this understanding impaired, under apartheid, in cultural, journalism and mass communication studies, insights that would have resulted from amalgamation of these theoretical paradigms got impaired not only by bias in favour of each, but also by politicisation of reception theory and semiotics\(^4\). In the post-apartheid, there has been no attempt to reconcile textual, contextual and reader-oriented theoretical paradigms. Against this background, this work demonstrates how qualitative research methodology, reception aesthetics and its appropriation by media and cultural studies, are used in the interpretation of young adult South Africans’ motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news texts. It concludes that these human subjects’ motivations for watching texts, their perception and readings of them are products of ideologically-situated socialisation as much they are polysemic.

Keywords

Journalism and mass communication scholarship, news media, reception theory, semiotics, structuralism, research methodology, television news, youth and media

Introduction

*It is Jauss’s considerable merit to have perceived and demonstrated the linkage between reception and semiotics* (Paul de Man, 1982: xviii).

---

\(^4\) This is in strict reference to South African journalism, cultural and mass communication studies to the exclusion literary studies (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson, 1995).
Though scholars in South Africa have been studying the relationship between youth and news media since the late 1980s, the local youth-news media research area still lacks theorization from- and application of- reception aesthetics (Iser, 1978; Jauss, 1974), including its appropriation by media and cultural studies (cf. Fiske, 1987; Hall, 1980; Morley, 1992). This has limited an understanding of youth-news media relationship that is grounded in reception aesthetics and cultural studies’ differential (immanent) accommodation of socialisation theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics and structuralism-based semiotics. Not only in this way is this understanding limited impaired, under apartheid, in cultural, journalism and mass communication studies, insights that would have resulted from amalgamation of these theoretical paradigms got impaired not only by bias in favour of each (cf. Lategan, 1992), but also by politicisation of reception theory and semiotics (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1995). In the post-apartheid, there has been no attempt to reconcile textual, contextual and reader-oriented theoretical paradigms. Against this background, this work demonstrates how qualitative research methodology, reception aesthetics and its appropriation by media and cultural studies, are used in the interpretation of young adult South Africans’ motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news texts. It concludes that these human subjects’ motivations for watching texts, their perception and readings of them are products of ideologically-situated socialisation as much they are polysemic.

Reception aesthetics’ accommodative nature of other theoretical paradigms and its profound explanatory efficacy in the reader-text discourse are primary justifications for its adoption and application in this work. As a distinct strand of reception theory propagated mainly by the German literary historian Hans Robert Jauss, an amalgamation of reception theory and semiotics, and as subsequently appropriated compatibly by media and cultural studies, reception aesthetics fit neatly with the main objective of this work. This work is an application of literary studies-based reception aesthetics and a selected set of other compatible concepts and models, grounded mainly in media and cultural studies, in the examination of young adult South Africans’ reception/reading of locally-produced television news texts.

---

5 This is in strict reference to South African journalism, cultural and mass communication studies to the exclusion literary studies (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson, 1995).
Application of reception aesthetics as a guiding theoretical framework has a duality of function. In the first instance, its utilisation accords this work its theoretical and paradigmatic subjectivity, self-consciousness or reflexivity. It is necessary for this study to be aware of its subjectivity. The primary responsibility of exploring young adult South Africans' reading of locally-produced television news texts is undertaken against a specific scholarly background with its identifiable theoretical, paradigmatic and methodological persuasions. (For operational reasons, this scholarly background is referred to as *youth-news media research area* in the South African field of journalism and mass communication research). So, the introduction of this work's subject matter and the proposal of space for it, in the local youth-news media discourse, requires, indispensively, not only consciousness of the theoretical perspective from which evaluations are made, but also demonstration of awareness of 'the state of play' in the research area itself. The latter, however, is done in brief and as a conduit to dealing with the second, but main, function of reception aesthetics in this work. That is, the manner in which young adult subjects interpret locally-produced television news subjects. Reception aesthetics, then, simultaneously performs both the evaluative and explanatory function.

**Rationale and objectives**

From a reception aesthetics perspective, engagement with the local youth-news media relationship by various studies (see below) has produced at least two limitations, which this work tries to overcome. First, works in the area concern themselves primarily with what can be referred to as the 'second order' of reading; that is, young people's actual decoding of television news texts as sign systems. These works fail accommodate that news text reading is preceded by pre-reading or social perception or profiling of television news texts themselves. The argument of the present work is that individual human subject's motivation towards news texts is a product of the nature of that individual human subject's ideologically-situated socio-cultural relations. Arguably, then, interpretation of youth-news media relationship should not necessarily begin by exploring youth's response to *actual* news texts, but by, first, how youth are socialised by various
cultural frames, to which they are embedded, about news texts. This will bring about an understanding of how young people then profile news texts in the context of their socio-cultural existence. It is for this reason that, first and foremost, this work examines young adult’s reception of news from a perspective of social-psychology’s socialisation theory. This perspective is connected to reception aesthetics’ concept of ‘the horizon of expectations’. This concept suggests that readers have expectations of the text which are imported from their socio-historical world.

Another reason for using reception aesthetics is because it is compatible with the theoretical beginnings of this local research area, which are also relevant in discussing this work’s primary subject. The local area’s research into youth-news media relationship has its theoretical beginnings, like the American and European ones, in the social-psychology’s socialisation theory. Reception aesthetics’ interpretation of the reader-text relationship in the (historical) socio-cultural context reflects some of socialisation theory’s presuppositions. So, reception aesthetics’ recognition of historical, economic and socio-cultural ‘situated-ness’ of the text and the text’s reader, functions as an accommodation of (rather than as total negation of)- and progression from-socialisation theory. Socialisation theory sees media texts as vehicles for transmitting and reinforcing already existing social values.

The second limitation in the local youth-news media research area pertains to how participating works collectively point to the manner in which youth react to the news media texts as complete sign systems. This limits understanding. Different signs of the sign system, particularly television news texts, signify differently. So, interpreting youth’s reaction from a perspective of looking at a complete text restricts an understanding of how youth read and react to individual components or signs of a text. This position does not illuminate which signs are, in Hall’s (1980) terms, partially rejected or accepted. Or, which signs are totally rejected or accepted. Because of this shortfall, this work provides a descriptive structure of a typical television news text from genre (see CHAPTER THREE) and semiotic perspectives.

By taking a descriptive examination of the structure of the television news text from a structuralism perspective, this work accepts two theoretical paradigms immanent in reception aesthetics: structuralism and phenomenology.
With respect to phenomenology, which is a precursor to and is also accepted to by reception aesthetics, this work acknowledges the ‘phenomenological presence of the world’ of a television news text that young adult readers negotiate or bargain with. The argument of the work is that when young adults interpret news media signs there is an interaction between them and news texts. To paraphrase the phenomenologist, Poulet (1969: 54), young adults are inside the news text and it is inside them; “...there is no longer either inside or outside” (1969:54). Very few messages are self-explanatory and transparent—“we must engage with or act upon a text to produce meaning. In other words, we must internalise and appropriate a message in order to make it our own” (Pitout, 2001:245). This work then argues that because of young adult readers’ (metaphorical) existence ‘inside’ the text, the parameters of their readings are delineated by the text itself—to the extent that, one might reason in post-Marxist terms, that their readings are a re-productions of a text’s ‘hegemonic’ meanings.

In accepting the world of a text on a reader, this work at the same time rejects, as reception aesthetics would, the extreme presuppositions of hypodermic-needle theory. This theory assumes passive recipients of media texts on whom texts have direct effects in terms of how they think and act. The theoretical paradigm is rejected on the same grounds that socialisation theory is accepted (see above). It is acknowledged here that mass media messages, including television news, have profound effects on the audience, but several other intervening factors modify text readings. Studies have shown that “…recipients of mass messages are not isolated individuals, but they interact with others—family members, friends and work colleagues…” (Steinberg, 2002: 195).

While this study accepts some of the premises of the socialisation theory, it dissociates itself from socialisation theory’s absolute subjection of the human subject to the social structure and its denial of this subject of agency.

At the same time, while young adults’ agency is emphasised and their active text reading noted, this work discredits uses-and-gratifications’ notion of a psychologically-based and socio-culturally de-contextualised consumer of media messages.

Within reception paradigm itself, those interpretations of the reader-text relationship, like Stanley Fish’s, that radically conclude that ultimately the reader is the
producer of textual meaning are rejected. The manner in which reception aesthetics is applied in this has implications for research methodology.

**Qualitative Research Methodology**

**Focus-groups**

The use of focus-group interview technique has become more common in recent years. Researchers, however, vary on the actual number of participants a typical focus-group should consist of. Some researcher methodologists prescribe that a typical focus group should be made up of between four and eight participants who are interviewed together (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:111); other methodologist suggest that a focus group should typically bring together eight to ten qualified people for a face-to-face discussion of a particular topic (Edmunds, 1999:1). There is seems to be consensus, however, on the fact that a focus group with over ten participants is difficult to work with and to manage. If it exceeds ten people, the discussion among participants can be difficult to control and can be less effective.

Given that the initial consideration of triangulating quantitative and qualitative methods became impossible and that eventually, in-depth focus-groups interviews were to become primary methods of data-gathering, seven sets or sessions of focus-group interviews were conducted for this particular research study and in the actual implementation. The decision pertaining to the quantity of focus-group session was taken in view of the nature of the data required to meet the objectives of the study. This decision also was taken in recognition of the views of the experts with regard to the organisation and actual execution of focus-group interviews. According to focus groups research experts: “it is advisable to conduct two or more (focus) groups…” (Edmunds, 1999:9).

For this study, each session consisted of between seven and to eight participants, as much as over-recruiting had been done in anticipation of last-minute cancellations and failure to show up, which are normal in these types of research. Indeed, some prospective participants cancelled in last-minutes and some did not show up for their assigned
sessions. To allow for adequate discussions of the main and related topics, the focus group sessions lasted between ninety to ninety-five minutes.

Instead of using University of South Africa’s (UNISA) and University of Cape Town’s (UCT) official student databases as sample sources, student participants were recruited by this researcher from the study areas of both main and Sunnyside campuses of the (UNISA). UCT students were recruited from the Upper Campus.

**Screener questionnaire**

A specific presupposition influenced by socialisation theory and reception aesthetics’ concept of the horizon of expectations had implications for the research method and methodology for this study. Using screener questionnaire for ensuring appropriate profile and eligibility of each recruit, only those prospective (youth) participants who had shown intimate knowledge of television news texts were allowed into focus-group discussions.

It is very important to note that an artificial television news-environment was avoided at all cost in this study. For example, no television news tapes were brought in by the researcher for the participants to watch. The aim of the focus-group interviews was to establish youth’s motivations and readings as they consciously happen at home, student residences, etc, not in a created environment. It is, in part, for this specific reason that screener questionnaires were carefully used to establish prospective participants’ suitability for being in the groups and their intimate knowledge of television news. Set of focus-group interviews discussed mainly participants’ reading of their television news texts’ codes of content and codes and form.

Using the necessary screener questionnaire for ensuring the appropriate profile and eligibility of each recruit, prospective (student youth) participants in the focus-group interviews were carefully selected and sampled by the researcher/author of this study on the bases of intimate knowledge of the objectives of the research project. In the recruitment process, which took two to three weeks, the principal objectives, main problem, sub-problems, assumptions, and research questions (see above) were used to
determine the composition of focus-groups. Furthermore, in consideration of these aspects of the study, the prospective participants were purposefully sampled to elicit their knowledge of television news and the types of news channels they watched. Population parameters such as age, gender, race, field of study, frequency of television news viewing, etc were highly considered in this ‘sampling’ process.

As stated above, in each recruitment instance for a particular group session more than eight prospective participants were interviewed in anticipation of those who might not attend and the realised sample. These prospective participants were left with informed-consent forms which they needed to submit before each focus-group discussion for indication of their knowledge and implications of the study on them (see Appendix D).

To ensure comfortable surroundings, Department of Communication’s seminar room at University of South Africa and University of Cape Town’s Arts Block seminar rooms were chosen as venues for respective interviews. The author/researcher as the moderator introduced and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher also explained to the participants that they were free to speak without being prompted, but will need to identify themselves by assigned number as only the audiotape, as the recording device, was used to capture interview processes. This was also done to facilitate the processes of transcription and interpretation. (See Edmunds, (1999) for the types of guidelines followed in professional moderation here).

Apart from this practical application process of focus-group research technique, there are other fairly abstract rationale for using focus group method. Focus groups, for example, can be used to evaluate existing tests (advertising/copy) and to test new concepts. The application of this qualitative research technique in this project, as well, was to test aspects almost similar to these.

First, it was meant to establish student participants’ orientation towards local mainstream television newscasts. In this first aspect, the aim was to ascertain an in-depth understanding of student participants’ perspectives and opinions of the mainstream television news as offered by the four channels discussed above; to capture their subjective assertions on what motivates (and de-motivates from) them to watch these news programmes.
In the second aspect it was to explore the degree to which South African youth audiences are likely or unlikely to be motivated to watch and interact with television news and current affairs programmes that incorporate and are characterised by particular types of content, style, identity, and setting. This use of focus group technique here is in line with its use in testing new ideas. Edmunds (1999: 3) suggests that:

*Focus groups are best used when the concept or idea you wish to evaluate is new and when the best evaluation comes from letting the target customer...view the concept directly. A good example of this is a new advertising campaign. Typically, an advertising agency will want to test a new advertisement with the consumers it hopes to reach with the campaign. The agency needs to know whether the message is clear, whether consumers view the advertisement positively or negatively, whether the advertisement would prompt them to purchase the product, and so forth.*

The intention in this study as well was to ascertain and evaluate whether participants viewed mainstream television positively or negatively and/or if the content and the manner in which the news is presented would draw them into watching continuously. The comments and reactions of participants allowed this study to identify those aspects of mainstream television news that are liked or disliked.

Tape-recorded focus group participants' reactions and comments were then transcribed, as it is the norm after conducting these types of interviews, to facilitate accurate analysis. As the ultimate aim of this is to provide *formative* information to news practitioners resulting, in part, from these reactions and comments, student participants' comments and reactions were very useful in this regard.

**Reasons for using formative research**

It strongly seems that, so far, mainstream television news production processes and their outputs have been ineffective, lacking in appeal and incongruent to the news needs of the youth audiences. This is creating a considerable information gap between mainstream television news output and youth receivers. Testimony to this is young people’s statistical decline and growing disinterests in mainstream television news programmes (see discussions above).
The possibility is that if mainstream television news system remains on the present trajectory, as a causal factor, it will continue experiencing younger audiences’ diminishing interest in it. Young people’s interest, as noted above, then need to be renewed and revived; but such revivals and renewals need to be preceded and accompanied by in-depth knowledge and understanding of youth’s motivations to attend to the current mainstream television news and current affairs programmes; and likely motivations to additional types of content, style, identity and setting in the re-packaging, re-formatting and re-organisation of news.

It is in this respect, then, that this study contributes, as its goal, to the narrowing of the gap between mainstream television news and youth news receivers- by discovering those persuasive motivational factors driving youth into television viewing experience and those that discourage them, as well as those news segments and values they wish could be added on to mainstream television news for it to be effective, appealing and congruent to their motivations and needs. Employment of formative research method then becomes logical and appropriate in this endeavour.

Formative research method is used for the evaluation of various programmes to enhance their effectiveness and appeal to the targeted audience. It is a form of research method that is applied to programmes that are still in their developmental and incomplete stages of life; and which are still, therefore, susceptible to growth, change and revision, so that they can, consequently and as a desired outcome, become effective and meet the needs of and appeal to their target audiences (cf. Tessmer, 1995). In addition:

‘Evaluation’ is a data gathering process to determine the worth or value of the instruction, of its strengths and weaknesses. The identified strengths and weaknesses are used to revise the instruction to improve its effectiveness and appeal. Thus, ‘formative evaluation’ is the judgment of strengths and weaknesses of instruction in its developing stages, for purposes of revising the instruction to improve its effectiveness and appeal (Tessmer, 1995: 11).

Gathering, analysing and interpreting data from youth respondents assists in identifying those motivational and de-motivational factors that are determinants of worth or value, strengths and weakness of news products to them. It is these youth-identified strengths
and weaknesses that can be supplied to news practitioners to assist them in designing news programmes specifically for youth or programmes in which youth interests is taken into account.

In formative research, "the evaluation is conducted by collecting data about the instruction from a variety of sources, using a variety data gathering methods and tools" (Tessmer, 1995: 11). In keeping with this tradition this research uses qualitative research methodology; employs both primary and secondary sources in the evaluation of television news programmes.

**Qualitative Research Methodology**

Qualitative research methodologists, first and foremost, are opposed to the notion of value-free and objective social reality, which is an ontological premise of those operating from within a quantitative research methodology paradigm. Qualitative research methodologists reason that, ontologically, social reality is subjective. Instead of reality being discovered and measured in quantitative methodological and systematic ways, qualitative research methodologists believe that it can be derived from a subjective standpoint. For these methodologists multiple sources of knowledge that exists can be employed to interpret and explore the subjective reality in contrast to positivists' articulation that empirical observations and experiments can be the only sources in the discovery of real social knowledge. Du Plooy (2001:34) notes that in the qualitative research approach:

*Qualitative themes and categories can be developed as methods to explore and describe meanings communicated in particular contexts (methodology); research questions can guide the types of observations to be made, in order to understand a ...phenomenon (methodology); and observations can be analysed thematically and holistically within the contexts that consists of interrelationships.*

Generally, the exploration of the young adult South Africans' motivations for watching and reception of television texts, as there are described in this study, through qualitative
research methods is a research exercise concerned with the discovery of a particular form of social knowledge.

**Reading television news**

The term *reading*, in the context of this work, has two related meanings. First, it is used as an analytical tool. It is applied to mean the practice of analyzing and interpreting television news texts and young adults’ reading of them. Its use is influenced largely, in the first instance, by and is grounded in *structuralism*. Therefore, television news itself as a particular generic form as well as different institutions that produce it (within a particular set of regulating professional and bureaucratic norms and structures) are read as *sign systems* that collectively or individually produce particular social meanings.

It is presumed in this research that the selected units of analysis (young adults) are, in terms of *reception theory*, sophisticated and active audiences who critically read and engage with news texts. They are, therefore, capable of discerningly comparing several locally-produced television news shows on SABC 1, 2, 3 and on e-tv. The concept of reading is taken to mean that young adults are capable of reading various visual styles, narrative structures and contents of television news. "The term ‘read’ is being used loosely here to refer to any process of interpretation-viewing, scanning, listening, and other forms of engaging can all be termed ‘reading’ (O’Shaughnessy & Stadler, 2005: 91).

As it has become a tradition in mass media studies that apply reception theory (cf. Pitout, 2001:244), this study also substitutes “reader” for “user, audience, and viewer”. Focus-group participants in this study, therefore, are constructed as *readers* of South African-produced (hereafter: locally-produced⁶) television news broadcasts.

**Reception Theory**

The term reception theory has several referents. In its evolution, the term’s theoretical definitions and empirical applications have failed to produce conceptual unanimity

---

⁶ The term locally-produced is preferred over locally-broadcast, which might also mean international channels broadcast locally (e.g. BBC or CNN).
among the very reception theorists preoccupied with it. Collective identity of literary critics and scholars grouped as reception theorists, mainly in literary studies - later in media and cultural studies, is held together by specific points of conceptual convergence between these theorists’ various versions of reception theory.

Accounting for meanings of reception theory and its applicability to this study begins by drawing an operational distinction between reception theory and reader-response criticism/theory to avoid certain pitfalls. Reception theory and reader-response criticism/theory have sometimes been treated as similar (cf. Sim & van Loon, 2004:84). To a degree, this is misleading. The treatment of the two theoretical approaches as identical or interchangeable ignores particular differences between the two, and renders certain collective meanings to both, which at various points, should be a reference limited to only one.

Reception theory, for example, has sometimes been used to refer to reader-response criticism in general (cf. Sim & van Loon, 2004:84). The shortcoming of this generalisation is that it downplays the fact that reception theory is particularly more associated with the ‘reception-aesthetics’ (German, Rezeptionästhetik), as outlined in 1970 by the German literary historian Hans Robert Jauss (Baldick, 2001:213). Reception theory’s concern with and emphasis on aesthetic value, importantly, distinguishes it from reader-response criticism/theory, its parallel largely Anglo-American movement (Brooker, 1999:188). (For an illuminating account of the differences between reception theory and reader-response theory criticism/theory, see Robert C.Holub’s preface to his work Reception theory: a critical introduction (1984)). In this present work, reception theory is applied in the sense of its Germanic version, or more precisely, as having its roots in the German reception aesthetics. Further distinctions between reader-response criticism and theory reception are made with respect to identifying differences between Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss and and Stanly Fish’s versions of reception theory.

Another meaning of reception theory is that it primarily refers to the branch of modern literary studies concerned with the ways in which literary texts are received and interpreted by their readers over time. Its application, however, is no longer limited to reception of literary works, but also to other areas of audience ‘reception’.
Hawthorn (1992:149), for example, points out that the term reception theory, is “also sometimes used in a looser sense to describe any attempt to theorize the ways in which art works are received, individually and collectively, by their consumers”.

Furthermore, media audience studies, is also one the academic areas where reception theory is applied to the investigation of the ways in which audiences make sense of media texts. Importantly, however, reception theory is applied to media studies as having its roots both in German reception aesthetics, and in the encoding/decoding model of reception developed by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (also known as the cultural studies approach) (Pitout, 2001: 243). Accordingly, this present media audience study applies reception theory in the sense described in this paragraph.

In line with its range of meanings mentioned above, the term reception theory is also generally used to describe a particular group of mainly German theorists, based at the University of Konstanz, West Germany, who are working in the area that explores readers’ reception of literary texts (Hawthorn, 1992:149). Literary critics and scholars most frequently mentioned as core members of this particular group of theorists are Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, Karlheinz Stierle and Harald Weinrich. Where this theory is also referred to as reader-response criticism/theory, the name of Stanley Fish is added to the list of leading critics and scholars in this paradigm (cf. Sim & van Loon, 2004:84). However, to further explain the specific relevance and applicability of reception theory to this work, this work primarily uses concepts defined by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser.

There are two leading concepts associated with Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, among which reception theorists, in analysing the activity of reading, have made considerable use of (cf. Hawthorn, 1992:149). The first, which is formulated by Hans Robert Jauss (1982) is called horizon of expectation. Jauss draws on philosophical hermeneutics to argue that “literary works are received against an existing ‘horizon of expectations’ consisting of readers’ current knowledge and presuppositions about literature, and the meanings of works change as such horizons shift” (Balick, 2001:213).

In the essay Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory, Jauss gives prominence to three ways in which a writer can anticipate a reader’s response to his/her work:
first, by the familiar standards or inherent poetry of the genre; second, by the implicit relationships to familiar works of the literary-historical context; and third, by the contrast between history and reality...The third factor includes the possibility that the reader of a new work has to perceive it not only within the narrow horizon of this literary expectations but also within the wider horizon of his experience of life (1974:18).

Jauss's ‘horizon of expectation’ has implications for both writers and readers; it influences writers and readers in the composition and reading of literary works. Writers, in the composition of their works, have to reflect subscription to particular conventions of a mode, tradition, genre into which their specific literary works fall (see CHAPTER TWO). In their reading of particular genre texts, readers internalise and come to always expect these inherent properties embedded in texts and respond to them.

Two points are particularly worth mentioning here with respect to the application of the concept of the ‘horizon of expectation’ and certain aspects of the current study. First, first audiences’ recognition of the conventions of television news genre generates pleasure. Second, familiarity with these conventions, specifically those of South Africa-broadcast television was one of the major important criteria considered in the selection of the focus group participants; hence purposive sampling.

The second main concept introduced in reception theory, introduced by Wolfgang Iser (1974, 1978), is that of the implied reader. Through the notion of this type of a reader, Iser is interested in describing the “act” of reading. He sees the act of reading “...a process by which the reader traverses the text, both in an initial and successive readings closing ‘gaps’ and filling ‘blanks’ so as to make work consistent” (Brooker, 1999: 189). Iser conception of an active reader is the one who interprets literary work by filling blanks in the text with his/her knowledge, experiences, and frame of reference; these being inescapable part of the reader’s social and cultural life world (Pitout, 2001).

For Iser when readers interpret texts there in an interaction between them and texts. Particularly important in Iser’s theorisation of this relationship is his assumption of a greater degree of interaction between text and reader. Neither party is all powerful over the other. The text pushes the reader in a certain direction and the reader fills in any gaps left in the text (Sim & van Loon, 2004:84).
This emphasis sets Iser apart from other reception theorists, reader-response theorists (particularly Stanly Fish), and poststructuralist thought. "Iser grants the text an existence prior to the reading process which ‘concretizes’ its meaning and brings text and reader to a point of convergence" (Brooker, 1999:189). Although, in Iser’s thinking, the reader anticipates the text and the act of reading "is therefore seen as projective and creative, [this] is not to the degree [...] that the reader produces its meaning" (Brooker, 1999:189).

On the other hand, Stanly Fish’s perspective on the relationship between text and reader is radical and it part of what distinguishes reader-response theory from reception theory. Fish insists that the reader is actually the producer of the meaning of the literary text.

**Semiotics and reception theory in South Africa**

The reception of reception theory in South Africa, specifically in communication studies, is reflected largely in the book, *The Reader and Beyond* (1992), which is/was a collection of research chapters. Had Robert Holub’s (1992:23) complaint been about South Africa—that reception theory, remarkably successful in German, was “still an optional and marginal tendency in the United States”- he would have added his concern about how reception theory application ignored reception (under apartheid) and got itself into conflict with local left wing-oriented semioticians. Reception of reception theory in South African need to be read in the same context as De Beer and Tomaselli (2000) read ideological schisms in the South African journalism and mass communication scholarship. Tomaselli and Shepperson (1995:1) complained, with justification, that reception theory, in *The Reader and beyond*, de-politicized semiotics.

*The Reader and Beyond* is not about reception theory in South Africa as Lategan’s introductory heading claims. It is about unequivocal adoptions of theories developed in First World contexts imposed without reconstitution on South African readers assumed to evidence white Western individualistic Freudian type subjectivities. The bulk of the book, then, is really about the reception by particular strata of white South African academics of particular interpretive kinds of reception theory (Tomaselli & Shepperson, 1995:4)
In the post-apartheid, there has been no attempt to reconcile textual, contextual and reader-oriented theoretical paradigms, more especially, for interest on this study, in the South African journalism and mass communication research on youth and news media, to which we reflect on briefly below.

South African journalism and mass communication research on youth and news media: a very brief reflection

Between 1987 and 2003 several academic works, particularly in the South African journalism and mass communication studies (JMCS), have explored the relationship between South African youth and news media (see CHAPTER FIVE). To this day, there is no single South African-based study that specifically synthesises and applies semiotic and reception theories in the qualitative study of South African youth’s reading of television news programmes. This is not to indicate that there is a study in this area (local or done from somewhere else) that either specifically grounds itself in semiotics or in reception theory, but fails to combine the two. No. But it is to suggest, partly, that lack of theoretical growth in the area cannot reasonably be abstracted from the desertion and peripheral status of the research area itself in the South African mass communication and journalism research. Only a handful of academic research works exist as definers of the area, if ‘research area’ itself is not at all a charitable reference.

If the rise and acceptance of reception theory was a response to methodological crisis in literary studies in German in the 1960s and, in its Jaussian terms, it appropriated Friedrich Schiller’s motivating speech at Jena in 1789 to “establish […] a sense of urgency in a field that seemed moribund and consequently in need of a new orientation” (Holub, 1984:54), cannot the same spirit be adopted to propose more research into the South African youth-news media relationship? The reason it is necessary, in part, to call for more research into the area is because in the South African journalism and mass communication field that began in the 1960s, reviewed literature into the relationship between local youth and news media leads to the conclusion that engagements with the subject are few and far in between. (For a meta-study that reflects on this area see: South
Socialization theory, television news, production and reception

This work assumes a relationship between reception aesthetics and socialisation theory to argue three interrelated points. It first argues that a reader’s perception of social and cultural significance of a text, in this context television news text, is a product of socialisation and culturation dependent on exposure to micro and macro social and cultural institutions/frames that assign particular importance to the text in question. The point with respect to how social and cultural institutions assign importance to particular texts (and/or authors) can be illustrated through reference to how, at some point and within a particular historical and socio-cultural context, literary institutions privileged Shakespeare. Reflecting on Gary Taylor’s essay, 1790, in this regard, Machor and Goldstein (2001:76) present the following, which anchors the point being made here:

...Taylor explores how the significance and growing reputation of Shakespeare at this time depended on the way institutions of literary culture, from English theater to the work of publishers who issued new editions of his plays, re-presented his texts within the a matrix of cultural conditions.

The significance and reputation of television news texts equally is a product of various social and cultural institutions’ mediations. The process of interpreting young South Africans reading of television news texts should then, first and foremost, take into consideration, cultural frames (peers, schools, family, and media) that impact their perception of texts. This is not to suggest that young people are not in recurring dialogical relationships with and within these cultural frames. Exploration of which socializing or cultural frames influence young people’s horizons of perceptions should preferably parallel, be part and parcel of or immediately precede investigations of how they perceive aesthetic qualities of particular texts they encounter.

This brings us to the second point that the process of ‘actual’ reading, like the process of pre-perception of the work before it is read, is also a product of particular
kinds of social relations. Human subjects’ text reading, in this case youth’s reading, is an import of- and is mediated- by cultural and social norms, values beliefs and ideologies; externally aided. This is irrespective of whether readers are mass or specialists. It is necessary to draw from Machor and Goldstein’s (2001:77) reading of Henry Louis Gates, Jr essay, Literary theory and the black tradition, to emphasize the point on how reading of any kind follows ‘rules’ and ‘aids’

by ‘Literary theory’ he means not just the crafted principles guiding the practice of literary critics but the entire panoply of beliefs, values and interpretive codes that constitute the reception of texts...

Studies grounded in socialisation theory, equally, identify how social networks influence young people’s relationship with media texts. These studies clearly indicate that children, teenagers and young adults emulate their parents’ television viewing patterns. Gunter and McLeer (1990:36) observe that parents provide models of television viewing, which are matched by their offspring. “This certainly seems to be the case in relation to the development of news consumption practices for young adults” (Guntlett & Hill, 1999:86, author’s emphasis). From these observations it can be speculated strongly that parents might also offer particular kinds of models for news reception or reading.

What emerged in the focus-group discussions is that unlike those participants who lived on their own in student residences, digs or in flats etc, those participants who lived with parents reported that their parents played a major role in terms of influencing them to watch news almost daily. One of these participants said: “My parents and my grand parents are ... when the news comes up are like... they are absolutely dedicated... so I also watch constantly”. Another said: “I watch four times a week. That is because my dad is watching it.” “When I go home I watch the news every night. My parents always have. Now my dad never misses it. I think that it has big role to play”, concluded one participant. Parental influence, however, does not necessarily translate into long-lasting orientation towards a particular news broadcast. This seems to be an individual choice, more especially among students in middle and high income groups. Interestingly, whether news-viewing is influenced by parents or self-initiated all participants
commented fairly perceptibly on the *content, format/style* of the SABC and e-tv news prorammes.

The third related point is that the practice of textual production and intended signifying meanings are equally a product of socialisation which are an extension, in most instances, of cultural, political and socioeconomic contexts. This is not being overly Marxist or reductionist. Textual production is a reflection of individual authorial or institutional decisions and purposes (see CHAPTER FIVE) as much it responds to expectations (of certain groups) in its environment. This is in terms of importation of meaning and structure. MaGann suggests that a work has “two interlocking histories, one that derives from the author’s expressed decisions and purposes, and the other that derives from the critical reactions of the... various readers (in Machor and Goldstein, 2001: ix).

However, as television news texts are produced in a social system characterized by contending forces with varying influence and powers, they are not, in content and form, including in those carried by public service broadcasters, reflections of ‘critical reactions from various readers’; they are ideological sign systems that respond to certain kinds of ideologically-situated interests and structural codes and conventions. This work’s semiotic reading of South African produced-produced television texts is that they are, in content and form, sites of contested social meaning and power. The present work draws from John Fiske’s (2001:248) semiotic and cultural studies-based essay on *Madonna*.

It recognizes that the distribution of power in society is paralleled by the distribution of meanings in texts, and struggles for social power are paralleled by semiotic struggles for meanings. Every text and every reading has a social and therefore political dimension, which is to be found partly in the structure of the text itself and partly in the social relations of the reader and the way they are brought to bear upon the text.

From this point of view and by seeing themselves being represented and empowered by e-tv news, the majority of participants have preference for it. The perceptions and opinions of the majority of focus-group participants about South African television news
are summarized by one participant who said that: "I prefer e-news live @ 7. It talks to all people...e-news talks about a number of things: arts, entertainment, (etc). It covers everything". This observation is shared by another participant:

Personally, I prefer e-tv news. It caters for all people. SABC News is for adults. It is very much into politics. In e-news, there is politics, entertainment and sports. They cater for all of us. E-tv caters for all age groups.

SABC is seen as extension of the disempowering ‘world’ of the adults and excluding. E-tv is accommodative: ‘e-tv caters for all ages’. On this aspect of reporters’ style of reporting and presentation of news, most participants in the current study revealed that they were more likely to watch e-tv news programmes. One participant compared and critiqued the SABC by noting that “on SABC you have people sitting on the desk. There is nothing catchy. (On e-tv on the other hand)...even the presenters, those covering the stories they are more casual and more laid back.”

This is the second South African academic research study to find out that the majority of young adults in focus-group discussions (context) are attracted to e-tv news content and style. The first study conducted by du Plooy-Cilliers and Buzuindenhout (2003) also reveals that:

They (young adults) tend to have a preference for the way news is presented on e-tv, compared to the formats used by SABC 1, 2 and 3. They perceive the news presenters of e-tv as more relaxed and informal, and they say use language they can identify with. They also like the fact that these news programmes include more background information and they especially like the entertainment section.

Style, form and aesthetics

One participant in this current study observed that: “SABC is outdated in terms of style and e-tv is presenting in a way that is understandable.” For most participants, most appealing about e-news reporters’ style and presentation was their simulation and
imitation of certain aspects of news events they report about. One example given in this regard was that when an e-tv reporter reports on something that had happened at the hospital, he or she would dress up like relevant personnel of that particular section of the hospital. This “acting news” was considered to be educational and enhancing the understanding of the event being reported on. “I also prefer e-tv news. Its reporters are creative and they can relate the story to the viewer,” one participant observed. Another participant emphasized: “They (e-tv news reporters) are trying to make us understand. They dress like the situation they are representing. They act the news. They are part of the news.” Another participant noted that:

That’s why I like e-tv. I think they report things in far more professional manner. They always have someone in site and then they switch between him/her and the presenter in the studio instead of just adding inserts of visuals of the area. ...It adds another exciting element to the broadcast that makes us feel like we’re getting real news.

A structuralism/semiotic approach to understanding television news

(Conclusion)

Apart from reception theory, a semiotic approach is employed in this work to identify different kinds of signs and sign systems through which meaning is communicated by television news texts to audiences/consumers/citizens. This approach has been used successfully as means of analyzing media products since the 1960s. Since television news texts themselves are media products, they are therefore equally amenable to semiotic analysis.

Semiotics, which can now also be used in the analyses of any kind of meaning-making activity in society, began in the end of the nineteenth century as a method for analyzing language. Its founder, the Swiss linguistics professor, Ferdinand de Saussure, “...regarded spoken language as the most fundamental of human meaning-making practices” (Bignell, 2004: 86). Giving origin to what would be structuralism, Saussure aimed to reveal the universal structure of language as a constructed system of rules. He
described this system of language as *langue* and any instance of language use parole. Furthermore, and particularly important for this presentation, Saussure argued that all other media could be understood on an analogy with spoken language (Bignell, 2004: 86).

It is on the basis of Saussure’s understanding of language structure as a constructed system of rules and subsequent semiotic-oriented contention that all other media could be understood on an analogy with spoken language that the working premise for this work, in part, is formulated. It is therefore presented in this work that, as it is a principle of semiotic analysis of how textual meanings are produced and transmitted, that television news texts have a ‘language’ which television news practitioners and consumers have learnt to use. The following CHAPTER THREE, apart from its functionalism-based emphasis of the importance of news for the public sphere, is ground in structuralism semiotics for purposes of demonstrating news-production ‘language’ that news-practitioners follow in the one that consumers understand.
CHAPTER THREE

Understanding and reading South African television news

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract

Given that global youth-news media studies note a decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news, and that South African-specific studies produce contradictory results in this regard, this chapter highlights the importance of television news in the public sphere, more especially in the public sphere of a developing country like South Africa. The importance of television news is underscored against the view that the greater the numbers of young adults who attend to television news the better are the chances of the survival of the public sphere. Since the country’s public sphere is mediated, among other influential players, by television news broadcasters, the chapter also focuses on how these news broadcaster themselves conceptualize their role. This helps with evaluation of whether the role of their news products is congruent with information and news needs of a developing country’s public sphere in which they are embedded. Apart from this, in order to understand the relationship between South Africa young adults and locally-produced television news, the chapter also examines television news as a particular genre. When television news has been examined in the context of a developing country and also focused on as a genre, the arrangement of the contemporary South African television news and current affairs environment, as a response to both context and genre, is looked at. Lastly, the manner in which young adult South Africans consume ‘from this context and genre’ is also examined.

Keywords

Importance of television news, television news, youth and news media, reading television news

Introduction

Given that global youth-news media studies note a decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news (see CHAPTER ONE), and that South African-specific studies produce contradictory results in this regard (see CHAPTER ONE), this chapter highlights the importance of television news in the public sphere, more especially in the public sphere of a developing country like South Africa. The importance of television news is underscored against the view that the greater the numbers of young
adults who attend to television news the better are the chances of the survival of the public sphere. Since the country’s public sphere is mediated, among other influential players, by television news broadcasters, the chapter also focuses on how these news broadcaster themselves conceptualize their role. This helps with evaluation of whether the role of their news products is congruent with information and news needs of a developing country’s public sphere in which they are embedded. Apart from this, in order to understand the relationship between South Africa young adults and locally-produced television news, the chapter also examines television news as a particular genre. When television news has been examined in the context of a developing country and also focused on as a genre, the arrangement of the contemporary South African television news and current affairs environment, as a response to both context and genre, is looked at. Lastly, the manner in which young adult South Africans consume ‘from this context and genre’ is also examined.

Television news texts that young adults ought to be exposed to- not only in South Africa- are texts with minor distinguishing variations in style. These variations in style, in a multi-channel framework, are informed largely by the notion of brand identity. As much as they are self-distinguishing texts, as group of texts television news broadcasts share a set of conventional characteristics such as content, narrative structure, and visual style that distinguish and qualify them as a particular genre. These familiar characteristics and, in semiotic terms, other permanent signs, can be read and understood by television news viewers, including young adults. As such then, in this chapter, and in reception theory terms, television news viewers are conceived to be active audiences possessing enabling psychological skills with which they read and interpret television news broadcasts. Furthermore, they are conceived as discerning enough to distinguish between varieties of television news texts, and consequently consume habitually those whose characteristics are congruent with their motivations and needs.

Although the study holds this conception of its units of analysis, it deliberately eschews direct examination of the rather over-researched question relating to the use into which audiences put television news. It, rather, tacitly draws from functionalism media theory to further expand on the notion of the importance of responsible television news texts for the public sphere.
Importance of television news and news media

News students postulate and generally concur that availability of adequate news media, including television news, serves as a precondition for a creation of an informed citizenry (Hagen, 1997). They further suggest that citizens' exposure to news and news media is essential for general policing of the environment that citizens themselves inhabit. Vincent and Basil (1997: 381), in this respect, observe that "news has important implications in the creation of an informed electorate in areas including politics and international events". For van Zyl (1996:202), as a result, news is indispensable to informed decision-making as it allows citizens to make choices about critical issues that affect their lives in a rational and responsible manner. "The production, [therefore], of responsible, informative, analytic and intelligent news adds a qualitative dimension to the democratic process" (van Zyl, 1996: 202).

Consumers of news and news media themselves also acknowledge and confirm information benefits, social awareness and political consciousness that develop as a consequence of their exposure to news and news media. They further acknowledge that through news media messages they are able to keep in touch with international and local news and current affairs (cf. Gauntlett & Hill, 1999). Besides this general importance of news, television news programmes are seen by news consumers, especially in Western societies, as more useful a source of news in comparison to other news sources. This perception is enhanced by high public visibility of television news broadcasts (cf. Abercrombie, 1996:55).

Most European and American media research studies suggest that citizens in these societies continuously cite television news, compared to other news media and formats, as their source of news and current affairs (America's Watching, 1995; Gauntlet & Hill, 1999:53). Recent studies confirm the public belief that citizens source most of their news from television. University of Carlfornia Center for Communication's (UCLA) study (2002), for example, observes that "television dominated news delivery" of September 11 2001 events. Those, therefore, who thought of television, in its initial stages, as a prospective powerful information medium, are vindicated in this specific regard.
They are also vindicated in the sense that, when television was introduced, some observers enthusiastically argued that the medium would produce a better-informed public (Robinson & Davis, 1990). By nature of its technical construction, television carried with itself both the visual images and audio. It, therefore, “…simultaneously engaged the eye and the ear, the same sense modalities that most people use to learn naturally from their own environment and experiences” (Robinson & Davis, 1990:06).

In this respect, then, in simply sense, we have news as an essential information genre that transforms people into informed citizens; television as a significant information medium; and television news audiences as ‘believers’ that television news transforms them into better informed citizens (see CHAPTER FOUR). This relationship between television news and its audiences is underscored by research studies which also demonstrate that, apart from preferring television news provisions to other sources of information, citizens have a special connection with television news. Television Diarists in Gauntlett and Hill’s news research study, for example, said they preferred television news to that of other media “because TV is able to actually show the events taking place” (1999:55). Furthermore, Corner, (quoted in Gauntlett & Hill, 1999:55) note that the public trust images of television news. For Corner the impact and memorability of these images is important to viewers. He also notes that television news gives viewers a seemingly direct connection with current events “and a kind of trusting identification with their news-gathering representatives” (Gauntlett & Hill, 1999:55). Apart from the importance with which television news is treated by audiences, television news is seen as holding a particular social and television status. According to Fiske (1987: 281):

*News is a high-status television genre. Its claimed objectivity and independence from political or government agencies is argued to be essential for the workings of a democracy. Television companies applying for renewal of their licences turn to their news and current affairs programs as evidence of their social responsibility.*

Deducible and also evident from the above is that news is a socially important genre on television for citizens (see Abecrombie, 1996). It is also apparent that exposure and access to responsible news can facilitate young adults’ participation in and engagement
with the public sphere and the democratic process (cf. Hagen, 1997; Manning, 2001; van Zyl, 1996: 202). This importance of television news in the public sphere provides an impetus for wanting to understand its importance in the South African context.

**The importance of understanding television news, in the South African context**

The significance of reading and understanding television news in the South African context is deducible from a variety of factors. One of these being that television news, in general, has a profound impact in terms of how people view the world they inhabit. Using this line of thinking therefore, it can be argued that South African-produced television news broadcasts can have a profound clout in influencing how South Africans view and understand each other and the world they live in. The manner in which South African television news texts construct South Africa, South Africans, and the world is important to be ‘read’ closely.

The other factor that warrants a close reading of South African television news relates largely to the socioeconomic changes that are reshaping post-apartheid South Africa. Because of these changes, South African television market is experiencing an increase in the number of television viewers in each and every year (cf. *South African Advertising Research Foundation*, 2005). This increase in viewership propelled by the increase in individual household television set ownership is evident even among those country’s citizens who are in the lowest socio-economic income sectors- Living Standard Measurements (LSMs): 2-3. The increase in this income sector is as a result of governments’ continuing electrification of rural and semi-urban communities. However, the extent to which the increase in the number of people with access to television sets equals an increase in the number of television news viewers, is not a very clear one.

What can be said for certain is that television news in Nguni languages, specifically in isiXhosa and isiZulu, is still most widely-watched in South Africa; also, television channels have not reported losing or significantly losing their news audiences. In 2003, in fact, both heads of SABC3 and e-tv News Departments reported a steady increase in their news programme ratings. (For an understanding as to which news
broadcast has the highest ratings currently, visit: http://www.saalrc.org.za). Although a notable number of other programmes are still more popular than television news broadcasts, a significant number of South Africans rely on television news as another major source of information; therefore, increasingly South Africans have part of their view of the world shaped and mediated by information and stories presented by television news texts.

A close reading of television news in South Africa is further warranted by the question and the debate regarding the role it should play in the post-apartheid era and in the country’s transformation process. There is, for example, an ongoing debate in the country regarding SABC news department’s autonomy from the African National Congress-lead government; the debate centers on the credibility of its news output; there is a concern that SABC is becoming a propaganda machine under ANC as it was under National Party.

Given that different South African generations might have different orientation towards news information and stories (cf. Buckingham, 1997b) because of their generational characteristics (cf. Breet-van Niekerk & Ndlovu, 2005), it is further important to look at local television news. Integral to this current study is the recurring assumption that different demographic group have different orientation towards news broadcasts; as result young adults’ orientation towards television news has to be explored. But an understanding of how different social and cultural groups have a different orientation towards news broadcast is also dependent on knowing specific characteristics of television news texts as a genre- to which they have to react.

**Television news as genre**

Television news qualifies to be analyzed- and can be understood- as a genre like all other different texts on television that qualify for the status of genre, namely: soap operas, drama, documentaries, talk shows etc. Television news can be read and understood as genre because it has in itself intrinsic and unique elements that form a pattern and a structure. These elements help audiences to identify the programme as television news. Even if, for example, television news could be presented in a language alien to a
particular viewer, at a particular time and space, the viewer is more likely to recognize the programme as television news because of these familiar codes and conventions that characterize television news genre. Here we identify two types of sets of codes and conventions that television news normally uses, and which young adults have particular orientation to. These are codes of form and codes of content (cf. Hartley, 1982; Fiske, 1987).

**CODES OF FORM**

By codes of form it is here meant those iconographies created by camera shots, camera angles and different types of editing techniques that are repeated as conventions (Du Plooy, 2001:78-9). The first code of form to be looked at is **music**. Television news programmes (bulletins and headlines) have a particular type of music that has become a conventional code of form. This music serves the function of opening the news programme, indicating commercial or ad breaks and of closing the news programme. According to Lewis (2003:27) the music of the television news programme is usually important and serious-sounding. Lewis (2003:27) further notes that it serves the function of catching the attention of the potential viewer and symbolizing the importance of the announcements that are to follow. This music is often mixed with voice-over (VO), as the news presenter announces the top news stories, and the title sequence **segues** into the establishing shot (Lewis, 2003:27).

The establishing shot has become a convention in the production and presentation of television news. The high angle establishing long shot in the opening of a news programme normally gives an impression of a huge studio. This studio has people sitting behind computers and appearing to be working ‘hard’ (sometimes you have people walking around). The establishing shot shows the presenter framed centrally, emphasizing her/his importance (Lewis, 2003:27).

The establishing shot gives way to the ‘permanent’ straight on medium close-up shot with a newsreader framed centrally. Sometimes the newsreader is framed towards the left side of the screen, allowing the showing of stills on the top right hand corner, on a
backdrop behind the newsreader. This medium close-up shot has become a convention in
the presentation of television news. It is a particular code of form in television news
genre. Other codes of form that are used for the purposes of illustrating stories include
(cf. Lewis, 2003:27): still images on a backdrop behind the presenter; captions; and
graphics.

CODES OF CONTENT

Codes of content are used here to refer to those iconographies of what appears in front of
a television camera. These include décor, style of clothes, buildings, locations or settings
(du Plooy, 2001:78-9; Fiske, 1987). The most iconic of these codes of content is live in-
studio presenter.

One of the most important codes of content in television news is the newsreader. This
person is the centre of the news’ mode of address. According to Lewis (2003:27), the
mode of address is the style of delivery that is used by presenters and interviewers. Lewis
further notes that the mode of address is a key factor in establishing the mood and tone of
the television news programme. Depending on the nature of the television news
programme and on how it sees itself, this mood and tone can be authoritative or
lighthearted. The newsreader is the most important element in the news broadcast. This is
the person who introduces the news programme; narrates the stories; introduces news
reporters; conducts live interviews; and speaks on behalf of and carries the image of the
news station.

Lewis (2003:27) notes that television news presenters are given a highly privileged status
through well established conventions of their mode of address. They look directly at the
camera. They use smooth, fluent and articulate diction. They use personal pronouns:
‘Thank you for watching. We’ll see you tomorrow at the same time. The use of inclusive
‘we’ helps to encourage identification of the audience with the presenter and, by
extension, the Reithian principle of ‘one nation’.

In South Africa, though, there is something peculiar about the mode of address of
newsreaders who read news in African indigenous languages; theirs is different to the one
of those who read news in English. Newsreaders in African indigenous languages are allowed to introduce news programmes in a graceful and charming fashion. They go beyond the ‘good evening, here is the news’ norm. The way they ‘preface’ the news is however restricted to the opening of news programmes. Noxolo Grootboom, the SABC1 newsreader in isiXhosa, has an opening that has almost become her signature. She normally uses a metaphor of bighheartedly preparing a meal for the big occasion to refer to the processes of news-gathering, production and finally presentation. This is how she normally rhythmically opens:

(a)Siyiphekile, (b) sayibonda, (c) sayophula  
(d) Kungoku nje, (e) siyayiphaka (f) imbiza (pot) ...
Loosely translated:

(a) We cooked it, (b) we stirred it, and (c) we took it off (the fire)  
(d) As of now/as we speak, (e) we are serving it out ...

This charming method of prefacing news content by Noxolo Grootboom and others retains the richness and beauty of language; it “Africanises” the news and frees the news from mundane conventional ‘here is the news’, prevalent in English language, for example. However, these words reveal a lot when they are ‘read’ closely within the news discourse, especially from sociological, structuralism and semiological-orientated perspectives.

The (a) ‘siyiphekile’, from isiZulu verb ‘pheka’ (to cook), has a different meaning outside of the news context, obviously. However, when used in the news context as a signifier, it carries a danger of signifying and connoting: deceit, censoring, editing, spinning-doctoring, etc. The same goes for (b) ‘sayibonda’ from the verb ‘bondla’. Even if isiXhosa and isiZulu meaning is retained, its use here goes beyond the literal meaning of just stirring, mashing up and of sifting the unwanted parts, but to that of passionate perfecting and refining (beyond duty). By referring to these processes: (a)Siyiphekile,  
(b)sayibonda, (c) sayophula, Noxolo, unwittingly, in the news discourse, confirms what sociologists, structuralists and others have always been charging that news production is (systematically) bureaucratically and routinely-organized, and that it is a well-manufactured enterprise that constructs the world rather than reflects it.

65
Young adults consume these locally-produced SABC television news relayed through indigenous languages. But, from what is presented above and from the reception theory perspective of subjective interpretation, what meanings to they read from SABC news in indigenous languages? Do they view indigenous language as rich Africanisation of news? Or, do they see it as a Freudian slippage that suggests that indeed SABC is deceitful?

The closing remarks that are usually made by SABC1 19:30 newsreaders at the end of programme confirm the idea that it is virtually impossible to cover everything in one news programme. It is not unusual to hear a newsreader saying (in either isiXhosa or isiZulu: Izindaba azipheli bakwethu, inkinga kuphela nje isikhathi. Loosely translated to mean that: News/stories never end, people; the only problem is always time.

Reporters are part of television news' codes of content. They gather stories; report 'live' from the scene; give background to the stories; close the news item that is opened by the newsreader; and they can also be an indication of the news organizations' news-gathering capacity. Reporters, however, relates differently to the audience. According to Lewis (2003:27):

In television news programmes, other journalists and interviewees are expected to look at the interviewer, not the camera directly. This places them at a disadvantage in comparison to the direct address used by the apparently omniscient presenter. Weather presenters are also permitted to employ direct address, but their mode of address, the brevity of their screen time and the camerawork help to construct a less privileged status.

The studio is part of television news' codes of content. Studios are different, some have: desks or table with chairs behind which sits the newsreader; sofa on the set; broken with the traditional idea of a neutral environment, where there is no other visible furniture, flowers, pot plants etc.

The formal code of dress for newsreaders has is part of the conventional codes of content in television news. It is however being challenged by those television news stations whose newsreaders dress informally. Compare SABC and e-tv news readers, for example. Other codes of content in television news are: readers, voice-overs (VOs),
voice-over to sound on tape (VO/SOTs) (Tuggle & Carr, 2004:99); interviews; speeches; outside broadcast. With respect to readers:

*If a story involves no video or any other visual over the face of the anchor, then it's called a reader. Sometimes, the viewers can see the anchor's face for the duration of a story and also see a graphic over his shoulder. That story would still qualify as a reader, because the viewers see the anchor for the entire story. Because there is not much production value associated with reader stories, they're usually quite short and might include a promise of a video once it becomes available* (Tuggle & Carr, 2004:99).

The other aspects of television news from which audience derive pleasure are news categories within which news producers insert stories. Television news producers, not only in South Africa, professionally organise daily news events around national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial and weather news categories or sections.

**NEWS CATEGORIES**

The organization of daily news happenings around news categories is also evident on both SABC and e.tv news. Despite institutional differences between and manifest in SABC and e-tv news forms (cf. Bird, 1999:16), their organisation of daily news events around these categories (as it also observable by monitoring their daily newscasts), indicate the universal applicability and standard nature of these categories. In fact, organising daily news events around these categories, according to research, is a universal television news media practice (see, for example, Boyd, 2001:23-27). These different types of categories of news, combined with journalistic-based definitions of news and news values (see, CHAPTER SIX) are components that give content and structure to locally-produced (South African-produced) daily and nightly newscasts.

These categories are further divided into hard, soft, breaking and enterprising news categories (cf. Nel, 2005). Here we focus on hard and soft news categories only.
Drawing from Alfred Lorenz and John Vivian’s definition, Nel (2005) presents that the concept of hard news applies to event-based stories, such as the opening of parliament or the sinking of ship, and to depth coverage, which involves stories that explore issues. **Hard news is/are:** politics, economy, foreign affairs, national affairs, and disasters.

Soft news stories, on the other hand, tend to have less public implications. Soft news stories also tend to entertain than to inform. “Sometimes the terms ‘human interests’ or features” are used to describe soft news stories” (Nel, 20005:60). The following is a classification of news stories according to hard and soft news categories. **Soft news is** human interest stories such as entertainment and sport. Stories that are either categorized as soft or hard news are delivered through particular language of television news.

According to Lewis (2003:27) television news has developed its own linguistic conventions: present tense is normally used; this tense creates a sense of urgency. Future tense is also normally used for purposes of predicting. The active voice used and it makes the story more dramatic. Verbs are chosen for their sense of urgency and their strong action. Stories must be concise; one sense should equal one idea. This language peculiar to television news is used on different television news formats, like the ones presented below.

**TELEVISION NEWS FORMATS**

Television news categories—**news programmes, bulletins and headlines**—are professionally produced and then presented to targeted audiences in varied formats. The formats in which these television news categories are produced and presented range from the extremely brief such as news headlines and bulletins (e.g. SABC3’s *News in 60 Seconds* at 20:30), to ones that are longer (e.g. e-tv’s hour-long *e-news @ 7*). The format differences are not only **between** categories, but also within categories of television news themselves. These format-based differences between and within television categories, for the most part, reflect the stylistic preferences and other organizational options of news divisions or departments that produce them.
Because different television news organizations have different style orientations with regard to television news production, each type of television news product can come in its own unique format. SABC1’s 10 minutes-long SiSwati/Ndebele News bulletin aired at 17:00, for example, as a type of television news, is different to e-tv’s 15 minutes-long eNews Early Edition bulletin aired at 18:15. Both, however, by some definitions and qualifications (see below), are television news bulletins.

The differences between news bulletins and headlines transcend formats in which they are produced for and presented to the targeted audience. These terms carry different meanings in different countries and to a very lesser extent for different news broadcasters, depending on their use. Boyd (2001:126), for example, observes that:

*In the UK, the brief news summary is known as a bulletin. In the US, bulletin may refer to a one-item snap of breaking news, while in UK parlance that would be known as a newsflash.*

In the present research a television bulletin can be understood as a brief news update that reports the most essential information of the day, usually aired late in the day or at night. It is a continuous brief news update that reports the most essential information of the particular time of the day. This form of news update can also serve as an indication of and introduction to the stories to be explored in-depth in the main news programme that it normally precedes. It is very short, privileged and (normally) weighty news information broadcast in the middle of another programme when something extremely important has occurred. It is privileged in the sense that it is allowed to disrupt the running of another programme. However, other programmes can never really be broadcast in the middle of a news programme. It is normally weighty in the sense that a news bulletin can be allowed to be broadcast in the middle of another on the basis of its gravity.

Furthermore, according to (Boyd, 2001:126), television news bulletin is usually on air from three to five minutes. Its individual items are kept deliberately short- at around 30 seconds-so a good number of news stories can be packed in. It is illustrated with video clips and stills. It is difficult to simply apply Boyd’s (2001:126) definition of a television news bulletin to the brief versions of South African television news. The definition does not perfectly match the following bulletins and headlines. Or, arguably, South African
news broadcasters refer to television news bulletins and headlines in an interchangeable manner. Let us look at the following:

- e-tv’s *eNews Early Edition* aired at 18:15 and 18:00 on weekdays and weekends respectively is **15 minutes** long and e-tv refers to and promotes this news as a *bulletin*.
- SABC1’s *SiSwati/Ndebele News* aired at 17:00 weekdays is **10 minutes long**, SABC1 refers to and promotes this news as a *News Headlines*.
- SABC3 English news at 17:40 is **three minutes long**, SABC3 refers to and promotes this news as *News Headlines*.
- SABC3’s *News in 60 Seconds* aired at 20:30 is also referred to in the SABC 2003/2004 Annual Report as a *bulletin*. It is in sixty seconds.

These South African television news headlines/bulletins, even *News in 60 Seconds*, are illustrated with stills and video clips. They come in different formats though. What is also important to note is that SABC1 and SABC2 occasionally present shorter headline summaries that are read straight through without illustrations in the form of video clips and stills. These, when they take place, are read 30 minutes prior to the main news programme which they promote and to whose content they call attention. They are normally read by the same newsreader who would be reading the same main *news programme* being promoted. The aforementioned characteristics distinguish bulletins and headlines from a news programme, to which we now turn.

Television news programmes’ length usually range from 20 to 60 minutes. The current norm in South Africa is that of 30 minutes-long news broadcast. e-tv is the only television station that has, in recent times, re-introduced an hour-long news programme in the South African television news market. (Note that sometime back SABC3 used to air an hour-long news programme on Sundays). It is important, however, to note that e-tv itself no longer airs an hour-long news programme between 19:00 and 20:00. This slot has been taken up by a new South African-produced soap opera called *Scandal*. According to Boyd (2001:127) news programmes aim to provide a broader view of the day’s news and are a summary of the best stories of that day. They are generally longer and more detailed and sophisticated items, supported by film footage, stills and graphics. There are diverse reasons and factors that lead to the production and presentation of news in particular formats by different television news organizations.
Reasons for news format diversification

One of the contributing factors and reasons to the phenomenon of diversification of television news formats is competition, which itself is a product of media market liberalization. The continuing liberalization of the media market leads to the introduction of new television news-providers (e.g. e.tv). New (e.g. e.tv) and old (e.g. SABC) television news-providers are forced to compete with each other in the news territory for news audiences. The continuing liberalization of the media market leads to an increase in the number of other news-providing media forms (newspapers, magazines, Internet, radio, mobile phones). Television news also has to compete with these media forms.

Second, news-providers do not have to compete only with each other everyday on the news front, but also with entertainment. Entertainment programmes that offer competition to news are both internal and external. Because of the atmosphere and mood created by a particular station’s internal entertainment programmes, the station indirectly might be influenced to provide news in a format that sustains the created ‘atmosphere’. External entertainment forms are presented by competing channels within the network (e.g. sister channels at SABC), other broadcasting organizations and by other media forms.

SABC and e.tv channels also have to compete with international news channels hosted by the South African subscription-based multi-channel network popularly known as Digital Satellite television (DStv), where SABC and e-tv are also available. It is difficult to think that SABC and e-tv are completely oblivious to the competition that M-Net presents every Sunday at 19:00 through the investigative current affairs programme: Carte Blanche. As M-Net is not a news-producing and presenting channel, the possibility is that those M-net subscribers who are not equally DStv subscribers migrate to either SABC or e-tv for daily news programmes. On Sundays they might remain with ‘their’ channel because of Carte Blanche.

Another reason has to do with the continuing transformation and commercialization of news itself. News is being transformed from being a complex process of informing citizens of a country (reflecting the complex nature of societies in which it is part) to an oversimplified and refined product that can gratify and connect
with particular lifestyles of particular classes of audiences among citizens. Also, news is being transformed from being a complex process of informing citizens to the status of a commodity through which large numbers of audiences can actually be sold to media buyers and subsequently revenue be accrued. It is largely because of all these aforementioned factors that television news stations are forced, or have chosen, to provide news products in formats that clearly distinguish them from their competitors and also in formats that make them easily distinguishable by and marketable to audiences in the news market.

The other fundamental reason is that different television stations, to which news-producing departments are embedded, operate according to different broadcasting philosophies. They further carry different legislated and public mandates. In South Africa, for example, the Broadcasting Act No. 4 1999 (South Africa, 1999) prescribes a framework within which SABC1 and SABC2 should carry out a public service mandate that ensures that their news output generally interpellate and inform viewers as citizens. Apart from working to comply with the stipulations of this legislation, these channels are also guided in their existence by the philosophical ideals underpinning Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in general (cf. Ndlovu & Pitout, 2003). In this line of thinking, then, SABC’s Public Commercial Broadcasting Services (PCBS), SABC3 and SABC Africa channels should be expected to address their viewers as audiences and citizens at the same time.

The privately-owned commercial channel- e-tv- would be expected to produce and present news in formats that underpin the nature of its existence as a strictly commercial broadcaster. Unlike SABC, the source of power for e-tv is its shareholding owners, not the public. E-tv is therefore mainly beholden to the interests and patronage of its proprietors. Its news might reflect this. What needs to be noted is that television cannot only be understood in terms of categories, diversification of these categories and philosophies that underpin all these, but also it terms of how they expressly see their role.

How South African television news stations understand the role of their news products

An SABC perspective

72
Providing viewers and listeners with regular, reliable news and information is one of the SABC's most important functions. Audiences have identified the SABC as the primary and most credible source of news for the nation. Research shows that more than 85% of South Africans rely on the SABC for their main source of the news—more than 52% rely on radio, almost 34% rely on television and just fewer than 14% rely on newspapers and other sources.

The broadcasting product emanating from SABC News is impressive: it comprises daily news bulletins and current affairs programmes on radio and television, Internet on-line news and state-of-the art new media services, as well as a 24-hour pay-TV channel dedicated to news centered on Africa. The News Division uses a news computer system that is one of the biggest of its kind in the world. Radio News uses about 13 editorial offices, a countrywide network of about 1300 correspondents and more than 2000 news contacts. World news is provided by international news agencies. Television News is fed by News teams reporting from all over the country. The SABC's terrestrial television channels devote about 17% of their airtime during prime time to news and news related programmes. This includes daily news bulletins in 11 national languages.

Figure 3.1 (http://www.sabc.co.za/portal/site/menuitem)

---

**An e-tv perspective**

*news is South Africa's only independent television news service and it is highly regarded for its credibility, immediacy and quality. e.tv broadcasts three English bulletins each night and a daily news and current affairs show, Morning Edition, each morning. e.tv's prime-time flagship current affairs programme, 3rd Degree, is the most-watched current affairs show in the country. (http://www.etv.co.za/info/About_US).

Figure 3.2 (http://www.etv.co.za/info/About_US)

---

**Contemporary South African television news and current affairs environment**

There are four television channels that are mandated by the Broadcasting Act (No 4 of 1999) to provide news and current affairs programming in South Africa. Two of these channels, SABC1 and SABC2, are tasked to carry out strictly SABC’s public-service mandate as it generally is expected in the ethos of public service broadcasting and within developmental imperatives of South Africa. The third terrestrial channel, SABC3, has been transformed into a commercially-driven and self-sustaining entity within the
SABC’s public-commercial portfolio. The fourth of these television news providers is e-tv, which is a privately-owned, single free-to-air channel.

In line with broader post-1994 transformational changes that are re-shaping and restructuring South African public and private institutions, different local broadcasting institutions now carry different mandates in relation to the provision of news and current affairs. The SABC, for example, carries a national mandate that stipulates a more language-based policy and practice to ensure a cross-cultural language spread in the provision of news. This expectation is underscored by the SABC head of television news when he points out that: “we are mandated to do all 11 (official) languages. [Moreover], news and current affairs are shown indifferent time slots...” (in Mufweba, 2003:05). Hence the SABC channels have increased the number of news bulletins and of languages through which they present daily and nightly news bulletins on weekdays. Following is a programme schedule-based summary of how different language interests are represented in the SABC and e-tv daily and nightly newscasts. This summary helps in demonstrating the quantity of news bulletins that youth can exposed themselves to. We first look at SABC 2.

SABC2

The SABC2 channel characteristically provides the majority of SABC’s daily and nightly newscasts. It provides weekday news bulletins in both Tsivenda and Xitsonga at 17h30. Weekdays and weekends, this channel also provides news bulletins in Afrikaans at 19h00 and in SeSotho at 20h30. It is the only channel within the SABC that provides a variety news and current affairs breakfast show- Morning Live- in English. On Sundays at 19h30 it presents an investigative current affairs show called Focus, which is mainly in Afrikaans language. Around midnight SABC2 also carries SABC Africa, which is a news and information overnight feed produced elsewhere and dedicated to reporting on happenings mostly in the African continent (Ndlovu, 2003). Multilingualism that characterises SABC2 news and current affairs is not found on SABC3 channel.

SABC3

74
SABC3 channel characteristically provides news, current affairs and other forms of programming solely in English language. On the 7th of April 2003, the channel shifted its thirty-minute flagship news bulletin from 20h00 to 19h00, bringing it in direct competition with e-tv’s main newscast. SABC3 further cancelled its 22h30 news headline programme (the SABC3 plans to have a longer and analytical news broadcasts on this slot); it now presents a one-minute news headlines programme called News in 60 Seconds at 20h30. Furthermore, the channel discontinued its provision of Cable News Network (CNN) service that it normally showed around midnight. CNN has been replaced with BBC World service. Lastly, SABC3 provides one current affairs programme- Special Assignment at 19h30 on Sundays.

SABC1
The SABC1 channel differs from the other in the sense it is more youth-orientated. Quantitatively, this channel has fewer news bulletins and current affairs programmes compared to other SABC terrestrial channels mentioned above. The channel provides weekday news bulletin in IsiSwati and IsiNdebele at 17h30. The ‘main’ news bulletin is broadcast at 19h30 everyday, either in IsiXhosa or IsiZulu. There is only one current affairs programme in this channel, Asikhulume (Let us talk), which is presented in IsiZulu on Sundays at 18h30. SABC1 is not only channel service with a singular current affairs programme M-net too.

M-net
Investigative current affairs programme is also offered by South Africa’s first subscription channel- M-Net. M-Net provides Carte Blanche- the longest-running investigative current affairs programme in South Africa- at 19h00 and with the highest audience rating (9,3) during its time band across all televisions on Sundays (Mufweba, 2003: 5). Noteworthy, however, is that M-Net is not mandated to provide news service.

Among all these news-providing channels, there is only one channel that presents an hour-long news bulletin. That is e-tv. This television network introduced its first news broadcast on the 17th of January 1999. e-tv introduced South African television news viewers to a different form of news presentation. As Bird (1999: 16) observes:
Instead of the traditional medium close-up of the news-reader seated at a desk, as on SABC news, e-tv has gone for a more informal style of news reading. The reader is perched on the edge of a desk with a handful of papers in his/her hands while slightly dimmed newsroom and a neon-blue “E” make up the background. In addition to this the readers themselves are informally dressed when compared to their SABC counterparts.

Bird (1999: 16) further notes that

The appearance of the reader on the edge of the desk gives the viewer the impression that the news they are watching is ‘just in’ and the newsroom in the background with people working also give the news a sense of urgency. The sense of urgency also serves to represent the news in an objective manner.

It is important to note here that the atmosphere of informality presented by e-tv’s news, through its readers’ dress code and the entire newsroom environment, is that which is mostly recommended for youth-centric news and current affairs programmes by many of the participant in the youth news media discourse (cf. Pepler, 2003; Egan 1999). These youth news scholars (cf. Pepler, 2003; Egan 1999) suggest that television news should incorporate these styles for it to be congruent to youth needs and for youth to be motivated to watch it. Tsedu (2002: 1), however, contends that while e-tv news is informal and its “presentation may appeal to the youth, [it does not provide] youthful news”. Although Tsedu’s contestation here proves that the elements of what really constitutes youth-news is debatable, the status quo is that none of the television channels discussed here provides a ‘self-proclaimed’ news service specifically designed either for children, teenagers or young adults. Furthermore, according to Llyod (2001:01), “in terms of the current (South African) definitions of news and current affairs, there are no specific programmes targeting the youth” in South Africa.

The non-provision of youth-centric television news programmes by South African broadcasting institutions also reflects some limitations in the policy regulating the provision of news. Although, SABC1, for example, is a youth channel, it is under no obligation that its news programmes should target the channel’s core audience- the youth. SABC1 news at 19h00 and other newscasts in this channel are not specifically targeted at
the youth but people who speak Nguni languages (Tsedu 2002: 01). Furthermore, the current South African content provisions policy also does not specify that e-tv must specifically provide information programming for the youth (Lloyd, 2001:1).

In the absence of television news texts fashioned to specifically serve the interests of the youth market therefore, local youth are exposed to the four available conventional television news programmes specified above. Against this background, it is important to focus on the indications of how South African youth consume locally-produced conventional news as promised in the foregoing sections.

**South African youth and the television news consumption**

From the information that is presented below it can be concluded that the percentages of young South Africans who regularly pay attention to South African-produced evening ‘flagship’ newscasts on various television channels remain relatively low. These percentages are low when compared to the comparative share of young people who generally watch particular channels, but not their news provisions. These percentages are also low when the share of young people who pay attention news is compared to adult television news viewers in most channels.

It is important to note that the low exposure to television news is despite the fact that in South Africa people who demographically can be classified as young collectively outnumber the adult population. Is also important to note that due to the scarcity of academic research literature and sustained, far-reaching media industry-based research that determine South African youths’ interests (or lack of) in television news, it is hard to fully establish why the percentage share of young people who are motivated to watch news watch it. Equally, it is hard to ascertain why others are not motivated at all. This is not to suggest that there are no research instruments that normally are employed for purposes of understanding young people’s relationship with various television programmes.

The instruments that are normally employed as methods for understanding and measuring young peoples’ viewer-ship patterns of television news are *people meters* and *diaries*. These audience-data collection instruments produce what is commonly known as
summative evaluations. Summative evaluations are supplied by television programme and audience ratings companies (cf. SAARF, 2005) and by broadcasters themselves. In relation to the data pertaining to this study, the nature of statistical information that these people meters and diaries provide indicate that some local news channels attract more young people while others are losing them.

Summative evaluations, however, have limitations that are inherent in them, more especially when considered against the objectives of this study and the research methodology adopted to realise these objectives. Summative evaluations are limited in term of clearly explaining if the programme viewed by the consumer was a programme actively intended to be watched (Hanekom, 1990). The other limitation of summative evaluations is that they only record and report audience members after the event (Egan, 1999:135).

If we consider, for example, the inconsistencies in young South Africans exposure to locally-produced television news, through, the use of summative evaluations, is neither explainable and why the quantitative share of South African youth who frequently watch locally-produced television news programmes actively elect to do so, nor why those who refrain opt to do so. Lastly, and pertaining to the stated objectives of this study, summative evaluations demonstrate limitations in terms of providing comprehensive accounts of the types of television news formats that youth would prefer and the nature of prospective motivational factors that could draw them into watching television news.

However, there are some aspects of summative evaluations that can be effectively used in this study despite these limitations. These aspects of summative evaluations provide valuable information that provides a starting point and a foundation for the research results of this study as stated in the first chapter. Furthermore, numerical data that summative evaluations provide below is used for illuminating purposes and to draw a picture of the quantitative nature of the relationship between South African youth and the current television news provisions in the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s three channels- SABC1, 2 and 3; and also e-tv. While this illumination is undertaken, it should be noted that SABC2 has two evening ‘flagship’ news, Sotho and Afrikaans; only the latter is considered here. But first is necessary to look the manner in which data about youth’s viewership of locally-produced television news collected.
SAARF Research Methodology Relevant For This Study

The statistical information that is presented below is sourced by from by *Telmar Media Systems* on professional request of the author of this study. Telmar Media Systems is a professional media Research Company (see http://www.telmar.co.za). It draws its statistical information and research methodology from SAARF (South African Advertising Research Foundation). Following is the research methodology that used by SAARF in calculating programme viewership, on the bases of which Telmar Media Systems calculated television news viewership and rating of the South African 16-24-year olds.

SAARF uses a sampling type called *Area Stratified Probability Sampling*. It divides the country into nine provinces (South Africa is made up of nine provinces). The country is further divided into four areas i.e. Metropolitan, Large City/Town, Urban and Rural.

The gender split in South Africa is 49.5.1% male and 50.5% female, therefore the country is then proportionally split accordingly. The same is done for the four SAARF age bands i.e. 16-24, 25-34, 35-49 and 50+.

The "geo-frame" method is then used to select respondents. The telephone book is one of the tools that are used. The suburbs are then categorized alphabetically form A-Z and the same applies to the streets within the various suburbs.

The interviewer is then instructed to go to, for example, no 54 in a specific suburb and interview people falling into a specific demographic profile e.g. a male aged 16-24. Four attempts are made to find the person, if these fail then the neighbour is used as a substitution.

In trying to understand the relationship between local youth and television news, this research study not only used statistical information produced by the foregoing SAARF research methodology. Instead, it used focus group as a research method. This research instrument and technique assisted in determining those television news properties that the sample of youth identified as motivating or could motivate them to pay
attention to television news. In order to provide a baseline of the subject audience, we first look at young adult South African’s viewership of SABC3 news.

South African youth’s viewership of SABC3

Statistical calculations that are specifically focused at 16-24-year-olds’ viewership patterns of locally-produced television news reveal that in the period beginning in 1999 to 2000, the percentage of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC3 newscasts increased by 18.56 percent. It decreased by 3.96 percent in the period of 2000 to 2001 (Telmar Media Systems, 2002).

These calculations also show that in 2001, the total number of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC3 English newscasts at 20h00 was 671,000. This number is subtracted from the total number of 2,329,000 youth in the same age category who watched SABC3 channel in the same year on the twenty-four hour basis and every week. The total number, then, of 16-24-year-olds, who did not make it to the SABC3 nightly newscasts in this period is 1,658,000 (Telmar Media Systems, 2002).

Furthermore and in a different calculation, the SABC News Research (2002) shows that that in the period between March 2000 and March 2002, the SABC3 newscast that attracted the highest viewership among the 16-25-year-olds rated 5.2 percent. The very same newscast, however, rated 10.3 percent in the 50-year-old age category and in those categories above. This demonstrates that people who are aged fifty (50) consume more SABC3 news than those of the age groups below them.

It needs to be noted, however, that the specific reasons for the 18.56 percent increase in the percentage of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC3 newscasts in 1999-2000 period is not clearly established yet. It can reasonably, however, be deduced that given the fact that the SABC3 channel tends to target mostly English-speaking cosmopolitan audiences in the highest Living Standard Measurements (LSM) through its programming, and that its nightly newscasts are more popular among the youth in the Living Standards Measurement (LSM) 7, the lower ranking of its newscasts among youth should be expected. The indications are that affluent youth tend to pay less attention to news and news media in general (see below and Strelitz, 2002).
It is worth noting, however, that SABC3 is the only television channel in the 'public broadcasting service' that provides news in the English language during the day and during prime-time. It should logically follow, therefore, that the majority of English-speaking youth interested in locally-produced television news are most likely to watch this channel if they also are interested in the news that is provided by the Public Service Broadcaster (PSB). The SABC3 flagship newscast is rivalled by e-tv news.

South African youth's viewership of e-tv

In the 1999-2000 period, the percentage of 16-24-year-olds who watched e-tv newscasts increased by a phenomenal **42.31 percent**. In the 2000 to 2001 period e-tv news increased its share of the 16-24-year-olds by **38.65 per cent**. In 2001 the total number of 16-24-year-olds who watched e-tv's English newscasts at 19h00 is **1, 016,000**. This total number is out of **3, 117,000** 16-24-year-olds who watched the same channel twenty-four hours, every week, in the same year (*Telmar Media Systems*, 2002). Furthermore, according to the *SABC News Research* (2002) the e-tv news programme that attracted the highest number of 16-25-year-olds in the period between March 2000 and March 2002 rated **5.1 percent**.

South African youth's viewership of SABC2

Within the SABC network, the channel that showed signs of losing youth newsviewers during the time of data collection was/is SABC2. In the period 1999-2000, the percentage of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC2 newscasts decreased by **14.24 percent** and in 2000-2001 period it further decreased by **0.55 percent**. The SABC2 Afrikaans news programmes were watched by the total number of **1, 254,000** 16-24-year-olds in 2001. This total number of youth is out of **3, 252,000** 16-24-year-olds who watched the same channel twenty-four hours, every week, in the same year. This means that **1, 998,000** of the youth who watched this channel in the considered period did no make time to watch its news (*Telmar Media Systems*, 2002).

South African youth's viewership of SABC1

81
If we move further to look at another SABC channel—the SABC1, it becomes evident that this particular channel’s news tends to attract the highest number of young people. In the period 1999-2000, for example, the percentage of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC1 newscasts increased by 10.32 and in 2000-2001 period this number of viewers further increased by 1.35 percent. In 2001, the total number of 16-24-year-olds who watched SABC1 newscasts is 3,653,000. This total number is out of 5,746,000 16-24-year-olds who watched the same channel twenty-four hours, every week, in the same year (Telmar Media Systems, 2002).

From this information, it is evident that SABC1 Nguni newscasts at 19h30 are comparatively more popular with young viewers. In March 2000, for example, the SABC1’s news-bulletin that attracted the highest number of viewers in the age category 16 to 25 rated 9.3 percent; in March 2001 it rated 12.7 percent, and in March 2002 it rated 10.4 percent (SABC News Research, 2002).

It needs to be further noted that, SABC1, when compared to all other news channels mandated to provide locally-produced news, is the only channel where news has featured consistently among “children’s most popular programmes” (South African Advertising Research Foundation, 2002). This relative popularity of SABC1 newscasts, therefore, needs to be unpacked. First, it has to be noted that in repositioning itself to appeal to diverse segments of South African audiences, the SABC transformed and positioned SABC1 into a channel catering specifically for youth interests. Presumably such move was undertaken in response to the insufficient representation of youths’ interests on South African television (Newman, 1996). It is, however, not clear whether youth watches SABC1 news programmes merely as a result of channel loyalty or it is because these young people are consciously interested in the newscasts that are provided by this channel. The motivations of young people in this regard are not easy to identify in the clear absence of scientifically proven research data.

Besides the clear lack of this scientifically proven data, however, the following can reasonably be speculated as contributory factors to SABC1 news’ said popularity among the youth groups. The SABC1 itself, as already established above, a youth-centric channel. Its 19h30 news programmes are presented alternately in IsiZulu and IsiXhosa,
which are both widely spoken home languages among the youth in South Africa (The Youth of South Africa, 2001:11). It would be implausible, however, solely to credit these factors with relative popularity of SABC1 news without sufficient testifying scientific research. Besides, not all young South Africans are generally literate in these Nguni languages—because of the country’s linguistic and ethnic diversity.

Lastly, the other crucial factor that is worth noting with respect to SABC1 news is that it has the highest number of youth viewers in the rural areas of South Africa compared to other regions of the country. In terms of viewer-ship per province, SABC1 news shows that it is has the highest number of SABC1 news viewers among the 16-24-year-olds in KwaZulu-Natal province (KZN). The second highest number of viewers of SABC1 news in this age group is found in the Gauteng province.

The SABC2 news has the highest number of 16-24-year-olds in the Limpopo province; the Gauteng province follows here. The Gauteng province, however, has the highest number of young people who watch SABC3 news, and it is followed by KZN. Gauteng also has the highest number of young people who watch e-tv news and it is also followed by KwaZulu-Natal (Telmar Media Systems, 2002).

If young people’s interest in news for a particular television channel is considered against the background of their ranking in the South African socio-economic ladder, the following conclusions can be made. First, e-tv’s 19h00 news is more popular with the youth in the LSMs 5. This popularity, however, declines from LSM 6 right up to LSM 10.

The SABC2 Afrikaans news is consumed mostly by youth in the LSM 3; and this consumption level drops from LSM 4 right up to LSM 10. The SABC1 news has the highest viewer-ship among the youth in the LSM 4 and its starts dropping in LSM 5. This trend gets worse in LSM 8 up to LSM 10. It can therefore be concluded that news on SABC1 and 2 is watched largely by young people in poorer sectors of the South African socio-economy.

**Conclusion**

The information provided here, drawn from summative evaluations, provides valuable information in terms of understanding the relationships between mainstream South African television news and young adults. Summative evaluations are, however, limited.
Summative evaluations or ratings cannot, for example, provide sufficient reasons for the popularity of SABC1 news while comparisons of SABC1 news' content with that of other SABC newscasts reveal that the content is very similar across news channels (Mapukata, 1998). It is in this context that summative evaluations can also be said to be limited in terms of demonstrating if the South African youth need different types of news contents and formats.

Although summative evaluations have their limitations, there still reveal that, among other things, South African young adult’s television news consumption is gender and race-based. It is concerning that although the levels of exposure vary from one news channel to the next, young males are more likely to watch television news viewers than young women (More Details). This gender-based orientation towards news has serious implications for the public sphere. In terms of race, Black youth in the 16 to 24 age category consume more locally-produced television news. Following this racial group in the Coloured youth- except when it comes to English news on SABC3. More white youth watch English newscasts. Coloured youth are the highest viewers of Afrikaans news on SABC2 at 19h00.

Also concerning is that despite the demonstrable importance of television news, there is relatively low number of young people who generally watch news regularly; this situation is worse among young people in the highest LSMs. The relative low number of young adult South Africans who regularly consume television news has implications for the survival of the local public sphere and the quality of the political process; and because politics is often singled out by most studies in the youth-news media discourse as the first major casualty of youth’s disinterest in television news, the next CHPATER THREE explores the relationship between South Africa youth, politics and television news texts
CHAPTER FOUR

Exploring the relationship between South Africa youth, politics and television news texts

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract
Youth's political knowledge accumulates from television news consumption (among other news media); and television news consumption is normally indicative of their inclination to accumulate political knowledge. It is for this reason that youth's continuing abandonment of television news consumption raises critical concerns about their declining levels of political knowledge, survival of a critical-rational public sphere and the democratic process. However, despite the importance of this symbiotic relationship between youth, politics and television news (and other news media), South African scholarly discourse so far has focused either only on youth and news media or on youth and politics, not on all the three variables simultaneously. Against this limitation, this chapter examines the relationship between South African youth, politics and television news. It notes a dominant perspective in the post-apartheid mainstream media and scholarly discourse on youth, politics and news media which holds that youth are becoming less interested in the country's political affairs. This dominant perspective, the chapter argues, owes its being to the dominant views on youth and politics in the global discourse on the subject and to the way that South African youth have historically been defined as political subjects. Lastly, the chapter argues that while there are strong indications that youth are losing interest in politics, this change cannot be attributed to their relationship with local television news, as it is the case in other societies.

Keywords
Politics, political effects, television news texts, South Africa youth

Introduction

South African youth and politics
Youth's political knowledge accumulates from television news consumption (among other news media); and television news consumption is normally indicative of their inclination to accumulate political knowledge. It is for this reason that youth's continuing abandonment of television news consumption raises critical concerns about their declining levels of political knowledge, survival of a critical-rational public sphere and
the democratic process. However, despite the importance of this symbiotic relationship between youth, politics and television news (and other news media), South African scholarly discourse so far has focused either only on youth and news media or on youth and politics, not on all the three variables simultaneously. Against this limitation, this chapter examines the relationship between South African youth, politics and television news. It notes a dominant perspective in the post-apartheid mainstream media and scholarly discourse on youth, politics and news media which holds that youth are becoming less interested in the country’s political affairs. This dominant perspective, the chapter argues, owes its being to the dominant views on youth and politics in the global discourse on the subject and to the way that South African youth have historically been defined as political subjects. Lastly, the chapter argues that while there are strong indications that youth are losing interest in politics, this change cannot be attributed to their relationship with local television news, as it is the case in other societies.

A dominant perspective in the post-apartheid mainstream media and scholarly discourse on youth, news media and the politics is that South African youth are becoming less interested in the country’s political affairs; and it commonly portrays them as politically ignorant, cynical and apathetic (cf. du Ploy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003; Deane, 2003; Madela, 2004; oa Makola & Koma, 2001; Mataboge & Mawson, 2004; Mulegeta, 2002; Pepler, 2003; Pokwana, 2002; Smith, 2003). News media headlines, such as the ones below, characterise this perspective:

- *Where is the youth of today, gone parting?*
- *From young lions to young yawners*
- *Young, gifted and gatvol*
- *South Africa’s youth care little, know less about apartheid*
- *The politics of the self*

This particular view, however, is not peculiar to South Africa; it reflects a dominant global tendency in the manner in which youth have come to be represented in relation to mainstream politics. But while this dominant global perspective attributes youth’s disinterest in politics mainly to their dissociation with television news, the South African counterpart has not singled out television news as the predominant cause for this (see below). Notable also is that this dominant global view conceives both youth’s disinterest in television news and the result ‘effects’- in political terms, as it can be witnessed below.
Youth’s disinterest in television news and political effects

At least two broad reasons contribute to the consideration of youth’s relationship with television news in political terms. First, research studies in the youth-news media discourse (and engagements between them (cf. Strelitz, 2002)) examine this relationship in political terms. They normally reason (or some present perspectives that conclude) that young adults’ disinterest in television news- and subsequently in political affairs- limit their participation in civic responsibilities and threaten survival of public democratic institutions (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Barnharst, 1998; Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Matlack, 1992; Pepler, 2003). The second reason is that studies in the youth-news media discourse draws a correlation between exposure to news and political consciousness and participation. For example, Conway, Wycoff, Feldbaum, and Ahern (1981) argue that exposure to news and levels of political knowledge are mutually reinforcing variables which determine political attitudes and political participation to a much extent.

Apart from this, scholarly works in this research area suggest that young adults’ diminishing interest in television news texts also leads to declining levels of political and social knowledge, attention paid to other news sources, political party membership, and to declining levels of those young adults who participate in local and national elections (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Barnharst, 1998; Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Matlack, 1992; Pepler, 2003).

The available body of work locally, unlike its global counterpart, does not attribute these abovementioned effects to young people’s rejection of locally-produced news media. There is another that way this local body of work is different to works that have been done in other parts of the world. This relates specifically to what the local body of work is, collectively. It is a continuation of and is embedded to an idiosyncratic historical inclination, in South African scholarship, to construct the country’s youth as political subjects. The manner in which South African youth have been constructed scholarly provides a rich context for understanding the relationship between youth, politics and news media.
South African youth: scholarly context of representation in brief

The current pool of South African youth that this study specifically concentrates on-those who are between the ages of 18 and 24 (cf. Breet-van Niekerk & Ndlovu, 2005), are a product of the country's diverse generations of youth who (have) endured living in a country whose private and public lives, for so many decades, had been characterised by economic, political and social inequalities and cleavages, which are part and parcel, if not the causes, of the country's history of conflict (cf. Cross, 1991; Cross, 1999; Nadine, 2001; Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994). Textual representation(s) of these generations of the South African youth in the post-traditional, industrialisation and later in the modern decades before 1994, reflect a youth conceptualised and constructed as inseparably interwoven with the country's prevailing cultural, political, racial, ethnic and socio-economic tensions.

These tensions and other underlying structural conditions almost compelled analysts to think of South African youth in (political) racial/ethnic terms (cf. Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994). These underlying structural conditions, arguably, go as far back as to the course of the country's colonial history wherein ethnographic and anthropological comparisons and positioning (which were as political) of youth along racial and/or ethnic ideologies already were becoming detectable in the South African youth discourse (cf. Cross, 1991; Status of the Youth Report, 2002). Sustained analysts' conceptualisation and construction of youth in racial and/or ethnic terms perpetuated itself and found space in the country's contemporary political discourse wherein:

"white youth" in uniform were either "fighting the total onslaught" or were "the enemy of liberation"; "black youth" were "lost", "rebellious" or were in the "front line of the struggle for justice and freedom". Youth as a social category in the South African context invited hyperbole and rhetorical extravagance and thus led to stereotypes which obscured and confused (Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994:11).

A further illuminating account on how South African scholarly literature has constructed youth is offered by Cross' (1999) classification of this literature into dichotomous model
in which a consensus (liberal and conservative) view is opposed to conflict model. The consensus model, Cross argues, preoccupied itself exclusively with those aspects perceived by the previous state as of “national interest”: “riots”, “terrorism”, and “black on black violence” or “tribal clashes” and “delinquency” (1999:266). This literature, Cross further observes, tended to propagandize a variety of images to vilify and denigrate youth oppositional practices as decadent social behaviour.

These were generally explained as: (1) aimless and gratuitous violence; (2) erosion of traditional authority, community and family control; imitation of violent behaviour transmitted by mass media; (4) social disorganisation involving the breakdown of “civilised” behaviour; (5) the communist onslaught; (6) influence of violent gangs in slum neighbourhoods; (7) “infiltration of undesirable elements” amongst youth or manipulation of youth by “political agitators” (Cross, 1999:266).

The conflict model, on the other hand, argues Cross, calls for analysis which recognises the role of the political economy in the shaping of youth identities and oppositional practices; the role played by the contradictions within the institutional structures of the school; the importance of the sociological categories of such as generational unit, race, class and gender in the analysis of youth culture (1999:267). While the following historical contextualisation of youth does not fully take into account these literature positions, it is aware of their existence as part of the historical context within which South African youth can be understood.

South African Youth: A historical context

Research studies on South African that begin by tracing, describing and analysing the changing nature of South African youth, especially African youth, in the end of the nineteenth -and the beginning of the twentieth centuries provide another rich context for appreciating the subject at hand. Integral to these studies are almost uniform descriptions of youth identities and categories in traditional African communities. The described identities reflected and corresponded to community-based daily responsibilities and activities that youth were expected to undertake in the traditional settings. These
identities also defined young peoples’ positions in the settings of political power and in the divisions of labour-the economy (cf. Cross, 1999; Freund & Ntsebeza, 1993; Lindell, Kemp & Moema, 1993).

At a cultural level, traditional structures are presented as institutions responsible for integrating youth into broader community settings. Youth are presented as passive and subordinate subjects who were socialised according to traditional expectations and authority (cf. Cross, 1999; Freund & Ntsebeza, 1993; Lindell, Kemp & Moema, 1993). These studies present, sometimes indirectly, traditional socialising systems, culture and concomitant institution of authority largely in two ways in the course of South African industrial revolution. Firstly, and in an implied manner, they are presented in terms of their disintegration and their declining influence in managing youth behaviour as youth migrated from rural areas to the main cities to look for employment. These agencies are presented as being replaced and undermined by Western culture, migratory labour system and youths’ contact with the cities (cf. Freund & Ntsebeza, 1993:280).

A generalised, over-simplified and strong impression is given by these research studies that the subsequent formation of violent gang groupings in urban areas was caused by a situation where youth were merely being “deprived of traditional rites of passage into adulthood”. Lindell, Kemp and Moema (1993:347), for example, note that “deprived of traditional rites of passage into adulthood, they began to form gangs. The prison – and workers’ – compound gangs known as Isithozi emerged during 1920s, and the latter gang recruited youths”.

The second interpretation of the traditional socialising systems, culture and concomitant institutions of authority presents these agencies as cultural and pre-capitalist economy structures that were necessary for reabsorbing youth who had been “thrown off by capital” (Cross, 1999:270) or sent to rural areas for “disciplined upbringing” (Freund & Ntsebeza, 1993:279). Cross explains this second part through Wolpe’s dissolution/conservation thesis:

So long as pre-capitalist modes of production survived, they restricted the recomposition of social relationships and reabsorbed part of the labour force, including unemployed youth, thrown off by capital. They thus provided for the structural
reintegration of unemployed youth into traditional relationships that prevented the proliferation of delinquent behaviour.

There are differences in the manner in which analysts represent the creation and evolution of urban black youths’ political and cultural identities from the 1920s. They, however, commonly agree that these identities developed under severe socioeconomic conditions, structurally imposed by prevailing forms of political economy of the time. Cross (1999) offers an illuminating sociological condensation of these socioeconomic conditions.

These included: (1) the instability of the urban black family; (2) the break down of family and social discipline; (3) generalized poverty that permeated African life; (4) a stagnant employment market and massive unemployment of urban juveniles; (5) the flood of immigrants and massive over-crowding; (6) inadequate housing and shortage of housing; and (7) malnutrition and disease (Cross, 1999:272).

Different studies frame urban black youth cultures of the first decades of the twentieth century differently. Other studies interpret and frame them within criminal and violent activities that besieged black urban settlements in the said period. Within this context, however, Cross (1999:272-3) broadens the scope of interpretation. He draws a distinction between black urban cultures that emerged in the 1920s and the 1930s. He separates cultures of survival around the collective but politically passive institutions from the gang culture that took command of township life (1999:272-3). The latter was to take political forms in subsequent decades, if had not already; and, on the other hand, it was being paralleled by the formation of Afrikaner youth cultural organizations with clear political objectives.

In the 1940s and, perhaps before and after this particular period, youth organisations specifically designed to promote Afrikaner nationalism among youth emerged. According to Cross these groups were formed “…through an imagery based on Afrikaner political and social traditions and according to the foundations of Christian Nationalist philosophy” (1999: 259). Cross further notes that:
Youth and student organisations were formed to unite all Afrikaans youth, further “white Christian civilisations as a bulwark against communism,” and resist all liberal and “communist” influences in education, particularly in institutions of higher education. A variety of cultural initiatives were undertaken by youth organisations to achieve these objectives.

Youth and Political Participation

Cross (1999) questions if initial gangster youth culture should be conceptualized in political terms. He then argues that there are indications that the actions of youth gangs very often assumed a political character as they were subsequently integrated into the resistance movement.

Three main factors played a central role in this process: (1) the psychological appeal that Black Consciousness had for youth by giving them the hope that they were capable of controlling their destiny; (2) the expansion of secondary education, which incorporated a considerable portion of the surplus youth from the street and absorbed its subcultures; and (3) the political mobilization of the 1976 Soweto uprising, which cut across the boundaries of the developing youth subcultures (Cross, 1999:274).

Despite, however, young people’ incontrovertible involvement in political affairs before 1976, “the emergence of children and the youth as significant players in the political struggle can be specifically dated to 16 June 1976” (Lindell, Kemp and Moema, 993:347). Van Zyl Slabbert et al., (1994) also note that:

In 1976, South Africa’s youth took centre stage and remained there throughout the unrest and strife of the 1980s and transformations of the 1990s. In fact, many observers see 1976 as the political watershed that culminated in the country’s first democratic elections in April 1994. A direct line can be drawn between the Soweto uprisings of 1976 and these elections (Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994).

Motanyane (2002:08) also notes that:
Black history reached a watershed in 1976 when children reversed roles and took over leadership positions in the liberations struggle [...]. A lot of positives came out of “children’s war”. Most of the reforms were brought about by the government after the 1976 uprisings; the international community could not help but pay attention to the South African problem when townships went up in flames in 1984-86.

June 16 is now a much celebrated public holiday in South Africa in honour of youth of 1976. There is much debate, though, about how June 16 should be celebrated as political speeches are increasingly taken over by popular cultural performances. However, this debate falls beyond the scope of the present thesis.

‘Re-legitimation’ of the political past for youth’s political socialization

The post-apartheid epoch is characterised by the dominance of what could be called a re-legitimation of the anti-apartheid discourse (or critical discourse, cf. Cross, 1999:266) in different scholarly and media’s analyses of the post-1990s South Africa and youth. This re-legitimation is victoriously over the conservative perspective which had hitherto de-legitimised and perceived youth’s pre-1994 political activities as generally catastrophic (cf. Cross, 1999:266; see also Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994:11).

This re-legitimation is anti-apartheid in character and celebrates the political role played by youth in the events before and after the 1976s uprisings. It is paradigm in which youth’s participation in the revolts against apartheid state are commended for having laid the foundations for economic, cultural and socio-political transformations currently being enjoyed by the post-1990s 18-25-year-olds. Characterising the 1970s youth class were high levels of social and political consciousness and a mission to structurally re-organise their country. Politically and culturally-orientated popular commentaries and formal addresses predominantly examine post-1990s and 21st century South African youth in relation, comparison and contrasts to their 1970s/1980s counterparts. Numerous scholarly inferences can be drawn from this sustained examination of the post-1990s youth in relation to their 1970s/1980s counterparts; however, many of these inferences stretch beyond the said principal objectives of this presentation. The following reasons, though, are necessary for the context within which
the relationships between South African youth and television news need to be analysed (cf. Deane, 2003; Madela, 2004; oA Makola & Koma, 2001; Mataboge & Mawson, 2004; Mulegeta, 2002; Pokwana, 2002; Smith, 2003).

16 June 1976

June 16 1976 is being positively re-mythologized, politically and ideologically, especially by the Left, the Centre Left and Black Consciousness schools. It is used as a psychological educative tool for providing direction to (and to position) the current South African youth among the generations of youth. For example, South African president Thabo Mbeki, in his remarks in honour of African youth attending the ITU Telecom Africa 2001 Youth Forum, referred to the contemporary youth as “successors of the generation of 1976” (in The African Dawn, 2002:04). In Kimberly, on 16 June 2005, Mbeki said: "we should seek to aspire the youth of today to follow the footsteps of the generation of 1976. We must inspire them that they too must see themselves as builders of South Africa” (SABC, 2005).

June 16 1976 is also used as an ideological critique of the manner in which South African society, especially the media, socialises its young citizens. Speaking during a National Assembly debate commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Soweto uprisings, Deputy Education Minister, Mosibudi Mangena, argued that: “South Africa could not expose its young to decadence and then expect them to be revolutionaries in the mould of the 1976 generation” (Sapa, 2001:13).

Besides being perceived as a watershed that culminated in the broad structural changes, the Soweto uprisings of 16 June 1976 have become indelibly entrenched as the yardstick against which current South African youths’ relationship with politics is measured. From a sociological human agency perspective, youth of the 70s/80s and symbolize youths’ victory of over oppressive political economic structures that aimed to shape their destinies.

It is against this background that dominant analyses of the South African youths’ relationship with politics reflect a considerable degree of anxiety about the gap between youth and mainstream politics. These analyses give a sense that young South Africans are
no longer interested in political affairs as previous generations of youth actively were. Is this correct, though?

Are South African youth loosing interest in politics?

Two dominant and opposing perspectives pertaining to the relationship between South African youth and politics in the post-1994 era are emerging. On the one hand is the perspective that is found predominantly in the country’s mainstream media. It suggests that youth are losing interest in the country’s politics. On the other hand is the view that rejects that there is a phenomenon of young peoples’ diminishing interest in the mainstream politics.

Youth Are Not Losing Interest in Politics

Thabo Mbeki, the South African president, is one of the prominent proponents of the latter perspective. He persistently has questioned the view that young South Africans are no longer interested in the political affairs of the country. Campaigning at the University of the Western Cape, before South Africa’s 2004 national elections, for example, the president maintained this position (SABC, 2004). Delivering a speech at the election victory party of the ANC on the 16 of April 2004, Mbeki questioned the truthfulness of the suggestions that young peoples’ disillusionment and apathy were the consequence and reflective of government’s failures. Mbeki (2004:1) noted that:

*There are some in our country and the rest of the world who had invented stories about our government and our movement [...] they said that the failures of the ANC government had led to disillusionment and apathy among the youth of our country.*

At the same party and responding to the SABC journalist’s question about the youth voter apathy, the then ANC Youth League president, Malusi Gigaba, repudiated as "nonsense" the notion that young South Africans are shied away from political participation. Gigaba said: “We have disputed that nonsense and we continue to do it now. The youth of our
country are very active in our country's political and democratic processes. They come out and vote and we are looking good on the queues” (SABC, 2004).

Recently, delivering a speech in Kimberly as part of the June 16 2005 celebrations, President Thabo Mbeki urged the youth to return to politics. He said:

It is important that our youths end all these complaints that are made that the youth of our country are not interested in the politics of our country (SABC, 2005).

Proponents of this perspective, as it can be seen above, are not only unsure, but also have not provided enough evidence to back up their point of view. The only evidence in their favour are thousands of young people who still attend political party-organised rallies and those who vote in the country’s elections. Apart from that, the bases of this perspective are weak. Standing against this perspective is the notion that indeed young South Africans are losing interests in the politics of the country.

Youth’s declining political interest and the causes

On the other hand, there is a perspective that observes that young South Africans are becoming apathetic, cynical of and disinterested in the country’s political affairs. This second main perspective draws from and is a confluence of varied ideas; a reflection that declining levels of political activism among the youth are stirring almost similar concerns across political philosophies and divides. Expectedly, various approaches are advanced for causes of local youth’s disinterests in politics.

The majority of the commentators on the subject of South African youth and politics have so far refrained from estimating the exact time at which youths’ interest in politics began to decline. Marks and McKenzie (1998:223), however, observe that the beginning of the 1990s “witnessed the decline of the youth movement, largely owing to the commencement of negotiations”. The negotiations here are framed and interpreted as a process that excluded youth participation; therefore, a contributory factor to young South African’s declining interest in politics. The notion of the sidelining of youth from
the processes of mainstream politics is a factor that keeps coming up as almost a single cause for their disinterest in politics in general, as it is to be demonstrated.

The general change in the South African political environment is also seen as a factor that gives an impression among the youth that there is no longer a necessity for active political participation. South Africa has transformed itself from apartheid to (an almost) democratic state. This transformation process is creating a different orientation towards mainstream politics among young people. Some observers, therefore, justify that the political behaviour of the post-1990s youth is common in emerging or democratic societies. Commenting on this decline of political culture among South African youth, Chairperson of the National Youth Commission (NYC), for example, pointed out that:

*What exists in South Africa is no different from what happens in post-war situations of other countries...South Africa is experiencing a phase where young people are beginning to find new avenues of expression (Where are the youth today? Gone partying, 2001:17).*

Because of their diminishing interest in politics, young peoples’ relationships with various youth organizations that claim to represent their interests have also come under scrutiny from various quarters. First, different youth-orientated political and policy organisations blame each other for the current state of the relationship between youth and politics. Pan Africanists Youth Congress (Payso) and Azanian Youth organisation (Azayo), for example, are of the view that the National Youth Commission has failed to mobilise youth politically. They are also of the view that this commission has failed to address socioeconomic issues affecting youth in the country. On these grounds, therefore, these organisations maintain, the commission is responsible for youths’ political apathy. However, political organisations such as Azayo and Payso are also blamed for lacking vibrant programmes to attract young people.

There are other factors that point to the problems within youth organisations themselves, which can interpreted as contributory factors in the political demobilisation of youth. These are infighting and competition for leadership positions within youth organisations and between organisations, financial mismanagement, lack of political
knowledge, and the general failure of organised politics and youth organisations to connect with their constituencies.

Corruption is also one of the biggest factors that turn young people away from politics. For example, “ninety-eight-percent of 18- to 24-year-olds surveyed by Yfm believe that some government officials are not honest” (Deane, 2003:16).

Other social and political commentators hold the view that the orientation of the post-apartheid South Africa towards ‘neo-liberalism ideology’ produces political indifference among youth. Oa Makola and Koma (2001:08), for example, argue that:

*neo liberalism is certainly eroding student politics, with students pre-occupied with vibes, entertainment and sex, instead of seriously and actively engaging in political activities such as mass demonstrations, meetings, debates relating to government programmes, maladies within government operations....*

This idea that South African youth are increasingly preoccupied with superficial issues and that are becoming excessively materialistic is becoming a dominant theme in the critique of youths’ relationship with politics. There is a concern that:

*over the last few years the youth has grown apolitical, channelling their energies into international music trends and fashion...Instead of turning up in their hundreds to listen to political speeches and commemorate the self-sacrifice of their predecessors, they can be found at parties and other entertainment venues (Where are the youth today? Gone partying, 2001:2).*

This concern about South African youth is also shared by Deane (2003:16) who observes that:

*If this is the image of tomorrow, it is of fast-talking, palmtop-tapping, cellphone-wielding generation, a far cry from the image of South African youth in the eighties-T-shirt-wearing, toyi-toying young people, struggling for this (Innes) free world of today.*

Some young South Africans perceive the move away from politics to be a ‘natural process’ of progression that is necessary after the struggle. Their focus is on carriers, businesses and general self-development.
Research studies that concentrate on South African youth in political processes and in the elections in particular also concur that young people are losing interest in politics. One of these studies is the *Status of the Youth Report 2002*. This section of this report that deals with young people’s participation in politics and social mobilisation deserves serious attention. According to this study it seems that the youth, generally, and especially the younger group aged in their late teens and 20s, are less likely to vote than older people. This report notes that:

> In 1994, in our first democratic elections, voter turnout was extremely high. This pattern also emerged for the youth. A survey by CASE showed that 93 percent of young people aged between 19 and 35 voted. Turnout was highest for African youth and lowest for Whites... *(Status of the Youth Report 2002, 2002:100)*

This study further notes the following with respect to the two election periods that that followed the historical 1994 one:

> Nineteen months later, in the first local-government elections, turnout declined substantially, and particularly for youth. Only 43 percent of the youth voted in these elections. Only 35 percent of those aged 18 and 21 voted, compared to 51 percent of the 21 to 25 group, and over 60 percent of those aged 25 to 35.

> In the 1999 general elections, young people remained among the least active participants. Only 80 percent of adults registered, and 85 percent of the registered voters went to the polls. But the figures were lowest for youth. Only 48 percent of youth aged 18 to 20 registered to vote, and 77 percent of those aged 21 to 30. That means over 3 million young people did not even register, and probably half of those who did not register, did not vote at all... *(Status of the Youth Report 2002, 2002:100)*.

It is very important to note that this study present that a major reason for a low voter turnout in the 1999 elections among youth was the lack of identification papers and probably political involvement. The lack of identity documents is said to have been a major important reason why young people did not register to vote in the 1995 local-government elections. Poor and rural provinces had the worst registration rate for youth
(Status of the Youth Report 2002, 2002:100). This important study does not attribute low voter turnout among people to their relationship with television news.

**Media de-politicises youth**

In these debates, the relationship between media content, its cultural output in particular, and the youth is encountering condemnatory concerns. The media are criticised for de-politicising and ‘commercialising’ youth lifestyles and cultures. The media are perceived and conceived to be contributory to youth’s declining political engagement and consciousness. Decrying the role of the media on South African youth, the [then] Deputy Education Minister, Mosibudi Mangena, for example, noted that:

*Our society is not helping them [youth] to develop a greater sense of relevance in their own country. It is a society that bombard our young with avalanches of American music, films and other cultural expressions that have nothing except violence, decadence and conspicuous consumerism (Sapa, 2001:07).*

Evident and discernible from the above general concerns are that a South African youth must to a large extent be politically conscious citizens who continue to engage in socio-political dialogues. Implicitly acknowledged in the minister’s criticism of South African media content is the role that the media should play in this respect. This conceptualisation of youth here carries within itself a more politically-orientated *definition* of youth which has characteristically been the feature of numerous South African-centred textual representations of local youth and their activities.

In many respects, higher levels of political activism and consciousness that idiosyncratically defined many South African youth across socio-political and racial/ethnic boundaries in the decades before 1990s cannot be said of the post-1990s youth. The post-1994 youth, though some reasonable exceptions can still be made, provides a ‘generational shift’ in terms of lifestyles, political thinking and participation (cf. Deane, 2003; Mataboge & Mawson, 2004; Smith, 2003). So, as much as there is a clear and specific history of encounter between South African youth and politics, one of
the ways of understanding the current relationship between youth and television news is through SABC information programmes under apartheid.

The making of a South African citizen, SABC style

There are still no daily television news programmes- across South African news-providing channels- that are aimed at young adults. It is only recently that SABC has established Kids News, which has grown to be multilingual. This is not aimed at young adults. Historically, the SABC, South Africa’s first television news broadcaster, has only targeted youth (at least those had had television sets) through information programming, not news.

This section looks at these pre-1994 vocational information programmes. It focuses on those programmes that the SABC considered ‘appropriate’ for youth to learn and through which to be socialised. This section, therefore, concentrates on the implicit assumptions the SABC information programmes made about the youth viewer. This section does not focus on the stylistic how the SABC information programmes tried to convey information to youths. The SABC started providing information programming it regarded appropriate and necessary for young peoples’ knowledge growth as far back as 1976. These programmes presented regular vocational advice and discussions on youth problems, in which young people and adults took part. “Young people would be invited to send in regular contributions in the form of essays on subjects such as wisdom, cleverness, theft, naughtiness, negligence, laziness and cruelty” (SABC, 1976:73). Furthermore, “in both the English and Afrikaans7 service, there were series of Quiz programmes on the subject of Road Safety, in collaboration with the National Road Safety Association” (SABC, 1978:53).

SABC youth programmes also gave attention to university students and students at higher educational establishments by way of talks, literary contributions, news about student activities, interviews and music (SABC, 1979: 99). “Youth programmes also included sports Quizzes. Students took part in broadcasts from the various campuses.

7 It is not clear whom it meant by young people. For political reasons English and Afrikaans were dominant languages at the time.
Particular emphasis was placed on study directions, choice of subjects, bursaries, sports events and cultural activities” (SABC, 1980: 93; see also SABC, 1981: 46).

SABC also presented youth programmes where “students and lectures at Black universities took part in the programmes. Listeners were constantly kept informed of developments at these institutions about courses, conditions for admission, study methods, etc were broadcast” (SABC 1982: 93).

Part of the SABC’s typically youth information programmes included taking forty girls to a holiday farm for Skattieskamp where “in the course of the ten days the girls got to know more about matters such as fieldcraft, good manners and Bible studies” (SABC, 1984:4). The concern here relates not only to the banality of this exercise, but also to the ideological effects it was aimed to achieve as way of deepening apartheid.

There are critically important issues that need be considered about the content of the SABC information programmes presented here. First, these information programmes were presented within an extremely ideologically, racially and politically prejudicial environment. Second, they are from the SABC’s subjective perspective (and the history of SABC information texts in legitimatising apartheid is matter of public record and is conventional knowledge in South African journalism and mass communication scholarship). Third, they are very vague in terms of who fit into categories such as ‘youth’ and ‘children’, both in simply demographic and racial terms. Fourth, they do not explicitly state if the information reported in the Annual Reports pertained to radio or television programmes.

What they achieve to demonstrate, still in a limited form, in both direct and subtextual forms are typical conceptualisation of young audiences by the SABC and type of programmes that were considered ‘appropriate’ for their socialisation-intellectual and cultural upbringing. Most important, also, is that they point to the fact that these information programmes were vocational information in orientation rather than news broadcasts texts as understood in this study.

In short, the absence of both the news programmes tailored specifically at the youth markets and the paucity of academic research work that discusses relationships between youth and news media makes it difficult to locate local youth exclusively in its historical encounters with the country’s television news programmes. It can be
reasonably inferred therefore how television news would have been provided to youth audiences given the state of the political environment, ideological divisions in the South African journalism and mass communication scholarship and the character of the SABC mainstream television news before political freedom in South Africa.

Television news for youth would have been ideologically partial or not provided at all

The indications in and inferences from some South African media and communication studies are that the SABC would have been prohibited by both the apartheid state and itself from presenting youth news material regarded as oppositional to the apartheid regime’s conception of ‘national interests’, even if youths’ interests, needs and motivations demanded that particular material (cf. Hayman & Tomaselli, 1987; Karam, 2001:579-581; Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987; Wilkins & Strydom, 1978). The testimony to this is that even the then Director General of the SABC once admitted that the SABC programme policy was linked to the national policy of the apartheid state (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987).

Therefore, in line with apartheid state’s conception of ‘national interest’ youth had to be exposed only to television information deemed ‘appropriate’ by both the SABC bureaucrats and the apartheid system. In fact, before the introduction of television in South Africa, preliminary studies showed the use to which television medium could consciously be put in support of ‘national interests’ (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987) and also:

Research carried out directly before and after the introduction of television on the behavioural patterns of Afrikaans-speaking school children has shown television to be a positive reinforcement of psychological responses leading specifically to enhanced group dependency, a greater measure of social adaptability and an increased tendency to co-operation. Television it is argued, offers adolescents an opportunity of identifying with social roles portrayed, and thus has a reinforcing effect on the socialising process already in progress (Tomaselli & Tomaselli, 1987:84; see also Van Vuuren, 1980).
The employment of television medium as a mechanism for ideological socialisation of youth not only was restricted to the manner described in the above quotation, but it was also tied to the ideological methods in which the SABC treated politically-charged youth-related issues such as the 1976 youth revolt against apartheid oppression, which is said to be a watershed in South African history. According to Giffard (1980:220), “South African Broadcasting Corporation’s radio and television services deliberately underplayed the story”.

The SABC television’s self-censorship and suppression of political information perceived to be incongruous with apartheid state ideology extended to the realm of entertainment and radio medium. This is evident in the treatment of Lourenco Marques radio station. Lourenco Marques (LM) was a Mozambique-based radio station, broadcasting rock-and-roll music format since the 1950s. LM proved very popular with South African youth audiences. Nearly half of the South African youth cited LM as their favourite radio station (Hayman & Tomaselli, 1987:68). When the SABC, however, gained control of LM in 1960s (it is not clear how it gained control), it changed the music policy of this radio station and the more ‘extreme’ forms of rock music, which were seen to express rebellion against values of conformity, ambition and respect of parental authority and which characterised LM Radio, were eliminated (Teer-Tomaselli & de Villiers, 1998:158).

Ironically, however, despite the SABC’s explicit ideological support for apartheid regime, research reveals that many young Blacks comparatively watched television news. The Teencheck poll conducted in 1987 discovered that black teenagers paid more attention to news and politics than their white counterparts. This poll conducted face to face with 800 black and white teenagers between 13 and 20 years revealed that 99 percent watched TV. The poll also discovered that three times more blacks than whites said they watched the news without fail. Furthermore, the poll revealed that 69 percent of black kids showed they thought independently over politics, only 43 percent of white kids differed from their parents on vital points (Black Kids more Clued Up, 1987:4). The conditions that existed during the time of this poll almost compelled youth to be political as shown in the history of South African politics and
youth above. The concern now is that youth are losing interest in local television news programmes.

**Local youth’s interest in television news: is there a decline?**

Concerns about youth’s levels of political knowledge and participation derive from an accumulative body of global scholarly literature that point to qualitative and quantitative decline in the share of youth who regularly attend to television news. This chapter, however, challenges the very notion that South African young adults, like their international counterparts, are losing interest in television news. Two salient positions are presented in this regard. First, on the ground of the provided statistical information (see below), percentages of young adults South Africans who regularly pay attention to locally-produced evening ‘flagship’ newscasts on various television channels remain relatively low; they are relatively low when compared to the relative share of young people who generally watch particular channels but not news provisions. These percentages are also low when the share of young people who watch news is compared with adult news viewers in most channels.

To be noted also is that the quantitative information that both *Telmar Media Systems* (2002) (drawing from South African Research Foundation’s research methodology) and *SABC News Research* (2001)- provide for this study contradicts the notion that there is a clear decline in the share of young adult South African who regularly watch locally-produced television news across channels. The information that is provided indicates youth instead that interest and/or disinterest in various locally-produced television newscasts is *channel-specific*, variable and fluctuates.

The second position of this chapter is that the inconsistencies and contradictions in the South African youth and television news research, both academic and media industry-based, emphasize the fact that at this stage no conclusive conclusions can be reached about whether young adult South Africans are becoming interested or disinterested in television news.

**Conclusion and discussion**
The understanding of the above-mentioned effects as a consequence of young adults’ declining interests in news, and in television news in particular, creates a critical problem in the South African context, and for this study in particular. So far there is insufficient research evidence to incontestably suggest that young adult South Africans’ levels of political and social knowledge are on the decline solely on the basis of their diminishing exposure to television news. Similarly, there is inadequate research evidence, if any, to correlate young adult South Africans’ exposure to television news and their levels of attention to other news sources, political party membership and their levels of participation in the national and local government elections. This absence of an identifiable correlation so far, however, should be construed not to mean an absolute non-existence of it; but rather that it has not yet been identified through appropriate objective research.

Interestingly, despite the fact that locally almost no scholarly attention is paid to the relationship between youth, politics and television news texts, all at once, the debate on the relationship between youth and the South African (political) public sphere is current and robust. This debate, too, conceives the relationship between local youth and public sphere largely in political terms. The reasons for this can be discerned from the historical construction of South African youth in public and scholarly discourses. This construction of youth is central to them and their orientation towards news media. The other equally important body of scholarly work that is central to understanding local youth and their relationship with news media is South African journalism and mass communication research on youth and news media.
CHAPTER FIVE

South African Journalism and Mass Communication Research on Youth and News Media: A Reflection

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract

Between 1987 and 2003 several academic works, particularly in the context of South African journalism and mass communication scholarship (JMCS), have explored the relationship between South African youth and news media in the research area of the global and the local. This thematic meta-study explores conceptual and methodological frameworks through which they have investigated this relationship. It concentrates primarily on the exploration and framing of the relationship; choice of medium of study; construction of youth identity; and preferred research methodologies and theoretical approaches. The investigation is contextualized within ontological, epistemological, and political-ideological debates in local JMCS, and in global discourses on youth and news media. The study concludes that post-1994 local studies largely adopted qualitative research methods, critical social theory, and cultural studies, rather than socialization and functionalist theories. The studies also defined youth in sociocultural, rather than in political, terms. Limitations of South African research on youth and news media are noted.

Keywords

Framing, global and local identity, journalism and mass communication scholarship, news media, research methodologies, television news, youth and media.

Introduction

Lacking in South African journalism and mass communication scholarship (hereafter JMCS) are meta-studies that review the youth-news media research area. International research in this area has had its various theoretical/paradigmatic positions subjected to evaluative scholarly attention (for example, Buckingham, 1997b). South African meta-studies have so far focused on broad historically contending ontological, epistemological, and political-ideological positions within JMCS, with De Beer and Tomaselli’s (2000)
South African Journalism and Mass Communication: Negotiating Ideological Schisms

providing deeper context in this regard (see also Tomaselli, 2004; Tomaselli, 2005). Specific meta-studies focused on exploring progressions of particular research areas within JMCS are scarce. The present meta-study arises in this context and it aims to contribute to South African JMCS through examining works that have so far defined its youth-news media research area.

First, an understanding of how South African academic researchers explore and render particular perspectival meanings to the relationship between South African youth and news media is essential for an appreciation of the relationship itself. Subsequently, their construction of the relationship functions as a window through which the relationship between youth, citizenship, democracy, and mainstream politics can be viewed. For example, in the event that researchers were to observe a particular orientation of South African youth toward political news, there is a strong probability that they would equally infer certain meanings regarding what that inclination means for the country. This is highly probable in the belief that youth’s news media consumption and political knowledge are mutually reinforcing variables (cf. Buckingham, 1997b; Chaffee & Yang, 1990).

Additionally, South African academic researchers’ examinations of the youth-news media relationship (hereafter Y-NMR) reflect not only a scholarly raison d’être for doing so for the advantage of the sociopolitical sphere but also accentuate relative importance and preference of certain theoretical/methodological positions in approaching the relationship. Therefore, researchers’ methodological and theoretical preferences are, on their own, conscious standpoints that anchor (and invite) particular readings of the relationship.

Critical to this meta-study, then, is the manner in which these studies situate themselves, methodologically and theoretically (paradigmatically), in constructing and de-constructing the relationship. As such, the study focuses mostly on how the studies under review explore and frame the relationship; choose media of study; construct youth identity; and use certain types of research methodologies and theoretical approaches.

The study locates itself within the continuing ontological, epistemological, and political-ideological debates in the South African JMCS, as well as in the international
discourse on youth and news media, and concludes by discussing limitations of and proposals for the South African research on the youth–news media relationship. Five interrelated reasons prompted this study.

First, familiarity with local studies on Y-NMR leads to the conclusion that they warrant a meta-study that introduces and reviews them as typical of a specific research area within local JMCS. They are indispensable to the growth of this field; yet they are still scarce, dispersed, and some have limited exposure.

Second, by introducing, organizing, and reviewing these studies, research gaps that need new evidence could be identified. For example, where just less than 50 percent of the population falls into the age category 14 to 20 years, and the majority is under the age of 35, most aspects of local youth remain remarkably under-researched (Strelitz, 2002: 5).

Third, this study is undertaken because “scholars of mass communication— and indeed other fields—seem always to be interested in knowing research trends in their areas. Which methods are used most and least often? Which areas have been more or less studied?” (Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003:7).

Fourth, there is a need to understand perspectives that are espoused by local researchers regarding how news media and youth should relate to each other in view of their (shifting) normative responsibilities in the public sphere. This search for understanding is in the sense that globally, particularly with respect to youth and news, there are already calls for (and evaluations of) popular alternatives to conventional news forms and postmodern conception of citizenship and the public sphere (Buckingham, 1997b:344).

Fifth, by drawing attention to this local research area, it is hoped that productive scholarly debates would develop, particularly with respect to relationships between various categories of local youth and different news media sectors; theories; and methodologies. Anticipated debates could intersect with other intra and inter-disciplinary political-ideological, ontological, and epistemological1 discourses already continuing in the South African journalism and mass communication scholarship.

The Context of South African JMCS

109
In tracing the historical development of South African research into youth and news media, it is difficult to imagine how, contextually, it would have developed externally to political-ideological divisions that idiosyncratically defined South African JMCS during apartheid. Even if it did, contemporary meta-studies on JMCS, as authoritative frames through which one reads the scholarship’s history, hardly ever reconstruct any of the pre-democracy intellectual persuasions as having been apolitical. Arguably, therefore, whichever scholarly directions research into Y-NMR would have pursued, they would have been interpreted as political-ideological positions and read in relation to apartheid.

The reading, in the local context, of ontological and epistemological orientations as political ideologies is observable in studies that chart approaches to the scholarship by situating them in their different intellectual, institutional, and ideological contexts (cf. De Beer, 1990; De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000; Tomaselli, 2004; Tomaselli, 2005). Some of these studies read ontological and epistemological positions in terms of having been pro- or anti-apartheid (Tomaselli, 1996:1).

Other emphasized divisions are those that had to do with academic institutions’ paradigm choices in teaching/researching journalism and mass communication studies. De Beer and Tomaselli (2000) identify five primary paradigms from which South African journalism and mass communication university departments taught between 1960 and 1990. These are German and Netherlands tradition (media history, law, and ethics), positivist, functionalist, interpretative, and Marxist. Of these approaches, these scholars observe that Afrikaans universities tended to emphasize interpretative, behaviorism, systems theory, and functionalism. They further observe that the English universities’ works emphasized neo-Marxism, critical communication studies, participatory research, criticism of “administrative research,” and cooperated with grassroots anti-apartheid organizations.

Historical reviews of the South African JMCS largely segment it along these paradigmatic themes. This study presents these themes, too, as a brief historical scholarly context within which local research into Y-NMR emerges. Except for contextual reference, though, the study infers no direct correlation between the history of South African JMCS and the theoretical/paradigmatic and methodological directions of the
studies it reviews. Where it, rather, identifies strong theoretical/paradigmatic similarities is between the studies being reviewed and international research’s directions on Y-NMR.

**International Y-NMR Research**

Against accelerating decline in youth’s news media use, international discourse on Y-NMR has focused largely on youth’s news media choices, use, and their attitudes toward specific sections of news media. In most cases this concentration has been employed as a direct or implicit measure of youth’s relationship with dominant ideologies/practices in their particular social systems. In Iran, for example, a Tehran University study explored, among other things, students’ attitudes toward religion and “found that the religious section of the newspaper is the least read, though [young] people have a positive view of religion” (Varzi, 2006: 203). In Australia, Evans and Sternberg (1998) conducted a qualitative study in which they explored young adults’ attitudes toward political information on television news and current affairs.

Integral to these studies has also been an exploration of whether youth are losing interest in news media and whether news media texts, in content and form, satisfy youth’s interests. In this regard, Evans and Sternberg’s (1998) study, for example, investigated the extent to which television current affairs programs discussed political issues in a manner relevant to youth’s everyday lives. A study of an almost similar kind was conducted in Belgium by Raeymaeckers (2004). This study concluded “that content shifts offer the best chances for increasing readership: more attention to local news, extra background information and easier language help to reduce the gap between newspapers and young readers (2004: 221).

In the realm of theory and paradigm, international research into Y-NMR has been conducted broadly within three prominent areas since the 1970s. Two of these areas also characterize local research trends on Y-NMR.

First, much of the early international research has been conducted within political socialization theory, in the social-psychological paradigm, to argue that mass media have direct influence on youth’s levels of political knowledge and attitudes (Buckingham, 1997b: 349). This theory, however, has been challenged by those approaches that view media influence as mediated by other agencies (Booysen, 1991).
Second, other studies have been conducted within the cognitive processing approach, mostly to determine the degree to which young news consumers recall information after exposure. These studies’ results have consistently revealed that news audiences appear to remember little of what they watched on the news (Buckingham, 1997b).

Third, recent studies recognize these approaches, but shift to consider cultural studies and critical theory as necessary (but also challengeable) interpretive frames. This trend is reflected in recent debates regarding popular alternatives to conventional news forms and postmodern conception of citizenship and the public sphere (Buckingham, 1997b: 344). This orientation toward cultural studies and critical theory is also discernable in the post-1994 South African research’s framing of local youth in cultural and sociological—rather than in purely political—terms. Pre-1994 local research on Y-NMR, however, emerged from a different paradigm.

**South African Y-NMR Research: Pre-1994**

Local research into Y-NMR, like the international, also first emerged within the social-psychological paradigm, with Booysen’s 1987 doctoral thesis exploring “The Political Socialization of Afrikaans Students: A Theoretical and Case Study.” This thesis yielded two academic articles, which, respectively, examined “A Political World within the Parameters of SABC Politics: The Case of Afrikaner Students” (1989) and “Mass Media, Social Networks and the Political Socialization of South Africa’s White Students” (1991).

It is because of their sample choice that Booysen’s studies are, in this study, considered to be the only ones “representative” of the pre-1994 local research on Y-NMR. (Only two of the available studies have been excluded.) No generalizations are established from Booysen’s research. Their consideration is mainly for tracing development, exploration, and construction of local Y-NMR.

**Exploring and Constructing the Relationship**
Booysen’s motivations for exploring Y-NMR, and the manner in which she ends up constructing a particular perspective of it, reflect positivist assumptions on media as social phenomenon. Her studies predominantly aim to measure effects mass media have as youth’s socializing agents. Perspectives initially espoused by her studies are that of an all-powerful mass media, which function as politicocultural propaganda frames through which youth’s political views are structured. Her 1991 study, however, moderates these perspectives through its challenging of some aspects of socialization theory. The study constructs an understanding of mass media whose effects are mediated by other socializing networks. Still, though, a connecting thread in all her work is the presumption that youth, on their deconstructive own, hardly possess any agency or reciprocity, but are simply cogs in competing politicocultural frames. Of these frames the media are seen as most influential.

**Medium/Media of Study**

Booysen chooses television and newspapers as media of focus (and excludes radio). At the time of her writing, South African media were not as diverse and relatively widely accessible as they are today. She chooses television because it is a dominant source of political information for “youth.” Print news is chosen because it is more important than the electronic media in conveying political knowledge. These reasons, however, only hold firmly if limited to the socioeconomic class/status of the youth category that she constructs. (Otherwise to argue that working-class local youth have general access to television would still be empirically incorrect.)

**Constructing Youth Identity**

It is not only in socioeconomic terms that Booysen constructs white youth’s identity but it is also in political, racial, and linguistic terms. The first distinct formation in her 1991 work is largely, but not exclusively, Afrikaans and it generally complied with Nationalist Party rule. The second group is what she calls “deviant” liberal. She contends that as much as this group is deviant it still operated largely within a mainstream, white-dominated frame of reference and was mostly, but not exclusively, English. English-speaking students were affiliated to liberal parties.
Booyzen observes the following with respect to her groups’ consumption of SABC news. English-speaking students, because they were exposed to many more social networks in comparison to Afrikaans-speaking students, regularly watched SABC news programs critically and doubted the credibility of what they were exposed to. Afrikaans students, alternatively, had much more faith in what they saw/heard on television broadcast. In keeping with positivism, all these phenomena, for her, are amenable to scientific research methods.

**Theoretical Approach and Research Methods**

All Booyzen’s works are quantitative. This methodology’s tools are used to sample white student respondents, drawn from major South African universities, for the purposes of exploring their access to, and use of, political information within the political socialization theory. This theory and its paradigm, however, are less emphasized by the post-1994 South African research on Y-NMR.

**South African Y-NMR Research: Post-1994**

With regard to socialization theory and news media as socializing agents, the difference between pre-1994 and post-1994 South African studies is that the latter also raise critical questions on which the former are particularly silent. These interrogatives pertain to critically evaluating the following in exploring and constructing Y-NMR: news media institutions and their mandate in a democracy; news content and form; public sphere; youth culture; citizenship; and representivity and access.

**Exploring and Constructing the Relationship**

Post-1994 studies offer diverse explicit and implicit reasons for exploring Y-NMR, and, in the process, construct different perspectives of it. They all, however, arise against what can be called perceptions of social, political, and cultural deficiencies that impact negatively on the nation’s social capital. Youth’s declining levels of general knowledge and cultural literacy are two of these deficiencies.
A study that concerns itself particularly with this factor is Claassen’s (1996) “News as Vaudeville: The Dramatic Image, News Diffusion and the Demise of Cultural Literacy through Show Business.” It is not, however, only television news, according to Claassen, that has failed to produce generally informed and cultural literate youth (because of its adoption of entertainment values), but also other social institutions. He blames, for example, the change among young peoples’ reading patterns on a lack of cultural literacy that has become virtually nonexistent in school education, and subsequently also at universities.

Implicit in Claassen’s perspective are presuppositions rooted in political socialization and functionalist theories, albeit with different ideological emphasis, that social institutions, particularly media, are sociocultural frames responsible for reinforcing values that integrate youth into an already existing social structure.

The other South African researcher equally concerned about youth’s declining levels of general knowledge is Pepler (2003). Pepler, however, differs with Claassen on who is to blame for this phenomenon. Pepler’s perspective on the Y-NMR is that youth are losing interest in news media and therefore have to take the blame for it, not the social institutions. Pepler reasons that “a possible conclusion . . . could be that young generations do not care enough to pay attention to the news, and they care less about what is happening in the larger world around them” (2003: 2).

This perspective is, however, challenged by Strelitz (2002). Strelitz provides a study whose research results indicate that “nearly 50% of the student population read the newspaper at least twice a week with the heaviest readers being the African male students and the lightest being the white students” (2002: 325). His study also finds that readership is heaviest among the African working-class students. Strelitz (2002: 325) further observes that

The relatively high readership of newspapers and continuing salience for youth of news contradicts the claims made by Katz (1992: 33) and Buckingham (1997: 348) that young people are no longer interested in conventional news media.

Local Y-NMR is also explored for social, professional, and pedagogical reasons. Claassen’s (2001) work “Exploring a Model for Training Journalism Students” and Pepler’s (2003) “Traditional News Values vs. Popular Culture: Media Preferences of the
Younger Generations” are examples here. Questions raised by these works pertain to
general knowledge levels of students training to be journalists. For Claassen (2001),
journalism students’ declining knowledge levels, particularly of history, reflect
“detrimentally on the media employing these students, as the media are increasingly
becoming the target of criticism for superficiality and lack of contextual references in
news reports.”

Pepler and Claassen, however, offer markedly different solutions to their shared
sociopedagogical concerns. Arguably, the reason for this is that Claassen’s outlook is
rooted in critical social theory, while Pepler’s is in cultural studies. Their differences are
discussed below.

Discernable from Claassen’s concerns is that news media are social institutions
that ought to produce an enlightened citizenry. His proposed news media, in Habermasian
(Habermas, 1989) terms, are those that constructively contribute to a critical-rational
debate in society and are not contaminated by entertainment values. Claassen’s
conception of contemporary news media is negative, as he feels that they are increasingly
entertainment oriented and, therefore, no longer directly geared toward creating
qualitatively informed citizens, in this case youth. For Claassen (2001: 21), “the
amusement factor has clearly overwhelmed the concept of news presentation on
Television. This development . . . has brought superficiality to news diffusion with
dramatic image and sound bites replacing in-depth analysis.”

An evaluative perspective offered by Claassen is that which laments the loss of
journalistic quality and standards, the form of journalism that (supposedly in the past)
contributed constructively to rational debates in society and circulated information
essential for the survival of the general citizenry. Advocating for the return of these
standards and in reference to journalism training, Claassen (2001: 21) quotes Burkhat,
who strongly argues that “there ought to be an adversary relationship between what we
do in class and what ‘TV babies’ watch on MTV.” In short, Claassen, in equally
assessing the state of knowledge of youth citizens in the public sphere, attributes the
blame to television news’ failure to properly “parent” young people.

Contrary to Claassen and located in cultural studies, Pepler (2003) embraces
“MTV” and popular cultural values, as well as the bottom-up democratic “right” of youth
audiences to mold, as it were, television news broadcast to whatever format they fancy. Pepler hardly disparages the incorporation of entertainment values and tabloidization in news presentation; instead, she advocates for bridging the gap between traditional news and popular culture values in South Africa. Her perspective is that “a study of the academic terrain of popular culture could possibl[y] lead to a re-defining of news values. Popular culture is the choice of the masses, and a denial of the importance of these aspects to specifically younger generations could be unwise” (Pepler, 2003: 10).

Third, local Y-NMR is explored to assess whether television news and current affairs programs are representative of youth interests in terms of content and form. A study more concerned with this is Du Plooy-Cilliers and Bezuidenhout’s (2003) “Young Adults’ Disillusionment, Apathy and Cynicism in Politics and Television Current Affairs.” This study explores first (and among other issues) if South African television news and current affairs programs encourage political participation among local youths. Additionally, it assesses if these programs discuss political issues in a manner that is relevant to the youth. The study concludes that “it doesn’t seem as if though news programmes are reaching youth audiences” (Du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003: 10).

A perspective presented by this study is that television current affairs are at least partly responsible for young citizens’ apathy about politics. Where this study shares similarities with Pepler’s is in questioning representativeness of South African news media content and format, and on emphasizing bottom-up and audience-centred news media.

The study by Du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout (2003), however, does not expressly propose news media that are in the critical-rational sphere for macro-discourses, nor for the incorporation of popular cultural values. Rather, it calls for incorporation of “micro-politics and South African affairs, which often receive very little media attention” (Du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003: 18). Though not specifically framed within a particular theoretical framework, its proposition of decentralized news media that are representative of everyday lived experience of youth and communities situates it in communitarian media theory.
Medium/Media of Study

All the studies examined above primarily focus on television as a media of study. Even those studies that focus on youth's relationship with a range of other news media (cf. Strelitz, 2002; Pepler, 2003) concentrate chiefly on television. (To be sure, the section of Strelitz's work examined above is part of a broader audiovisual-oriented thesis.) There are at least two common reasons why these studies focus on television. First, they observe that youth are oriented toward television. They also emphasize the primacy of this media form on youth's everyday experiences and identity construction.

Constructing Youth Identity

Local youth identity that post-1994 studies on Y-NMR normally construct is qualitatively different to the one constructed by pre-1994 studies. Apart from specific demographic distinctions, post-1994 studies tend to emphasize sociocultural, rather than political, aspects of local youth identity.

These studies' interrogations of the youth subject are conscious of youth's cultural lifestyles and cultural heterogeneity as well as their locations in various social classes that still define postapartheid South Africa. It is through these lenses that youth's orientation toward news media is understood, not solely in terms of their political ideologies, for example (cf. Booysen above).

Where these studies construct local youth as political citizens is when they relate them to the broader affairs of the public sphere. They frame youth as (political) citizens who are or ought to be concerned with various affairs of the national public sphere. Overarching in these works, one discerns, is a concern with the relationship between the (post)modern young citizen, news media, and the public sphere. With the exception of Strelitz's (2002), though, reviewed studies offer brief definitions of local youth identity. Strelitz (2002) presents a detailed cultural and sociological account of local youth in relation to national and global media consumption. In terms of news media consumption as another important factor, post-1994 studies are premised on the notion of youth as active and interpretive readers who are in continuous negotiation with their texts. Even those studies that argue that youth care less about public sphere affairs perceive this as a
"rational" call for popular cultural alternatives. This common conception of local youth has not, however, led to the adoption of a single research methodology.

Research Methodology
Postapartheid works have no single overarching research methodology that they prefer. They operate within a variety of research methodologies ranging from the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to qualitative and quantitative methodologies. There are indications, however, of a general shift away from strictly behaviorism-oriented research that assumes research on passive young adult audiences in the application of these methodologies. All of these studies, at the end, offer qualitative analyses. Even those works that are framed within quantitative methodology (Pepler, 2003) make substantial use of theoretical approaches that are normally associated with qualitative research applications.

Theoretical Approaches
Various post-1994 South African studies investigate Y-NMR through and within different theoretical and paradigmatic frameworks. Varyingly, these studies draw from cultural studies (specifically studies on popular culture), critical social theory, and contemporary media studies. Generational theories are used to construct local youth as either belonging to Generation X or Y in terms of their lifestyles. A sociological understanding of local youth is also a feature in the post-1994 works. Although most theories, in terms of their conceptualization and application, indicate a shift from strict positivism, positivist and functionalist assumptions, which see news media as socializing agents, are still pervasive in the studies reviewed here.

Conclusion and Limitations
The reviewed literature on the local youth-news media relationship leads to the conclusion that engagements with the subject are few and far between. (Responses from the JMCS pertaining to the availability of the body of work on local Y-NMR directed this researcher to few studies that he had not already seen [see above].) It further points to the absence of a meaningful dialogical relationship between participant researchers, self-consciousness or "reflexivity" in theory and methodology application, and reflection on
the general scholarly "state of play" in the research area, as there would be in other areas that deal with youth and other phenomena in the country (cf. Cross, 1999; Van Zyl Slabbert et al., 1994).

In the exploration of the relationship (or some aspects of it) between South African news media and young people, there is an absence of awareness of other South African works in this area (the exception is, perhaps, where Pepler focuses on some aspects of Claassen's work). There is also, so far, reluctance by academic researchers in this area to collaborate with news media industry-based researchers who are in possession of relevant stocks of quantitative data that could be used for the enrichment of the area at empirical and theoretical levels.

Generally, the area in question is still in an embryonic stage. It is yet to assemble sufficient body of empirical evidence that can illuminate the relationship between different categories of the country's youth and various types of news media. At the same time, this area is yet to consolidate its theoretical and methodological trajectories that could give it identity in global youth-news media research, and in the field of South African JMCS. South African research, if viewed against some of the international studies on youth-news media discourse, reveals a number of research areas that it has not yet covered.

In this case, current scholarly directions of the South African studies have to be treated cautiously. South African research into Y-NMR is at present composed of too few studies for any theoretical and methodological orientations to be considered incontrovertible forecasts.

There is, therefore, a need for South African television news audience studies that qualitatively locate encounters and relationships between various generations of local youth and television news in a historical context. Where Buckingham (1997b), for example, can produce a condensation of and a reflection on American- and European-produced body of scholarly work that stretches back to the 1960s, the South African research area reveals that, historically, South African Media Studies researchers have paid little attention to the study of the relationship between various generations of local youth and the country's news media.
Further, there is a need to create a body of knowledge that clearly illuminates young adult locals' qualitative and quantitative reception of locally produced television news. Also, there is a need for more awareness about, debate within, and reflection on the methodological and theoretical trajectories of the area. There seems to be a tendency among South African researchers to rely on Western theories, hypotheses, and empirical conclusions that are not accompanied by critical examination of their adequacy in illuminating local relations. Strelitz's negation, however, of Buckingham's conclusions and generalizations that young people are demonstrating diminishing interest in mainstream news media exemplifies a concern by some South African researchers about accepting at face value Western conclusions on any matter.

There is a need to reconceptualize theories that are used to define local youth. Generation theory, for example, which is being used increasingly, is insufficient. The problem with this theory is that, in its South African application, it is overly descriptive, neatly linear, elitist, overly generalizing, and lacks a critical bite that should objectively point to the pervasive contradictions that exist among young South Africans in their sociopolitical contexts and history (cf. Breet & Ndlovu, 2005).

The last major drawback in the local discourse on the relationship between local youth and news media is that all researchers have drawn their empirical data from and have used units of analysis that are in the South African institutions of higher learning. First, the data that are produced in this context, more especially by the post-1994 work, are not really externally generalizable. Second, in a socioeconomically stratified society like South Africa, the extent to which the student population truly represents the youth population beyond university borders is not clear. In most of these works, also, young South Africans are imagined as urban and only Pepler makes a limited reference to rural youth in her work. These categorizations impose further limitations on the work.

Notes
1 For explanatory context for these terms, see De Beer & Tomaselli, 2000.
2 This is a concern to later feature prominently in the South African National Editors Forum report on journalism skills (see De Beer & Steyn, 2002).
CHAPTER SIX

Do mainstream news values, definitions and theories accommodate youth’s conceptualization of news?

Musa Ndlovu

*Should the producers of news not be interrogating how they DEFINE what is newsworthy and the angles they take on stories to make sure they cater for the youth audiences?* (Lloyd, 2001:2).

Abstract

Very little exist in the news discourse regarding the congruence- or lack of- between mainstream conceptualization of television news and youth-oriented perspectives on news, despite growing concerns over young adults’ growing disinterest in mainstream television news. This chapter, then, sets out to explore whether conventional means of conceptualizing mainstream television news such as news values and definitions accommodate youth-oriented perspectives on news. A basic youth-oriented “requirement of news, [in this context], is that it should enable [youth] to make sense of their own social and political circumstances in such a way that they feel empowered to criticize and change them”. Upon review of various ways through which news is defined, the chapter observes that, historically, news conceptualizations have sidelined youth-oriented perspectives, largely because news media audience in general has been excluded in the conceptualization of news. Though now there are emergent youth-oriented perspectives on news, news itself, in its practical orientation, still excludes youth interest; but this is because news has never enabled anyone, women or men (or youth) to understand their own circumstances.

Keywords

Mainstream news, news values, news definitions and theories, news media, television news, youth and media

Introduction

Very little exist in the news discourse regarding the congruence- or lack of- between mainstream conceptualization of television news and youth-oriented perspectives on news, despite growing concerns over young adults’ growing disinterest in mainstream television news. This chapter, then, sets out to explore whether conventional means of
conceptualizing mainstream television news such as news values and definitions accommodate youth-oriented perspectives on news. A basic youth-oriented “requirement of news, [in this context], is that it should enable [youth] to make sense of their own social and political circumstances in such a way that they feel empowered to criticize and change them”vi. Upon review of various ways through which news is defined, the chapter observes that, historically, news conceptualizations have sidelined youth-oriented perspectives, largely because news media audience in general has been excluded in the conceptualization of news. Though now there are emergent youth-oriented perspectives on news, news itself, in its practical orientation, still excludes youth interest; but this is because news has never enabled anyone, women or men [or youth] to understand their own circumstances:

How often does it occur that information provided to you on morning radio or television, or in the morning newspaper, causes you to alter your plans for the day, or take some action you would not otherwise have taken, or provides insight into some problem you are required to solve? (Postman in van Zoonen, 1991:217)

Yet a youth-centric critique of mainstream television news (see below) continues to postulate that television news falls short of representing youth’s socio-political concerns in comparison to those of, for example, (a particular class of) adults. This critique suggests that conventional news practitioners indiscriminately provide television news viewers with what can be referred to as adult-orientated daily television news programmes. Underscoring this view Tsedu (2002:01) observes that: “news executives have an older audience in mind, [especially] when decisions are taken about what to run and how to run it”.

While this critique still holds firmly, it fails to fully appreciate an array of factors pertaining to the relationship between young adults and television news. First, television news has never historically comprehensively accommodated anyone’s socio-political concerns for it to be considered to be exclusively discriminating against youth; that it ever was is an overly romanticized view that glosses over a notable body of multiperspective scholarly literature, which habitually laments news’ failure to meet citizens’ needs (cf. Branston & Stafford, 1999: 162; Gans, 1980; Hagen, 1999:131; Schlesinger,
1987). Admittedly rather, various social groupings' interests have, over the years and depending on the social balance of power, been differentially represented by news. Second, this critique fails to recognise growing global newsroom staffing trends which reflect younger demographics, a phenomenon often cynically referred to as *juniorisation* (cf. Nicholson-Lord, 2000: 130; Steenveld, 2002:127). Despite this trend though, mainstream television news hardly reflects what could be described as 'youth news' (cf. Tsedu, 2002). Third, recent moves by mainstream television news practitioners to *tabloid*ise news content by incorporating, for example, news items about popular-culture celebrities is a 'strategy' to lure young audiences back into television news consumption. As undesirable in some conservative quarters as these changes may be, and that they can be evaluated as desperate, nonetheless they are strategically considered attempts in most cases to accommodate young adults' interest (cf. Buckingham, 1997:347; Pepler, 2003).

Fourth, television news media discourse lacks research studies that function to compare and contrast mainstream television news production practices for identifying those news production practices that are aimed at accommodating young adults. This leads to a common mistaken tendency in youth-centric news media critique to view mainstream news media as homogenous. Fifth, critiques of mainstream television news ignore differences that exist among young adults themselves. Because of socialisation and other socio-cultural factors, some young adults do not necessarily find anything amiss with mainstream television news' content and structure orientation. Sixth, ignored in various critiques of mainstream television news is the extent to which determinants of its contents and structures such news values and definitions actually accommodate youth-centric understanding of news- which is the central focus of this chapter.

**The chapter’s argument and direction**

This chapter argues, in part, that dominant definitions of news are institutional, professional and journalistic-based, and are still influenced largely by news values and a wide variety of other conventional organizational factors (cf. Branston & Stafford, 1999:162; Fowler, 1999:11-13; Galtung & Ruge, 1973, Oosthuizen, 2001:454; Shoemaker & Reese cited in Eichholz, 2000). All these factors, subsequently, determine
the content and form of mainstream television newscasts which young adults are said to be losing interest in and have formed mainly negative perceptions of.

The chapter further argues, as mentioned above, that youth-news media research work has rarely given any attention to the relationship between youth and news values/definitions despite their importance in constructing what ultimately becomes newscasts. However, recognizing the lack of direct and primary empirical evidence in this regard, and in order to test what is likely to be young adult’s reaction to certain aspect of newscasts constructed through news values and definitions, this chapter uses -as secondary sources- young peoples’ responses that correspond to news values and news definitions that are drawn from some sections of youth and news media research work. The purpose of this is also to enhance both an understanding of what could motivate young people to watch television news and that which could de-motivate them.

Continuing to probe the relationship between young adults and mainstream news conceptualization, the chapter also draws heavily from Eichholz’s (2000) news pilot project. The aim is to indicate not only how youth have been sidelined in the history of news definitions, but also to demonstrate those various areas of news that have defined and theorized. This is meant to indicate that while news definitions are not exclusively and explicitly meant for a specific social demography, at the same time- and mistakenly, assume inclusivity of all demographic group interests in their postulations. Lacking in these news values and definitions is ‘reflexivity’ and recognition of how their news conceptions are products of prevailing social relations and conventions (cf. Buckingham, 1999; Katz, 1993; Raeymaeckers, 2004).

This critique of conventional news values, news definitions and practices is meant to indicate how, as conceptual frames, they are limited in presenting youths’ conceptualizations of news. This means that through them, as determinants of news and interpretive frames, youth’s conceptualization of news are marginalized. The chapter further postulates that prevailing television news definitions and theories, in their diversity, are formulated mainly, but not exclusively, around the notion of the adult as the main consumer of television news and current affairs texts.

This chapter, then, is concerned with the fact that historical evolution of the concept of news, in its various theoretical expansion and amplification, arguably, has not
simultaneously evolved alongside diverse young peoples' supposed conceptualizations and definitions of news over different historical junctures. In other words, in its application and theoretical form, the evolution of news, does not provide periodical, historical encounters between youth and news in diverse geo-cultural spaces that can be referential for today's scholarship and for this study to understand young people's historical motivations for- or de-motivations from watching news.

Although the chapter argues that news definitions and values are limited in representing youths’ conceptualization of news, it also presents that some effects studies provide illuminating accounts on the relationship between youth and news media. Results of some of these effects studies provide valuable information with respect to young people’s reaction to news content and with regard to the role news play in socializing them. Their limitation, however, is that they do not give an indication of what young adults want from television news texts; but rather concentrate on what adult-orientated news media content do to young people; or, focus on the power of social intermediary intervening factors in this regard.

Lastly, this chapter presents research findings, scholarly perspectives and theoretical propositions that are presented as practical solutions on how news media should respond to young peoples' declining motivations for attending to news media (including television news) (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; Buckingham, 1997b; duploy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003; Egan, 1999; Fiske, 1992; Harwood, 1997; Pepler 2003). In this regard, participant researchers offer various recommendations and theorizations with respect to how news providers could arrest young people's diminishing interest in mainstream news media (including television news). These recommendations range from being grounded in evidence gathered from youth respondents themselves to being theoretical. However, it is important to begin by looking at what these scholars conceive to be probable causes of young adult’s declining interest in news.

**Young adults' declining interest in news: probable causes**

An accumulative number of survey research and academic studies, especially in the last twenty years of the twentieth-century, point towards statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly watch television news (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella,
1998; Barnhurst; 1997; Barnhart, 1998; Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b; 1999; Egan, 1999; Evans & Sternberg, 1998; Matlack, 1992; The Age of Indifference: A study of Young Americans and How They View The News,1990; TV News Viewership Declines: Fall Off Greater for Young Adults and Computer Users, 1996). “According to these statistical studies, the percentage of young citizens who view news regularly has shrunk by half since the 1960s” (Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998:279). Various reasons are advanced in the discourse for why young adults are becoming disinterested in conventional television news formats.

**Young adults’ perception of news**

At the heart of youth’s declining interest is their perception of news. Although research indicates that (consistent with historical perception of news) some young people equally perceive news to be a window to a world of events (cf. Gauntlett & Hill, 1999), they do not regard it as an extension of their ‘social world’, but that of adults. This orientation towards news is identifiable even among those young people who, unlike others, use news to increase their awareness of national and global issues; these young people only “use this [news] knowledge to situate themselves as part of an ‘adult’ social group” (cf. Gauntlett & Hill, 1999:69). Buckingham (2004:1; cf. Gillipsie, 1995) observes this phenomenon in relation to teenagers. He notes that news consumption provides an incentive for those teenagers who wish to buy into adult status. Du Plooy-Cillier and Bezuidenhout (2003:11) also conclude that young adults see news as an “adult discourse”. Perception of what television news represent and stand for, automatically affects the levels of acceptability, credibility or rejection of the communicated ‘facts’ or ‘truth’. The point here is that young people are likely reject television news, irrespective of its truth or facts, if the contexts of these values are not their social words. In other words, how youth view television news as source of information is vital (cf. du Plooy-Cilliers and Bezuidenhout, 2003). Inspite of the importance and relevance of news information to the intended recipients, it cannot be perceived by the intended recipients to be adopting, for example, a paternalistic or top-down approach in its address; this has a potential of compromising the acceptability and effectiveness of the content. The manner
in which young adults perceive mainstream news texts is seen as a product of news practitioners’ failure to connect with youth.

**News practitioners failing youth**

One perspective that accounts for youth’s declining interest reasons that young adults’ declining interest is caused by mainstream television news practitioners’ detachment from, and their irrelevance, to everyday lives of young people (cf. Buckingham, 1999; Buckingham, 2001; Raeymaekers, 2004). Discernible in this position is that, were these news practitioners knowledgeable and cognisant of the nature of young adults’ ‘social worlds’ and report (ed) on them ‘accordingly’, the statistical share of young adults who regularly pay attention to television news texts would be comparatively higher.

This perspective presupposes that conventional news practitioners seem to operate under an erroneous presumption that all social groupings want and process news information in the same way; or, they have the same orientation towards information (cf. Katz, 1993). At the practical level, this presumption manifests itself through continued non-incorporation of those news aspects that would motivate young people to pay more attention to news (Tsedu, 2002). For Buckingham (2001:01) “the big problem is that news producers do not make an effort to connect with young people”. It is therefore, according to Buckingham (1999: 124), “the failure of the established news media to connect with forms of ‘everyday politics’ which are most important to this generation that accounts for their declining audience”. Katz (in Buckingham, 1997a: 347) “blames young people’s growing rejection of conventional journalism fairly and squarely on the journalist themselves”. For Katz journalists have abandoned the young.

Young people themselves hold conventional news producers responsible for young adults’ declining interests in news. They blame them for not offering any material that adolescents and young adults would be interested in (Pepler, 2003: 2). For young people television news’ political stories, in particular, do not seem to be relevant to their lives (Egan, 1999: 136). In a parallel observation on newspapers Barnhurst and Wartella (1998:280) observe that:

*Qualitative research on the recent decrease suggests that young readers do not find newspapers compelling because the*
information they encounter there has little connection to their social worlds, and without that link they have a hard time using newspapers to make themselves into knowledgeable participants in civic dialogue.

Importantly, if mainstream television news is an extension of a particular set of interests in the public sphere, its exclusion of youth socio-political interest, is a manifestation of how they ignored in the public sphere itself. This desertion is illustrated by the The Mail & Guardian when it notes, for example, that:

All leave for Britain’s journalists is cancelled when a few hundred elderly people converge on a seaside town for the annual conference of the British Conservative Party. Every stave and quaver of the death rattle of a moribund movement is recorded and drummed into our ears. But when 51 000 mostly young people converge for a conference on the future of politics they are ignored. Doubtless the papers will inform us again this week that young people have lost interests in politics. (When the young threaten power, 2003:1).

The growing gap between young people and mainstream television warrants the exploration of the extent to which determinants of mainstream news contents and structures such news values, definitions and practices actually accommodate youth-centric definition of news. While this exploration is central, there is no systematic attempt here to systematically chart all different determinants of news contents and structure by locating each of them in their intellectual, social and historical contexts.

**Historical conceptualization of news (and youth)**

“Descriptive as well as prescriptive definitions of news have been made in many different sections of our society and for many different purposes” (Jensen, 1986:26). These definitions, especially by news scholars, date as far back as 1690 (de Beer, van Ryneveld & Schreiner, 2000; Atwood & De Beer, 2001). However, because of ideological and theoretical locations of various news students, there is still no definitive consensus on what news is; more especially those occurrences and practices that ought to be newsworthy (cf. du Plessis, 2003; Eichholz, 2000). What is central to this chapter is whether the evolution of news definitions has accommodated youth perspectives. In this
regard, a brief look at historical and contemporary conceptualisations of news is necessary.

**Historical and contemporary conceptualization of news**

Historically, news has been understood to be a “notification of a variety of matters which occurred recently in various places in the world” (cf. de Beer, van Ryneveld & Schreiner, 2000; Atwood & De Beer, 2001). This conceptualisation, offered in 1690 by Tobias Paucer, a doctoral student at University of Leipzig, presents the first scholarly attempt to describe news and news reporting. Interestingly, it is still held highly contemporary (Louw, 2000). With respect to whether young adults also share this understanding of news, research on the relationship between young adults and television news also finds that young people also regard news to be a window to a world of events (Gauntlett & Hill, 1999). At is the issue here is not the conceptual difference between how news has been defined scholarly and how young adults define it; rather lack of significance with which young people treat news (see also above). This is because “while their [young people] numbers expand the ratings of news programs, they hardly take the programs seriously; [they] consider news just another programme in the flow- a reality-based variety show” (Barnhurst, 1998: 204). Does this mean that young adults disregard news as factual information also?

**News as factual information**

Significant in the contemporary conceptualisations of news is that it ought to be credible, factual information. As such, it should allow for effective functioning of the citizenry in the public sphere. This understanding of news as ‘objective’ factual information differentiates it from how it used to be understood, say, before 1830s (cf. de Beer & Tomaselli, 2000; Fiske, 1992; Schudson, 1978). Peucer (1690) and his contemporaries, for example, did not actually regard news as a narrative grounded in factual information. Observations by Atwood and de Beer (2001:487) note that Peucer regarded news as narratives that originated when “a number of men with mediocre learning emulated these
[historians] and compiled confused works based on letters of courtiers or merchants or mixed reports on recent events occurring here and there based on public rumour" (Peucer, 1690:VI). Atwood and de Beer (2001:487-488) further note that "Peucer and other authors of his time thus initiated the criticism of journalists as poor historians and an educationally deficient pack of rumour-mongering hacks" This is a along standing criticism that still generates occasional clashes between professional journalists and university scholars (Atwood & de Beer, 2001:488).

The contemporary understanding of news as objective is not just an abstract normative conception; it is also practical, regulated and legislatively enforced. Most liberal societies have legislative prescriptions and regulatory frameworks within which news providers have to conform to professional principles of objectivity, accuracy of facts, fairness of reporting, etc, in their processes of gathering and disseminating of news (cf. Gerbner, 1977; Gallagher, 1982; Retief, 2002; Oosthuizen, 2001). Apart from these arrangements, news practitioners themselves, to be assessed as providing factual information and objective news, have to proclaim their autonomy from general political, government and commercial influences. Generally, then the claimed objectivity of news from these forces is argued to be essential for the workings of democracy (cf. Fiske, 1987).

This contemporary understanding of news as initially noted above, provides a fundamental shift from how news used to be conceived in the very early decades of the nineteenth century. In this period the concept of objectivity (which is today indispensable to news that truly serves its consumers) did not always feature prominently in the news definition and critical analyses. Schudson (1978:4), for example, in his social history of American newspapers, confirms that:

Before the 1830s, objectivity was not an issue, American newspapers were expected to present a partisan view point, not a neutral one. Indeed, they were not expected to report the "news" of the day at all in the way we conceive it-the idea of news itself was invented in the Jacksonian era.

Fiske (1992:45-6) amplifies Schudson’s observation when he points out that:
In the nineteenth century, the press was partisan and news was explicitly an arena of public argument. Much of it, therefore, lay outside the control of the power-bloc and, indeed, contested that from popular points of view.... Central to this process was the displacement of the values of debate and difference by those of objectivity and truth.

Today, in promotion of news as professional product, as Oosthuizen (2001:462) and Hartley (1982:107-129) show, journalists avoid propaganda. They present a sense of objectivity and provide real information, and in television news, for example, they separate objective from subjective news (Oosthuizen, 2001:462).

If these values, then, from the point of view of society, scholars and practitioners, are part of the means through which news is conceptualised (right to the final product), part of the concern about young people’s declining interest in news should question if these values matter to them. This is part of the argument of this work. The central questions should be: ‘to what extent do young adults perceive television news in particular to be a provider of factual information that they need for survival’? To what extent then does the notion of objectivity (impartiality or neutrality) matter to young adults? Do these qualities motivate them to watch news? These factors matter to young adults and to a very large extent. In the focus-group discussions for this present study young adults commented on the issues of objectivity and balance with respect to the South African broadcast news providers: SABC and e-tv. Comparing SABC and e-tv news one participant summarised the general feeling as follows:

You find the exactly the same news clip on both channels, but on SABC3 it’s first and e-tv it’s fourth or fifth in the line up. Also, SABC edits all the clips to show positive things about Mbeki [the president of South Africa]. Both channels show the same snippet but SABC shows Mbeki shaking hands with everyone and e-tv shows the masses striking behind him.

What concerns this work is that scholarly literature, as noted above, provides almost no data on how young people are oriented towards television news texts on the basis of their factuality, fairness, objectivity, etc. Lacking in the youth-new media discourse is the
exploration of the congruence- or lack of - between youth and mainstream news definitions, which are continued below.

News Definitions Continued...

One of contemporary and informative works in the study of news is the pilot project undertaken by Eichholz (2000), which tests Shoemaker’s Theory of news deviance and social significance. Eichholz (2000) surveys and examines numerous studies in the news discourse, which he then subdivides into different themes and definitions of news. For the purposes of this chapter, the most relevant themes to this work are: traditional, content-based, journalism-based, public relations-based, culture and ideology-based and audience-based news definitions. Further explained below, these news definitions demonstrate areas of news that have been studied and theorized in the history of news discourse.

Traditional news definition

Research projects, whose objectives are to ascertain what news is from a traditional definition standpoint, pay particular attention on the following three aspects: producers, content and receivers of news. These three aspects in traditional news definitions have had an impact on some of the influential scholarly works like that of Cohen, Levy, Roeh, and Gurevitch (1996) in their study of Eurovision. These aspects have also characterized some of the work of The Glasgow University media group. This group, for example, speaks of “tripartite division of the research tradition, the sociology of broadcasting institutions, the sociology of audience responses and content analysis” (1995:373). So, in the traditional definition of news there some attention given to audiences; but this does not explicitly translation to attention to youth and news media.

Content-based news definition

While the circulation of meaning between the ‘stages’ are important in the traditional definitions of news, content-based definitions of news examine the actual product, news content. For Eichholz (2000:10), “the reason to examine news content is not only that it is
literally is news, but also that it reflects news production process”. Galtung and Ruge’s 1965 pioneering list of news values is the most vastly used in this regard.

**Journalist-based definitions of news**

Furthermore, research studies that examine journalist-based definitions of news centre on employees and employers in the news ‘manufacturing’ institutions. In this respect it is believed that the process of news production is impacted upon by factors that influence newsmakers themselves. Shoemaker and Reese (cited in Eichholz 2000), suggest that “journalists search for newsworthy items and thus journalistic news definitions are influenced by three intramedia elements: characteristics of individual journalists, daily newsgathering routines, and a wide variety of organizational factors”. In this work, this definition of news is contrasted with views that suggested that it has abandoned the young.

**Public-relations based definitions of news**

The public-relations based definitions of news diverge from focusing on the impact of employees and employers on the news content, but examine the influence of extramedia sources on journalist and news media organisations. Strongly implying that extramedia sources have great influence on news content, Sigal (1987:29) maintains, “news is, after all, not what journalists think, but what their sources say”. Sigal’s observation, however, downplays the gate-keeping powers, culture and ideology of news practitioners and their employers in the news manufacturing processes. Culture and ideology play a significant part in the selection of news.

**Culture and ideology-based definitions of news**

Accounting for what news is, Eichholz (2000), identifies also culture and ideology-based definitions of news. He asserts that “scholars who study the influence of culture and ideology on news definitions place news in a broad context that goes beyond factors purely related to content, production, outside influences, or audience perception” (Eichholz, 2000:27). Culture-based definitions of news, then, acknowledge that news is intertwined with other cultural factors influential and prevalent in each and every society.

134
Ettema, Whitney, and Wackman (1997 cited in Eichholz 2000:28) emphasise that “journalists live and work within an encompassing social and cultural context that powerfully and implicitly informs their attempts to make sense of the world”. In the other hand, Eichholz (2000) posits that ideology has the stronger potential to influence news definitions than culture is. He subdivides ideology-based definitions of news into direct and indirect influences on news. Direct ideological influence on news definitions is linked closely uthoritarian normative media theory⁸ and is censorship. In this situation, the government or similar authority with equivalent powers prescribes the publishable and non-publishable material for news workers and threatens with immediate sanctions in case of non-compliance with the stipulated decree.

Indirect ideological influence on news definitions, however, works differently. It is closely associated with Althusserian (1971), Gramscian (1971) and other Marxists and neo-Marxist works on ideology and hegemony, wherein, at the politico-cultural and socio-economic levels, the ideas and the views of the ruling class(es) prevails over those of subordinate classes. This class-based partial representation of the social whole manifests itself in the news contents.

The acknowledgement of the power of ideology in manufacturing of news in media and cultural studies has prompted constant challenge to the (above mentioned) basic definition of news. It is asserted that news “is not transparent, not the window on the world it often sets itself up to be” (Branston & Stafford, 1999:161). It is argued that “[their] constructed versions of events are not unbiased and usually serve the dominant interests. This matters particularly with television news, from which most people get their sense of the worlds daily happenings” (Branston & Stafford, 1999:161). News is not free-floating waiting to be discovered in the world outside the newsroom.

The abovementioned news definitions give strong indications of how news has been defined and also indicate strongly how the audience has been sidelined. It is from within audience-based definition of news that we should ask if youth’s understanding of news has been accommodated. Audience-based definitions of news are supposed to ask young people as to what constitutes news for them. Eichholz argues that the reason the

⁸ For the definition of the authoritarian theory, see Denis McQuail (1987:111)
views of news consumers are important is because of their influence in the news production.

**Audience-based definition of news**

Television stations endlessly undertake audience research to ascertain audience interests in their news provisions. However, a significant number of scholarly researches argue that despite these research projects aimed at finding out audience definitions of news, there are always *incongruences* between what news providers offer and what audiences demand (Raeymaeckers, 2004:223). The reason why news providers pay little attention to audience research findings is, according to Harrington (1998:473), “... because it raises the question about their power to construct the news for the public”. Studying journalists’ work in national news magazines, Gans (1980), concludes that journalists neither understand their audiences nor incorporate their feedback. What is news is a product of a journalist’s judgment. In the similar vein Hagen (1999:131) points out that “journalists make their decisions based on, among other things, what they perceive to be appropriate for the public”. Accentuating this point Branston and Stafford (1999: 162) argue that “like most television professionals, journalist make programmes for other television professionals, partly because their sense of the rest of their audience is very flimsy” (see also Schlesinger, 1987).

It is this context that the relationship between mainstream conceptualisation of news (be it historical or contemporary or be it scholarly or news media institution-based) and youth should be understood. From the above perspectives, it strongly seems that news never comprehensively accommodated anyone’s interests. Young adults are not the only ones who are excluded from the processes of news conceptualisations. Be that as it may, though, a theoretical framework that has significantly accounted for the relationship between youth and news media is socialisation theory. Through this framework we get an indication of the extent to which *effects models* have catered for youth interest.

**Accounting for relationship between youth and news: Effects Models**

The effects paradigm gives testimony to the fact that not all theories and paradigms have ignored youth in relation to news. Research on the relationship between youth and news
media developed mainly within the effects paradigm in the early 1970s (Buckingham, 1997b). By effects paradigm it is meant here that category of approaches that emphasise what media messages do to their audiences; theories that function on the presupposition media messages have influence on their recipients (cf. Branston & Stafford, 1999: 403). Different theories conceptualise media effects differently, some build from each other (see, Branston & Stafford, 1999; Fourie, 2001; Manning, 2001). In the 1920s, for example:

*The Frankfurt School theorised the possible effects of modern media, especially in response to German Fascism's use of radio and film for propaganda purposes and later to the experience, in exile, of the early power of US media, including advertising* (Branston & Stafford, 1999:404).

The 1930s and 1940s were slightly different. By this time it was generally accepted that media have a strong effect on the behaviour, thinking, and attitudes of media users (Hall, 1982: 57). Till today, however, despite researchers' employment of various research techniques for investigating media effects, results still not clear-cut. For Fourie (2001:291), though, “despite the fact that there are no clear-cut answers and proofs, the fact remains that the media are pervasive and do have influence of some kind on our existence...”

Amidst challenges to behavioural scientists' assumption of media's direct effects, 'two-step-flow' theorists, within the said paradigm, aimed to demonstrate how media information, instead of directly impacting on people, flowed in two stages. Their reasoning was that opinion leaders, the term they gave to heavy mass media users, rely on media for their news information, then they pass it along, informally and interpersonally, to others (cf. Infante, Rancer & Womack, 1990; Heath & Bryant, 1992; Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet 1944; Steinberg, 1999).

It is hardly surprising that news has been seen to have effects on societies. It is central in the operations of institutions of political, cultural, social and economic power, as well as in the private and public lives of citizens. Because of this understanding of the social role of news, 'assumed' news influence on societies have, over the years, triggered
myriad of effects-searching projects and solidified the case for effects theoretical approaches. As Jensen (1998:4) notes:

*a continuous line of this research has been the growing attention given, both in theory development and in empirical projects, to the complex social networks of influence through which news and other political communication can be seen to take effect - in, through, and around the media.*

Owing to the effects paradigm, early studies in the youth-news media discourse highlighted the importance of mass media as agents of political socialisation of young people (Atkin, 1977; Chaffee & Yang, 1990). Chaffee and Yang (1990:137), for example, “have repeatedly found that the news media play a central role in political socialisation” of young people. However, in subsequent studies, media’s political socialisation has frequently been seen to be mediated by other factors (Chaffee & Yang, 1990). Also recognising this, Jensen (1998:4), points out that “more recently, studies of political cognition and socialization” have extended the line of research that media messages are mediated through interpersonal means, by “exploring how news enters into individuals’ everyday awareness and readiness to act on political issues”. In the same area of research, some studies have established that young people, as well adults, who are high news media and public affairs consumers “exhibit many kinds of political autonomy...[and] they are independent of interpersonal influence” (Chaffee & Yang, 1990:139).

Other social scientific methods that have been tried as measure of impact and learning from news media are grounded in cognitive processing approach. Studies situated within this conceptual frame have been used to establish what and how much audiences remember after exposure to news. Jensen (1998:6) notes that this strategy has been applied particularly to the news media. This is:

*Partly because the information transferred (or not) would seem to be easily operationalised, partly also because the audience’s recall of news items might serve as one measure of how well the media fulfill their daily task of keeping the citizens of a democracy informed.*
Studies using cognitive processing approach have normally come to one common conclusion—that in many instances, news audiences appear to remember or understand comparatively very little of what they watched on the news. "Studies of the comprehension and retention of the news have consistently found that television news is a comparatively ineffective means of communicating information..." (Buckingham, 1996:178). Exploring young citizen's use of television news, Barnhurst and Wartella (1998:283), also conclude that "experiences with television news seem to boil down to a few memorable events". Buckingham (1997a:351) notes that, within a cognitive processing approach,

*There have been few studies specifically of children or young people, and these have mostly taken the form of experiments on the effects of different presentational formats in terms of recall and comprehension—for example, the contribution of film reports [...] the role of editing [...] and story sequencing.*

For Buckingham (1997a:351) even these tend to confirm what has become almost truism of research on adult's learning from news, which is that viewers understand learn comparatively little from what they watch.

*The reasons for this are typically seen to involve a combination of textual factors (such as the brevity of news items, or the frequent lack of connection between visual and verbal material) and audience factors (such as viewers' lack of attention or knowledge of background information) (Buckingham, 1997a:351).*

The foregoing indicates that there are traceable attempts within some effects approaches to explore the relationship between youth and news media. The only problem is that effects approaches in general do not give an indication of what young adults want from television news texts; but rather concentrate on what news media content do to young people. The area of news research that has not been explored in relation to youth is news value theory, to which this study turns.

*News values theory and youth's understanding of news*
There have been many adaptations of news values in the twentieth century since Galtung and Ruge’s 1973 list of news values. This list (and its interpretations by various news scholars) suggests that events that should be or that are considered newsworthy are those that are: negative, unexpected, concern elite people; recent, predicable, unambiguous, and of size that exceeds the threshold of news worthiness. Other important news values are: personalisation, narrativisation, visual imperative (cf. Branston & Stafford, 1999:162; Fowler, 1999:11-13; Galtung & Ruge, 1973, Oosthuizen, 2001:454).

There are some similarities between news values and what Peucer considered newsworthy items in his time. Newsworthy items for Peucer equally included: strange signs, monstrosities, wonderful and unusual works of nature and art, floods, earthquakes, wars, apparitions in the sky, new laws, judgments passed, church and religion (Louw, 2000). Although many of Peucer’s values and definitions are still relevant today, they generally present an evolutionary change and a conceptual shift (notwithstanding various positions within the news discourse), on how news used to be understood during his time. Today news practice is largely defined according to news values theory or criteria.

Like other news definitions, though, news values do not determine news mainly from an audience perspective, but from an institutional and journalistic perspective (cf. Atwood & de Beer, 2001:488). In practice, journalists all over the world continue to (unconsciously) employ these socially constructed news values as a criteria for assessing the newsworthiness of events or whether those events are worthy of being broadcast as news (Branston & Stafford, 1999:162; Fowler, 1999:11-13; Galtung & Ruge, 1973, Oosthuizen, 2001:454). In other words, news values fundamentally impact on the content and meaning of conventional television news that news audiences watch. Oosthuizen (2001:454-455) critically observes that “the more of these news values an event embodies, the greater its chances of being selected as news [...] The first point that could be made here is that events do not adhere to any of these news values will not become news”.

The critical questions that deserve to be asked here are: are they the content of news that appeals to young adults as well? What if young peoples’ motivations for news fall outside the socially constructed news values that determine news texts? The problem is that reviewed literature for this study indirectly reveals that there has been little direct
examination of the relationship between youth and news values in the youth and news media debate in media studies, especially against the backdrop of young peoples’ declining interest in television news. Participants in the youth-news discussion need to explicate the extent to which these news values pull or push away youth from conventional news. They need to question if they are relevant in constructing television news programmes fashioned specifically for youth markets; and if they are not, in what way can they be made relevant.

As promised in the introduction, this section presents those news values that have been ‘examined’ in relation to young people in general (not only young adults). Focus on these news values appears to have been unintended or attended to ‘in passing’ or indirect by section of the reviewed texts.

Negativity is one of the news values that form the character of conventional television news. Negative news items such as violence, wars, famines and natural disasters feature prominently in daily news broadcasts and young people, as part of the larger undifferentiated audience, are also exposed to them. The selection of these negative news items and the manner in which they are presented, according to news scholars (Branston & Stafford, 1999:164), are not really incidental. They are rather products of conscious decisions. As Buckingham (1996:178) notes:

_The decision to include or reject a particular item, to tell a story in a certain sequence, or to select accompanying visuals, for example, is based partly on assumptions about what will grab viewer’s attention, or what they will find exciting or moving or even upsetting (Author’s emphasis)._ 

No body of work exists on how young adults feel about negative stories on television. Cantor and Nathanson’s (1996) work, though on children, reflects the impact negative news broadcasts might have on children, (notwithstanding the robust scholarly debate in the effects paradigm on this subject). Their random survey of parents of kindergarten conducted, 37 percent of children were reported to have been frightened or upset by a news stories on television. “The top categories of stories producing fear were violence between strangers, foreign wars, and famines, and natural disasters” (Cantor & Nathanson, 1996:139). Stories of this nature still feature predominantly and make
headlines in news fashioned for undifferentiated news audiences. Reactions of young adults, on the other hand, to negative news items have not been fully explored.

A study that comes close to examining the aspect of negative news—though not directly referring to *negativity* as a news value—is the one by Barnhurst and Wartella (1998). These researchers demonstrate how news greatly changes moods of young people. In this study 92 percent of young participants said television news affected their moods; with 54.3% of these young participants specifying the most common mood, *sadness* (Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998, *author’s emphasis*). Not explored in this study and others in the discourse is the impact of *post-news-viewing-mood-shifts*, more especially in terms of young people’s perception of news, frequency of news watching, and on the general retention of young adults as consumers of television news.

On other news values: recent, topical events and those that involve elite persons are newsworthy for many television news networks when news values are used as criteria for news selection. The notion of *recency* demands that for an event to be considered newsworthy it should have occurred within the last twenty-four hours, corresponding to the frequency of the broadcast of the news programme. On the other hand, stories that involve *elite persons* can be stories that involve persons such a former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Interestingly, the list of subjects that young adult participants in du Plooy-Cilliers and Bezuidenhout (2003) research study wanted to see focused on in youth programmes did not quite fit the category of news such as topicality, recency and elite people. Part of what young adults wanted to see focused on are: relationship issues, career guidance, HIV/AIDS, dealing with drug addiction, dealing with stress, etc (du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003:13-14). The extent to which these news values are used and not used in news bulletins to address subjects that are of interests to young people is yet to be subjected to systematic research.

Mainstream news media emphasis on the *recency* events does not necessarily guarantee representation of youth’s ‘social worlds’. Conventional news broadcasts have tended to pay less attention to youth activities, and report heavily on topical activities where mainly adults are actors (cf. Buckingham, 1999; Buckingham, 2001; Katz, 1993; Raeymaeckers, 2004).
As noted also, newsworthiness of events/subjects is also determined by their involvement of elite persons or countries. This creates a problem, since selected elite persons or countries, for example, might not necessarily be accorded the same ‘eliteness’ status among young people, and youth social groups. Consequently, these elite persons might not necessarily be perceived to be of relevance to the social lives of the youth.

News values also, like the many news definitions are generally limited in representing youth news needs. Not only with regard to youth issues, news values have generally been argued to construct rather than accompany the gathering of news (see Branston & Stafford, 1999:162). Oosthuizen (2001:455) argues that those events that do not adhere to any of the news values will not become news.

It is not advocated here that natural and/or human-made catastrophes such as genocides, floods, earthquakes violence, etc., should not be reported on for young adults. It is, however, proposed that reporting on these happenings, using news values as the criteria, should be grounded on sustained systematic research on how youth need these issues reported on; it is also proposed that these issues should be looked at within youth-focused theoretical frameworks that determine how much negativity, for example, young adults can handle, and how much it can de-motivate them from watching news. Youth-centred definitions of news try to give voiced youth perspectives in this regard.

Towards a youth-centered definition of news: practical and theoretical recommendations to arrest the decline

The historical lack of conceptualization of mainstream news from youth-centered perspectives has created a space of growing number of youth-centered perspectives in the news media discourse. (Some) based on n evidence gathered from youth respondents themselves, these perspectives range from being practical recommendations to being semi-theoretical frameworks; and common among them are types of contents and formats conceived to be capable of luring young people back to the news watching experience. Valuable as they are, however, they are not specific to the types of television news contents and styles that young adults, in rejection of conventional adult-centric news texts, would prefer. Then, to focus on those definitions and practices that could be said to
be youth-centered, the following discussion revolves around literature that addresses relationships between children/teenage and television news.

Buckingham (1997a:1997b; cf. Dahlgreen, 1995), to start with, suggests that the fundamental questions, for researchers, may be to look at how television addresses and constitutes the viewers as citizens and as potential participants in the public sphere. Furthermore, Buckingham (1997b:120) notes that “nevertheless, these questions and dilemmas may well be even more acute in relation to children, and in relation to news programmes which are produced specifically for them”.

For adults attending to news is strongly perceived as another aspect of fulfilling civic duties (Hagen, 1997). The carrying out of this civil responsibility, watching news, motivates adults to attend to news media. However, children and youth may experience no such impulses (Buckingham, 1997b). “To a greater extent, perhaps, than adults, children [and youth] have to be enticed to watch” (Buckingham, 1997b:120). In this respect, the production of news targeted at youth would not only mean, then, the simply provision of information _per se_, but should also means a concerted effort to entice young people to be active participants and ‘citizens’ in the public sphere. Scholarly and professional recommendations of what should be incorporated in and characterize the production of news for young people are emerging in this respect.

Central to these recommendations are suggestions that news for youth should be entertaining while simultaneously informing of the events as they unfold (ed). This need to be executed in a fashion that reflects young peoples, “existing enthusiasms and cultural experiences” (Buckingham, 1997b:120).

Some news events can be clearly understood within some particular contexts and with particular background, especially for young people whose knowledge of their environments is not as rich as those of their elderly counterparts. Since young people, therefore, sometimes, might not have already existing knowledge of events presented as news, news aimed them should have more background to the events. This should be practiced in order for them to understand what Buckingham (1997b:120) calls “foreground of news events”. Existing literature on news programmes suggest that, even for adult-centric news, news practitioners often fail to provide adequate background of events and topics in order to contextualize and explain them fully (Iyengar, 1991). For
Buckingham (1997b), this problem requires particular care in relation to children; one may also add in relation to young adults as well.

Research on youth and news suggest that young people would like news and current affairs programmes that position themselves at the same level as youth (cf. Buckingham, 1997a; 1997b). It is argued that youth can attend to news programmes that reflect and understand their social world. This is the type of news that also attends to the contemporary young people’s concerns. It is further said that young people would not appreciate paternalistic news programmes that are perceived as talking down on them, which could possibly be the reason why they are staying away from the adult-centric conventional news.

Research on existing children and youth television news channels shows that news events constructed with employment of thematic frames seem to work well with children. It would be advisable for scholars who are interested in youth and news relationship to put this into test. It is advisable for news providers as well to experiment with this when constructing news for young people. (Lloyd, 2001:1) proposes that “news needs to be more issue based generally than event driven”.

Thematic framing of events referred to here is the placement of “public issues in some general or abstract context, providing more background information about general outcomes or conditions” (Buckingham, 1997b:126; Iyengar, 1991). Thematic frames stand against episodic frames which tend to characterize ‘adult-centric’ news. “Episodic frames are orientated around specific events or individuals case studies” (Buckingham, 1997b:126).

Furthermore, it is said that young people might attend to news programmes they consider less conventional and formal (see Pepler, 2003). They are attracted to informality in news programme presentation. Formality for them comes in different ways; it could be the language that is used in the news content, the appearance of the news presenters, the camera angles and so on.

Judging the presenters’ dress code of the three children news channel which he studied, Buckingham (1997b) discovered that they did not dress formally, but causally. This also has a bearing on young people’s perception of news. Presenters of news in Buckingham’s research did not use formal language in the address of their audience, but
language common among young people. When these presenters were greeting their viewers, for example, they would not say “good evening and welcome” but “yo! what’s up?” (Buckingham, 1997b). A Johannesburg-based youth radio station- Youth-fm (Y-fm) has incorporated ‘street’ language in its news production as well. Instead of using terms like ‘police’ and ‘children’ which are used in many adult-centric news stations, its uses ‘cops’ and ‘kids’ respectively. The station claims that this system works well with its targeted audience (Hafajee, 1998:1).

Some media commentators (cf. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998) have also proposed, for example, that news should be entertaining (Fiske, 1992), “while others suggest that news needs to include more stories about small political entities such as schools, churches, and neighbourhoods from the everyday lives of young people” (Barnhurst & Wartella, 1998; 1991). This aspect is very important in terms of news categories’ content. What kind of content do young adults want?

Many of these abstract recommendations, however, still require vigorous evaluation grounded in various research methodologies and using youth as news recipients themselves. Second, they need to be examined and assessed, more especially in terms of their applicability to the actual processes of television news construction.

**Conclusion**

**Television news texts and youths’ declining interest: exploring possibilities**

Television news media practitioners have tried to develop remedies and practical strategies to attract young viewers. Part of these strategies has been to use young television news presenters/anchors that young audiences can identify with (Egan, 1999). According to Egan (1999:137) “using a younger anchor and youth-related stories to attract the 18-24-year-olds are ideas grounded-in-social-identity-theory”.

The theory postulates that individuals seek out messages that support their identity. On the grounds of this theory, Harwood (1997) reasons that older people like to see themselves on television and also young people like to see more people like them, in situations matching their own. Egan’s point on identity and its influence youths media
programme choices is drawn from Harwood's work. Harwood's (1997) work: *Viewing age: Lifespan Identity and Television Viewing Choices* draws, combines two theoretical positions *Uses and Gratifications* and *social identity*.

*Uses and Gratifications* theory has stimulated considerable research in recent years. It has served a fundamental paradigm shift from the *Effects Model* noted above. *Uses and Gratifications* theory demonstrates that individuals consciously and creatively seek media messages that correspond to their social and psychological needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974; Rosengren, Wenner, & Palgreen 1985). However, according to Harwood (1997:203), "to date, the motivations for viewing particular shows have been considered primarily at the individual level... or at interpersonal level".

Using both uses and gratifications and social identity theories, it is plausible to argue that the gratifications sought out of and obtained from a particular television genre do not only satisfy particular personal needs; but also enhance social identities that determine social group memberships of a media users. In this respect, for young people (or any other social group for that matter), the uses of a particular television genre at an individual level determine, socially, if they are "fitting in or sticking out" (Miles, Cliff & Burr, 1998:81). Such consumption could be an expression of group identity in contrast with other social groups.

In terms of the social identity theory individuals have a need to maintain and reinforce the positively valued distinctiveness of their ingroups compared to outgroups to achieve a positive social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). By contrasting their ingroup with various outgroups people gain self-esteem. "For example, young people may gain self-esteem through positively contrasting youth with negative impressions of being elderly" (Harwood, 1997:203-4). Except for Harwood's (1997) work, social identity theory has paid little attention to media use. In this chapter it is therefore proposed that the role played by personal and social identity needs in determining media choice require special scholarly attention. The need to belong to a particular social group determines media consumption. News providers therefore need pay particular attention to the possibility that news consumption could be driven by social identity.

Lastly, the other important aspect is the role of the transactional nature of communication. News practitioners have a tendency of downplaying the transactional
nature of communication, which is the process of exchanging messages and negotiating meanings to establish and maintain relationships. Although the application of this definition of communication is usually applicable in interpersonal contexts of communication (Verderber, 1990; Steinberg, 1999), it can be usable where news providers intend to inform and be informed of young people’s social world and where young people are to be used as sources of information (see Pepler, 2003).
CHAPTER SEVEN

SECTION A

YOUNG ADULTS SOUTH AFRICANS MOTIVATIONS FOR WATCHING AND THEIR RECEPTION OF LOCALLY-PRODUCED TELEVISION NEWS: RESEARCH RESULTS

Musa Ndlovu

Abstract

The present study set out to explore young adult South Africans motivations for watching and their reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and etv. This exploration is informed by a particular background: an accumulative body of international scholarly work into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. Of this body of international scholarly works, those singular works that are constitutive of a South African-specific literature in the collective are quantitatively scarce and between themselves have produced contradictory results. However, both local and international, and because of their research focus and general orientation (see above), so far have paid little attention to young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, let alone in the South African context. In the view of this work, an understanding of young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news is central to the appreciation of the relationship between them and television news- a relationship, which in turn, magnifies on the relationship between young adults and the general public sphere. Methodically, for understanding young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, young adults were asked, in the focus group interviews, to explain their subjective orientations towards codes of form and content of locally-produced television news. To respond to the question being explored, the study has the following assumptions, sub-problems and research questions: First, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial news, and weather news events? Second, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves? Are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger newscasters?
Third, are young people who are between the ages of 18-24 more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics)? The general purpose of this chapter then is to report on the sample of South African young adult participants’ formulations and argumentations about their motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and e.tv.

Keywords
Frequency of viewing, research results,

Introduction
The present study set out to explore young adult South Africans motivations for watching and their reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and e.tv. This exploration is informed by a particular background: an accumulative body of international scholarly work into youth-news media relationship strongly points to a statistical and qualitative decline in the share of young adults who regularly attend to television news. Of this body of international scholarly works, those singular works that are constitutive of a South African-specific literature in the collective are quantitatively scarce and between themselves have produced contradictory results. However, both local and international, and because of their research focus and general orientation (see above), so far have paid little attention to young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, let alone in the South African context. In the view of this work, an understanding of young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news is central to the appreciation of the relationship between them and television news— a relationship, which in turn, magnifies on the relationship between young adults and the general public sphere. Methodically, for understanding young adults’ aesthetical reception of television news, young adults were asked, in the focus group interviews, to explain their subjective orientations towards codes of form and content of locally- produced television news. To respond to the question being explored, the study has the following assumptions, sub-problems and research questions: First, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, provincial news, and weather news events? Second, are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be
motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves? Are young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger newscasters? Third, are young people who are between the ages of 18-24 more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics)? The general purpose of this chapter then is to report on the sample of South African young adult participants’ formulations and arguments about their motivations for watching and reception of locally-produced television news on SABC and e.tv. We begin by exploring the frequency of viewing as this factor was central to the recruitment and is a measure of motivation.

Frequency of viewing

The qualifying question which had been posed during the recruitment process regarding potential participants’ frequency of news watching was repeated at the start of each focus-group discussions for purposes of establishing consistency in the participants’ responses. Only young adults who had suggested a news-watching frequency of three times and more a week could participate in the discussions: the study’s assumption was that it was mostly young adult familiar with news aesthetical conventions who could offer in-depth inputs in terms of news interpretation.

Young adult participants, as it was expected, reported a regular television news watching behavior. Specifically, these participants’ news watching behavior was more than three times each week. The testimony to regular news-viewing tendency was their continuous reference to specific news report when they illustrated certain specific points. Noticeable also was that news-viewing was not a co-incidence; rather, a conscious behaviour. Very few participants reported that they watched news only when they had time. For example, one participant revealed that: “I watch it (news) everyday because I watch Isidingo before the news. (Isidingo is a popular local soap opera aired on SABC 3). Other participants reported that they watched news “every time”.

151
Integral to this question exploring frequency of viewing is the issue of duration of viewing. In response to it, most young people responded that they tuned fairly longer to the news broadcasts, with the majority reporting to be tuning to news for longer than twenty minutes. It has to be remembered that focus-group interviews were conducted at the time when SABC3 and e-tv news programmes were not aired the same time. The possibility of zapping between these two news broadcasts now exists as they are now head-to-head.

The frequency of news-viewing and the length of time that young adults spend tuned into particular news broadcasts strongly challenges the notion that young adults are generally losing interest in television news. This is conclusion is reached in full cognisance of the fact that the generalisability of the results of this current study is limited (as detailed in the delimitations section of CHAPTER ONE). Further, young adult student participants’ frequency and duration of news viewing, as expressed here, reinforces the point recurring throughout this study that young adults South Africans’ orientation towards locally-produced television news cannot be generalized yet. The news programmes that young adults reported to have watched regularly and each for a longer duration are broadcasts that are aired in the evening.

The First Assumption

Participants had to respond to questions specifically relating to the three assumptions this study makes about its units of analysis. The first assumption is that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news-categories about national, international, sports, entertainment, traffic, business, and weather news events?

National and/or international news

On the question of whether participants were likely to view news for national or international stories, three categories of participants emerged: there were those who had a high preference for national news; those who were highly orientated towards international issues, and those for whom these categories were never really
predetermined, as long they had a good story framed within them. Importantly, these preferences were mediated by largely by social class.

The majority of working ‘working-class’ participants responded that they were more likely to watch television news for national issues. The rational for this preference is the national stories are literally about local issues that are immediate and affect them almost directly. This is to the degree that some young people even indicated that they would also prefer news about their immediate communities or townships.

These participants who demonstrated high motivation for viewing news for national happenings were largely based in the Pretoria region, of working-class economic status, living at home and oriented towards SABC news in South African indigenous languages.

These particular participants felt uncomfortable about e-tv’s limited coverage of national issues. They felt it was provincially and regionally biased. One participant protested that: “One of the things I do not like about e-news is that it mainly covers Cape Town and Durban; it rarely focuses on other provinces such as Mpumalanga, Limpopo, etc.”

SABC was the preferred channel for national news, as one participant noted that: “For me the SABC... it is because they focus more on local news and stuff. I am more interested in local news than international news. I want to know what is happening in Petersburg (now Limpopo), KZN, etc. Another one added: I prefer SABC1 because it focuses on my background. SABC1 talks about South Africans. It is about national news.”

The relationship between home-living working class young adults and television in the public service broadcaster-SABC- reveals interesting information. First, while, as it can be seen below, middle-class and upper-class young adult are turned off by SABC news because of its political orientation, working-class young adults follow SABC news because of the priority it gives to national news. Working class young adult’s orientation to national political news can through interest in politics as well, as they are the ones who still attend political rallies in South Africa.

---

9 The character of South African television news programming is such that local, community and provincial events are reported on by broadcasters if they are perceived to have a national appeal. SABC terminated regional television services meant to cover regional issues. Perhaps regional news services can be resumed if the proposed two additional channels materialize.
There is also, in terms of this study's definition of socialization theory, the role of the family. Most of the young people in this instance lived in working class homes with their parents and in environment that socialized them into paying more attention to issues that affected them directly—national and local issues.

It is partly for these reasons that this study works on the presupposition that textual reading and perception are socio-cultural imports; in other words, human subjects’ reading and perception of texts, in this case young adult South African’s reading/reception of locally-produced television news, are products of socialization and culturation.

Then there were participants who preferred balance between national and international stories presented that they do not determined long before a news television programmes begins what they would love to watch. As one participant states:

*International news, national news, mix of everything, you need to know what is going on everywhere. National news but they always leave out national news, like all the corruption and housing issues.*

Even though this group does not have a high orientation towards either national or international stories, middle-class and upper-class participants among it tended to have a low preference for national government-orientated stories, and they were likely to change channels if these kinds of stories came up. One ‘middle-class’ participant said of her selection of stories: “It is not pre-determined, it depends on the subject. But if it is a government thing, I am likely to change to another channel.” Another participant added that:

*Generally I am quite interested in the international news. Last year I was more interested in the national news because of the elections (South Africa’s third democratic national elections in 2004). I find the local news often like, oh well, this politician went here and that one went there (making cynical gestures).*

Most Cape Town-based participants were of middle-class background and had high inclination for international news stories. One participant summed up the orientation of this category to when said:
I agree. I think international news gets my attention more. I think it is just the politics (national)... I do not really understand it- I do not know who is who. So I don’t really watch that (national aspect of news).

Another participant:

I agree. I think I much prefer to watch something much more international. Parliament is not interesting ... certain things like when the Pope died my family had news on like constantly, when the Tsunami happened, my mother was watching like constantly”.

Another:

When there is something bigger, I saw something on the newspaper. National news tends to be extremely boring too. On the day of the September 11 I watched the news the whole day.

From the information obtained for this research study it can be cautiously concluded that social class tend to mediate young adult’s orientation to news information. Working class young adults tend to have less inclination for international news, while middle-class young adults do not prefer national political news and politics. The preference of national or international stories is also dependent on the manner in which news broadcasters interpellate their viewers (see CHAPTER THREE). Although social class tended to determine participants’ motivations for watching news for national and/or international issues, common among the participants, irrespective of social class, was the fact that they were less likely to watch news for business news.

Business news

Focus-group discussions revealed that most of participants were less likely to view and understand business news; Instead of business news, discussions revealed, participants were more likely to watch news for political and entertainment issues. One of the participants said that:
After ten minutes they switch to business and that doesn't really interest me. Sometimes I switch back on for weather if I'm bothered or have something planned.

Another participant also said that: "I am not likely to watch news for business. I think I am more likely to switch off when the business comes up." With cynicism another concluded: "I am so uninterested in business news."

Justifications were provided for this negative attitude towards business news category. From these reasons it can deduced that many participants did not see the immediate impact of business news to their lives. The content of business news was perceived to be irrelevant, aloof, abstract, and not talking about the situation of the people it addressed. One participant protested that:

*News should talk about things that affect us (youth). There should be more current affairs stories about crime and AIDS. It really does not help to talk about New York stock exchange when it does not really hit you. At least they should not just give stock exchange; they should explain how it actually affects us.*

In this regard business news seemed to be that element that makes mainstream news to appear as an adult discourse. Another participant shared this view: "I am more inclined towards political news, HIV, crime, racism and all the things that affect us (young adults)."

On other hand, however, some young people, very few as they were, argued that there was a need to follow business news because whatever happens in the area of the economy affects everyone.

What also appeared to be a major problem with television business news was the language in which it is presented. Many participants felt that the concepts and terms used in the presentation of business news were complex, technical, discipline-specific, and generally difficult to understand, thus *de-motivating* them from watching this category of news broadcasts. While the majority of the participants were less likely to watch news for business news reports, they differed sharply on watching news for sport-orientated news stories.
Sport news

Youth participants differed greatly on the likelihood to view news programes for sport news. Most participants clearly disliked sport news. Their responses ranged from: “Basically, I hate sport;” “I would not watch it,” to “I turn off the channel or switch to another one.” For some it is the size of the sport event that entices them to watch: “If it something or big sport even I do watch. If it is after a big rugby match I watch”.

Others said they were more likely to watch if variety of sport events were covered. One participant advised that: “They should show each and every sport code that is representing South Africa so that we can be interested on watch them.”

Other participants, however, felt that there should be “more political and human interests’ stories and less sport.” These vast differences, however, cannot be attributed to gender differences, rather to individual attitude towards sport itself or other types of sports.

Weather reports

Weather news is the most commonly preferred category of television news among all the participants. Participants demonstrated that they were most likely to watch television news for weather news reports irrespective of the broadcast time of the news programme. The times they reported to be likely to watch weather reports differed with the specific time they were likely to watch news for traffic news reports.

Traffic news reports

Most of the participants reported that they were more likely to watch traffic reports on television news provided they were presented in the mourning news broadcasts. The rationale for this preference of news reports in the mourning is that it prepares people for the day. For many there was no apparent reason traffic should be reported in the evening news.
The Second Assumption

The second assumption assumes that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that contain stories about people like themselves. Secondly, it assumes that young adults who are between the ages of 18-24 are likely to be motivated to watch television news programmes that are presented by younger news-presenters.

Viewing news programs presented by people like yourself)

Participants' responses differed markedly regarding whether they were likely to watch news programmes that were anchored by people like themselves. A significant number of participants considered any introduction of young adult news-presenters as tantamount to devaluing the stature of the television news genre itself. Vehemently objecting to this prospect one participant said: "I do not believe in young people presenting the news." This strong objection was supported by another participant who presented that: "Personally, I wouldn't like to see someone my age presenting the news. I think late 20s and early 30s is okay."

Asked to justify this negative reaction to the prospect of introducing news young anchors, this particular cohort of participants conceded that this reaction might be a product of socialization. As this participant presented:

\[
\text{I think it is the mindset: I think our mindset is already programmed to watching news presented by older people. I would like to watch someone who is 28 or 30, and then the young one like me can be on the scene (field reporters).}
\]

Central to the objection to having younger news-anchors were the issues of experience and maturity. Their age mates, younger anchors of between the ages of eighteen to twenty-four, were considered not to possess these values. A regular news-viewer participant justified why he was less likely to watch news presented by presenters who were or looked his age.

\[10\text{ Most of the questions for the second and third assumptions are drawn from Egan's (1999) research article.} \]
I wouldn’t like to see someone like myself presenting the news because people like my age barely know what is going on in politics. (He is viciously attacked for this generalising statement). I do think that they are not conscious enough about politics.

Despite the objections to the over-generalizations of this participant with respect to political knowledge, others concurred that the introduction of younger news anchors would be a good idea. As another participant argued: ‘‘... but I tend to believe that old people they know what they are talking about.’’

Another participant agreed with this view and used an example of depositing money at the bank through a young banker-teller to illustrate her point:

*I think it is like when you go to a bank...when I get this like really young person, you can see that like is fresh of like banking school. It is like you don’t wanna really hand over your money, but ...it is like if you have an older person you kinda trust them more.*

A significant number of other participants, however, disagreed with this view. They were quite welcoming of the notion of the South African-produced television news being presented or anchored by fellow young adults. These participants were of the view that young adult news-presenters would make news more attractive to young people in general. Second, they felt that young recipients of news would identify with young news readers. It was strongly suggested that that television stations must ‘‘take in the youth’’. One participant said: ‘‘What we want to see are young people reading the news. We want people who are twenty, no forty-five and above.’’ Another participant added: ‘‘We want younger people reading the news. The way news is presented, however, should not change. We should be able to take them serious.’’

The qualification that younger news-presenters should present themselves in such a way that they are taken seriously, is almost similar to the one in Egan’s (1999) study findings. Egan (1999) found that younger news anchors (age 20-30) are not sufficiently important to age 18-24 to replace long-time anchors; 34 per cent of 18-24-year-olds in her study said youth was important; but maturity was important to 42.8 per cent of the 25+ and also 48.2 per cent of the 18-24-year olds.
Although some participants recognized the necessity for news producers to connect with youth through introducing younger news-presenters, they foresaw certain problems with this proposal. They were worried that there would be questions with respect to authenticity and accuracy of the stories due to the stigma of inexperience and unreliability associated with young teams. For them this shows that there is still a problem with establishing that connection with youth. One critical news-viewer felt that young people were mistrusted with information.

*I don't have a problem with young people presenting news. It is that I just don't think it will ever happen- that we will ever be given a chance. Because I think it's assumed that we are not capable of political active stuff. There is lot of condescending assumptions.*

For many of the participants it did not really matter if the news reader was male or female. The strong impression given, however, was that it would be much preferred if the news was representative of all the gender groups.

Other female participants, however, felt that women should read the news to enhance women empowerment. A persona used as an example of female news-reader that should read the news was that of SABC female sports-presenter Carol Manana. “She is young, intelligent and good-looking”, participants observed.

Some participants argued that not all stories could be presented by young people. One presented that: “It depends also on the nature of the story. If you have young person like, I do not know, presenting something serious, it is not okay.”

**Watching television news program for presenter’s personality**

On the question of whether participants were likely to watch a news programme on the basis of the personality of the news-presenter, they were very few people who responded that they were less likely a watch news programmes for this aspect.

A significant number of participants revealed that they were more likely to watch e-tv news @ Seven because of its senior news anchor, Debora Patta. They had different
reasons why they liked her. For others Patta exudes professionalism and gives an impression of being in charge. One participant observed that: "...she maintains a sense of professionalism when doing a broadcast. She is also believable and this is due her strong personality."

Others liked her for the fact that her interviewing style is serious, intimidating and generally aggressive. "I like Debora Patta. I like the fact that she scares me."

Others liked the conversational tone with which she presents the news. As one participant observes: "...she doesn't report or lecturer down to us. She rather includes us in the process of discovering and exploring news, facts, issues and events. It makes far more interesting." Another participant said of Patta: "The thing is that she not sitting there telling us that she is like us or she is with us."

There were a significant number of participants who said they were more likely to watch SABC news for its female news presenters. To this effect, one participant said that: "Definitely. I like SABC3 because I feel I can trust what they are saying (news-readers). The presenters are presentable and formal and old enough to look knowledgeable. They also tell news in a straightforward way."

This female participant said the following of the SABC3 news presenters: "The girls on SABC3 are fascinating to watch there are very pretty."

Other participants suggested that a news presenter's personality was likely to influence their choice of news broadcasts. They further suggested that a newsreader should be of presentable personality. One participant noted that:

[It is not only about the news content]; "the person (reading the news) should be interesting too”. First impression lasts. The person should dress nice”. "She or he should be presentable, good-looking. Even if we did not intend to watch the news if the person is attractive, we will be interested in watching the news.

Some participants saw more than a 'newsreader'; as one participant suggested: "Sometimes you are just bored and gee! There is this hunk reading the news. You are not interested in what he says, but in him."
Presenters’ personalities are part of the consideration about whether to watch a particular news programme or not. One participant argued: “It makes a difference. You want someone who makes you want to watch the news, someone who has a hidden energy.”

Participants who watched SABC news loved the SABC1 weather man, Jabu Sithole and were more likely to watch the weather section of the news because of his manner of weather news presentation.

The Third Assumption

The study’s third assumption is largely about style or format of probable newscasts. It presumes that young people who are between the ages of 18-24 are more likely to be motivated to watch television news programme styles/formats that are characterised by fast-pacing; pop music; computerised graphics; in-depth news reports; broadcasts live from the scene; weather reports with animation; superimposed titles, artwork, animation (graphics).

Formality vs. informality of news presentation

In the focus-group discussions there were participants who disliked the formality of the SABC news. Young people’s dislike of formality in news broadcast structure has been noted by some researchers in this area (cf. Buckingham, 1997a: 347; du Plooy-Cilliers & Buzuindenhout, 2003; Katz, 1993). Therefore, it was not very surprising that very few young adults would prefer newscasts that are presented in a formal fashion and that many would prefer semi-formality/informality as, to a considerable degree, typified by e-tv news broadcast.

Newsreaders’ style of dress or dress code was one of the aspects that were examined with respect to issue of formality/informality in the news presentation. There were those participants who did not prefer news presenters to dress formally.

On the other hand, the argument among some of the participants who favored formal dress code was that news should be given the respect it deserves. Informal dress
code of newsreaders was seen by this share of participants as demeaning to the formal stature of news.

Very few participants in the focus-groups preferred or would prefer news programmes that are presented in a formal and traditional manner. For these participants the SABC news broadcasts’ style and format epitomized formality and seriousness in news presentation as one participant notes, rather cynically:

SABC3. I like (its) formality and the way it is packaged. If I want something entertaining, I would watch Dube on Monday (a comedy show starring Desmond Dube), for example. But news is news. Is should be like Deborah Patta’s Third Degree” (Third Degree is a serious investigative current affairs programme aired on e-tv).

This formality of the SABC news was supported by another participant who that “the SABC has the old format. It kinda like makes you feel safe that they have the real thing. It is that same old format. Sometimes with e-tv’s informality you doubt if you have the real thing.” Another participant said of e-tv:

I don’t like the whole intimate thing e-tv is trying to do. When I watch the news I watch it for the current, topical facts and goings that we need to hear about. These things are generally serious and therefore must be treated in serious manner. Otherwise it looks like they are just taking facts and chatting about them instead of reporting them to us objectively.

In this respect, one participant strongly argued that: “News is news. I would not prefer somebody reading news wearing jeans and T-shirts. Not at all”. One participant noted that it should be clear that you “are reading the news”. SABC was seen as epitome of this formality. “SABC news readers dress okay. We have to take into cognizance the fact that they are reading news; so they have to look formal”. The other shared this need for formality in the manner that news readers dressed-up: “News has to be respected; so I prefer formality”.

While these participants perceived formality in style, format and general character of SABC news structure as giving respectability and prominence to the genre of news,
others saw it as boring and lacking in dynamism that they expected of the news. One participant notes:

_I would not go for SABC news. They are too formal and stereotyped. E-tv caters for everyone. SABC is formal. Even if you look at some of their news readers they are older man. Formality itself... we young people we want something more vibrant. SABC is boring. Udi (e-tv news-reader) presents in a cool manner. SABC should try and bring news within the reach of the youth market. We like the news but the problem is the manner of presentation. And also the people sometimes are boring. Those old people like Makhaya Mani (SABC news-reporter). And you look at e-people; they have these vibrant, young people. Look at their setting in the studio..._

This aspect of formality of newscasts is also examined in the study by du Plooy-Cilliers and Buzuindenbou (2003). This study’s reference to this aspect is worth quoting in full as it illuminates some of the points raised in this section of the study. According to du Plooy-Cilliers and Buzuindenbou (2003:12):

_Most of the participants felt that news programmes were aimed at middle-aged adults (not at youth), and that the style of presentation was dull. One of the participants said that: “news programmes are aimed at middle-aged adults and the formality of the presentation makes it boring. It is always the same people, sitting at the same desk, wearing smart but incredibly boring corporate clothing, with the same hairstyle. There is no variety in the presentation”. Another respondent made the following remark: youth are prone to be bored with news content because we are bombarded by media products and we are used to more exciting communication forms._

Between participants who favoured formality in the news programmes, with SABC as quintessence of this, and those who favoured semi or informality as epitomized, in this context, by e-tv, some participants felt the focus should be on the presentation of particular topics or items; as one participant noted:

_... Entertainment can be news. It is how you present it. News should be presented in such a way that if it something formal and serious, it should be formal. If it something that is news and_
entertaining is should be entertaining at the same time. SABC is too formal, but it has an understanding that politics is formal.

There are other factors that determine preference for either formality or informality. Egan (1999:137) notes that:

Sunbeam TV Corporation found that the location makes a more significant difference than age in audience tastes in news production variables: younger commentators, more current music and graphics, creative camera angles, and fast-paced editing captured a younger audience in Miami, but not in conservative Boston.

Watching either SABC or e-tv newscasts for language purposes

First, some young adult student participants chose to watch SABC news on the grounds that it offers them an opportunity to access news in indigenous African and home languages, other than English only. This is a personal choice, perhaps linguistic and political in nature, influenced by the corporations’ perceived stance on representing indigenous languages in which various newscasts are presented. The perception is that unlike e-tv which broadcast news only in English language, the SABC accommodates people of various language groups. One participant said: “I prefer SABC news...SABC caters for people who do not understand English. That is why they have news in all the languages.” Another said: “SABC is more interesting for me because news is presented in my home language.”

Second, what also emerged is that some participants watched SABC news programmes presented in languages different to their mother languages for purposes of learning other indigenous African languages. Very few participants, however, were engaged in this exercise. Other participants equally preferred news presented in the English language.

Third, for most participants, for whom English language is a second language, English news is regarded as the conduit through which new terms and concepts can be acquired to enrich ones’ English language vocabulary. Acquiring these terms and concepts is seen as means of intellectual growth and sophistication. Participants, for
whom English is a second language, perceived news presented in English language as not only providing information, but playing an educational role as well. One participant rhetorically asked: “How else are we to learn? There are new terms that are to be learned, [and] then you consult your dictionary.” Participants’ perception of English language should be understood in the broader contexts of English language perception among youth and language policy and debates in South Africa.

Fourth, as much as it might be too premature to state that some young adults are shying away from news programmes presented in African indigenous languages, there are concerning language-related pointers which, as much as they cannot be exaggerated on the basis of the scope of this qualitative section of the whole research, are important to monitor in future research studies. Some Black African young adults demonstrated inability to fully comprehend news in their own home languages. This factor, arguably served as deterrent from watching news presented in home language to preference of news presented in English language.

One participant complained that: “There some things we do not understand on SABC2, because of the language” (please see above for languages that SABC2 presents newscasts in).

It is not the first time it is discovered that some young adults, more especially among Black Africans, are unable to understand television programmes news presented in their own home languages. Du Plooy-Cillier and Bezuidenhout (2003:11) note that young adults felt that news programmes presented in African languages used language that was too sophisticated and abstract to comprehend. According to these researchers young adults also feel excluded by the use of sophisticated African language.

Participants felt that African languages were too ‘deep’ to understand, hence a barrier to watching news in African languages. Most young IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, SeSotho etc speakers said they could not understand news in their languages. “They are so hard to... (news- readers), I can’t understand them. I ask people to translate for me half the time, so I might as well watch news the English news,” said one African-language speaking participant.

Incorporating informal or ‘street’ language

166
The overwhelming majority of the participants demonstrated that they were less likely to watch television news programmes that are presented in an informal or street language. The justification for this stance was that it would simply not be appropriate for news to incorporate ‘street’ language. Informal language was seen as having no educational value that was noted of other languages noted above. One participant asked: “How we to learn other terms and languages if news was to use street language? According to most of the participants street language would not contribute to intellectual and vocabulary growth.

This overwhelming rejection of informal language use in the presentation of television news is in contradiction to what Buckingham found out in his study, for example. His research study reveals that young news presenters did not use formal language in the address of their audiences, but language common among young people. When these presenters were greeting their viewers, for example, they would not say “good evening and welcome” but “yo! what’s up?” (Buckingham, 1997b).

The local youth radio station- Youth-fm (Y-fm) also incorporates ‘street’ language in its news production and presentation as well. Instead of using, for example, terms like ‘police’ and ‘children’ which are normally used local conventional news stations, it uses ‘cops’ and ‘kids’ respectively. The station claims that this system works well with its targeted audience (Hafajee, 1998:1).

However, Pepler (2003:30) warns that “what should be avoided at all cost is a naïve language or “lingo” which underestimate the intelligence and comprehension of these younger readers. They do not accept being “talked down” to”. She further warns that: at the same time “they are (young people) and not impressed by academic and ostentatious language” (Pepler, 2003:30).

**In-depth vs. brief summarized news stories**

What emerged out of the focus-group discussions with respect to preference for either in-depth or brief and summarized news stories was that most of these young adult participants were most likely to watch television news that included in-depth news reports. The majority of the participants reported that they would want more background, context and in-depth discussion on the issues so that they would have better
understanding of the subjects at hand. The majority of the participants felt that news was not presented in ways that enhanced comprehension of issues for youth. This participant summarized what most young adult complain about:

*I don't think it's so much what they, it's the way they say it. It doesn't always make sense. The people producing the news are not directing the news at us, so they say it in away that older and more informed people can understand. We need things broken down.*

There was, therefore, a strong indication that participants had high preference for stories that provided more background and enhanced understanding of issues being reported on. One participant said that: "I will prefer news with more background, for example, if there is an issue about fraud we want to know more about it." Another added that: "...cause the in-depth story is more interesting, because you know exactly what happened rather than the headlines or just an overview of it." This view of the value of in-depth news stories was shared by another participant who presented that: "with stories that provide more background, you get an idea of almost all the issues involved in the story. You are aware of all the aspects of the story."

The strong indication for preference of in-depth stories contradicts Pepler's (2003:31) observations with respect to this issue. Pepler (2003:31) observes that young people's "attention spans are apparently also shorter; therefore news reports must be shorter also, more informal and reader-friendly." She further recommends that:

*It could be worthwhile to keep in mind that the young generations prefer, reader friendly bits of information. They are clearly not interested in long explanations or story behind the story, as they operate on hectic life-schedules and are easily distracted and bored (Pepler, 2003:17-18).*

Few young adult participants demonstrated that they would be motivated to watch news for brief, summarized news reports. Participants who shared this view argued that they would prefer brief and summarized news reports on the grounds that, as one participant states: "I actually get bored with whole report on one news story. I get bored very, very
fast.” Another presented that: “I prefer summarized news reports. I can get the background to the story from the newspapers”. Another argued that:

It should be summarized, because people are stressed. But they are not willing to sit down and watch news and then get nothing out of it. We need information, we need significant information.

Brief vs. long news broadcasts

Young participants who preferred brief and summarized news stories also stated that they would prefer SABC’s News in 60 Seconds. In News in 60 Seconds, they say, you get everything that you can get in thirty-minutes. One participant complained and said: “I get bored if news takes long to finish.” Another added: “SABC news [News in 60 Seconds] is short and to the point. He made a good point that it gets to be boring. news for an hour is boring.”

Those who preferred in-depth news reports also preferred longer news broadcasts. One participant commented that: “...I think is better to have one hour of news so that viewers would have both sides of the story: a better view of what is going on rather than to have short headlines.”

Fast-paced presentation of news

Participants strongly presented in the focus-group discussions that they were less likely to watch television news programme that included fast-paced presentation of items or issues. The main justification was that news should be presented at the pace that enhances understanding of what is going on. The main concern was that fast-paced editing could lead to inability to fully grasp factual information being presented in the news. Participants were of the view that: “it is already fast-paced. (If it gets faster than this), it will look like a music video.” As if to summarise the common view of many of the participants, this respondent rhetorically asked: “how fast-paced should it be?”
The feeling was equally that news should not be too slow and monotonous. This other participants: "It should not be fact-paced and at the same time it must not be drawn out."

The other participant warned: "I would not trust anything that involves serious manipulation of the visual." All agreed. The other commented that: "There is manipulation already. There should not be any high tech manipulation of visuals."

That young people would not be motivated to watch stories presented in a fast-paced is also confirmed in the study by Egan. The research study by Egan (1999:139) found that "fast-pacing (editing, length of news stories) appealed only slightly more (38.8 per cent) to 18-24-year olds than to 25+ (33.6 per cent) (34.2 of the 25+ were neutral on 'pacing')."

**Stories broadcast from on-the-spot locations**

The overwhelming majority of the participants reported that they were most likely to watch a television news program that included broadcasts from on-the-spot locations watch news broadcasts that. They were of the view that news reports reported live on the spot of the happening of the event were credible and interesting as compared to studio news, as one participant presented:

> Definitely (I more likely to watch news broadcast live from the scene of an event). It's because it is so exciting, you can see the action, and everything is there. If there is a bomb blast, there is smoke and fire in the air and the camera is bit shifty because it is happening right there and then. It's live you can't miss anything. Even the expression on the journalist is exactly how they are feeling at the time. Everything as it happened. It's brilliant.

Other participants, however, were of the view that not all type of stories lended themselves to being covered really live. It depended on the type of the story and time, as this participant argued:

> Let us be realistic here. I don't expect the journalist to be there when a bomb goes off but in the aftermath (laughs). The whole idea is the impact of it. If hasn't been on TV station where it is
being edited, where the journalist is given a script to read and all of that it is just happening.

Other participants, although were also more likely to watch news covered live, cautioned that the ‘liveness’ of the story was no automatic guarantee of its objectivity. One participant warned that: “the sense that it not edited doesn’t really mean...I mean there is still one camera, they can only show one view of the story at a time, so whatever is seen is a particular view.

Other participants presented that they were more likely to watch if the stories covered from the scene “...interesting enough.” For others the location of the story was immaterial: “for me it does not really matter as long as they report it really well,” said one participant.

Egan’s (1999:139) research study asked the question: “should news be broadcast live from the scene”? The answer was “Yes, according to 51 per cent of the 18-24-year olds, who said they would tune in if they knew the story was live from the scene of action; and yes according to 70.6 per cent of the 25+”.

Weather reports with animated graphics

Young adults’ preference for weather reports presented in graphic forms might not necessarily be surprising given they are presented as visually-oriented. Pepler (2003:31) observes that:

*The younger generations, particularly Generation X, are visually oriented and grew up on visual images. News products should therefore be visual and graphic in nature to capture their attention.*

Most young adult participants suggested that they were more likely to watch television news programmes that include weather reports with animated graphics. E-tv news weather reports were the most memorable ones in this regard. Young people found these reports interesting and appealing. SABC news’ weather reports are not presented in the form of animated graphics. E-tv weather reports were recognized without being compared to SABC’s non-existent ones. One participant notes that: “e-tv, I like the way
they present their weather, the graphics they use. I do not like the guy on SABC 1 who presents the weather [report]. He takes my mind to sport and I do not like sport.” [This is in reference to SABC1’s most popular weather reporter Jabu Sithole].

These participants felt that there should be a more dynamic way of presenting the weather. “Particularly if they are not going to be accurate about the news the least they could do is to make more interesting news to stare at,” said one participant. Another participant added that:

*I think graphics and animation stuff will be cool, everyone loves the duck that comes on in cricket when someone goes out a duck! They could have little animation creatures coming onto the screen.*

In her study Egan (1999:139) revealed that:

*Graphics (such a animation, computerised weather maps, artwork, superimposed titles) are more important to age 18-24 (41.2 per cent would be motivated to watch) compared to 25+ (31.5 per cent said graphics were important to them); graphics for weathercasts are important to both groups; half the group age 18-24 (51.2 per cent) agreed; as did half the age 25+ (49.5 per cent).*

There was, however, a strongly objection from some participant to the idea of using graphics. This objection, however, was strongly directed at stories themselves and less so to the presentation of weather reports. The argument was that stories should not be made visually appealing, as one participant bluntly put it: “no animation- no visual effects.”

“You can’t have graphics ... for the news that makes it cheap and tacky and not like news at all,” said one participant. Other participants added that: “I think graphics would take away from the authenticity of the news, makes less believable.” Another participant said:

*The time they would spend doing the graphics and stuff could be time that they would not be spending on the news stories. They*
cold use that time if they have it to make stories more interesting
or find stories that are more interesting.

Simunye-Grooves/Channel O/MTV-Type of music in the background

All the participants were vehemently opposed to the idea of playing music in the
background during the presentation of news. Overwhelmingly, participants responded
that they were less likely to watch news programmes that include broadcasts with
Simunye-Grooves/Channel O/MTV-type of music. The justification for this feeling was
that music of whatever genre would distract and draw attention away from the news. One
participant emphatically said: “I would not like a news report with music in the
background. News should capture your attention.” In Egan’s (1999: 139) study, the older
audience said they were not likely to watch a newscast with pop or MTV-style music.

Another participant objected strongly against prospect of playing the music in the
background during the presentation of news. “No. You cannot blur the lines of news,
news should not be entertainment. News is news.”

Humor between news presenters

Young adult participant responded that they were very unlikely to watch a television
news programme that includes humor between news presenters. The feeling was that
news should be taken seriously. One participant compromised by saying: “unless (the
humor) is a closing remark or something. There should be no jokes in the middle of
serious news.”

According to Egan’s study (2003: 139)

No; 52.9 per cent of both age groups said they were unlikely to
select a news program for humor and another 27.6 per cent were
neutral on this question. Although humor was more popular with
older viewers (73 per cent said they would a humorous story),
they said credibility is more important than humor, that humor
can detract from credibility. Focus group participants said humor
between anchors had to be sincere for viewers to appreciate it...
Some young adults viewed the twisting of the idea of the seriousness of news by adding informal humorous tone as being dangerous. They argued that people expect the news to be serious and will admit that initially people will be drawn to informal nature of news but at the end of the day, such news draws too many parallels with gossiping. They argued that tabloid news is tabloid news. “Humour should be assigned to humorous stories and there should be a serious tone throughout the broadcast. If there is too much humour, news will become a circus,” argued one participant.

**Mourning vs. Night viewing**

Irrespective of the news broadcasts to which they are orientated, many of the participants reported that they were more likely to watch news broadcasts between seven and eight-thirty in the evening. If, however, they were to choose between early morning news and late night news, they would choose the latter. Very few preferred early mourning news. The preference for mid-evening news broadcasts could be as a result of the fact that participants are just used to this arrangement.

Although for many participants news-viewing is a self-initiated exercise, some reported to be introduced to news-viewing by their parents. Some are still influenced by their parents.

**Further Discussion and Conclusion**

**Parental influence on viewing**

What emerged in the focus-group discussions is that unlike those participants who lived on their own in student residences, digs or in flats etc, those participants who lived with parents reported that their parents had played a major role in terms of influencing them to watch news. One of these participants said: “*My parents and my grand parents are ... when the news comes up are like... they are absolutely dedicated... so I also watch constantly.*” Another said: “*I watch four times a week. That is because my dad is watching it.*” “*When I go home I watch the news every night. My parents always have. Now my dad never misses it. I think that it has big role to play,*” concluded one participant. Parental influence, however, does necessarily translate into long-lasting...
orientation towards a particular news broadcast. This seems to be an individual choice, more especially among students in middle and high income groups. The role of parents in anchoring the importance of and in influencing news viewing underscores the recurring presupposition in this study; that is, that textual reading and perception are socio-cultural imports; in other words, human subjects’ reading and perception of texts, in this case young adult South African’s reading/reception of locally-produced television news, are products of socialization and culturation.

Interestingly, whether news-viewing is influenced by parents or self-initiated all participants commented fairly perceptibly on the content, format/style of the SABC and e-tv news programes.

Watching SABC or e-tv news programes for style and format

Structural differences (in semiotic terms) between the SABC and e-tv news programes are presented in the preceding chapters. Different channels go extra miles in constructing their own brand identity through differences in styles. Brand identity is further enhanced through conscious use of the combination of various iconic and arbitrary signs to construct meanings that lead to brand recognition. The purpose of adopting stylistic differences that create brand identity and recognition is to make respective news products easily recognizable and distinguishable from the rest by the audience. Do young adult audiences ‘read’ these differences?

Young adult audience participants were requested to identify various (semiotic) signs that distinguished each news programme from the other. Specifically, they were asked to state what they perceived to distinguishing the SABC from e-tv news broadcasts. In this process, they were asked to speak freely of their general experiences with, perceptions and preferences of various South African-produced television programmes as typified by SABC1, 2, 3 and e-tv. Respondents were requested to identify their single most preferred television news programme and then as a necessary addition, provide rational justifications why the identified programme was their most preferred one(s). Equally, respondents had to elaborate why the other news programmes were their least preferred ones. Broadly, the first parts of the discussions concentrated on the general
comparison of e-tv and SABC news programme structure, content and whatever respondents wanted to say about these programmes.

Most news researchers into the relationship between youth and news media present that the formats and styles in which information or entertainment is conveyed to young people are just as equally important as what is being conveyed (cf. du Plooy-Cilliers & Bezuidenhout, 2003). They observe that irrespective of the importance of the content being presented, if it is presented in a styles and/or formats that are not appealing to young people they are likely to turn away from it. These news researchers also suggest that youth prefer broadcast material that is presented in a dynamic as opposed to ‘adult’, monotonous or official manner. Furthermore, Pepler (2003: 31) warns that: “the streetwise ‘savvy’ of these young generations should never be underestimated or ridiculed… style and production values are important in this regard: (it is) not what is presented to them as news, but the way in which it is presented and offered”. The role and importance of style in the construction of social meaning that can equally be interpreted by young adult participants emerged in the from focus-group interviews, underscoring the points made immediately above. Participants were consciously aware of institutional styles and format differences between the SABC and e-tv news programmes. This gave strong indications that news programmes they viewed were actively selected. What is clear also is that these active choices are grounded in one’s personal and subjective expectations of and disposition towards news programmes, as they are social and cultural imports.

Part of what informs the sustained following or choice of a particular news programme, according to participants, are news presenters and reporters’ style of presentation and personality. These styles of presentation and personality, according to participants, contribute and form part of a distinguishing broad character and mode of address of a particular news programme. Gender played a notable role, though, in how participants oriented themselves towards a particular news reader personality. For example, some female participants felt empowered by e-tv Debora Patta's strong personality and aggressive style of interviewing. She represented how they want to be. However, they conceded that, at a personal level, Patta might be may not be as she appears on television. As female presenter, they argued, she has to be forceful to command respect.
Though there was this reaction to Patta, some female participants ‘saw themselves’ in the ‘young-ish’ and ‘pretty’ SABC female news readers. They felt that these news readers exuded professionalism through their formal sense of dress, formal mode of address and articulate language. For the female participants who preferred SABC news readers, there was something in being intelligent and pretty as the same time.

On the aspect of reporters’ style of reporting and presentation of news, some participants in the current study revealed that they were more likely to watch e-tv news programmes. One participant compared and critiqued the SABC by noting that “on SABC you have people sitting on the desk. There is nothing catchy. (On e-tv on the other hand)...even the presenters, those covering the stories they are more casual and more laid back.” These differences should alert researchers in youth-news media discourse that generalization about what young adults want can be misleading.

Be that as it may, a pattern is developing with respect to the preference of e-tv style. The present study is the second one in South African academic studies to find out that the majority of young adults in focus-group discussions are attracted to e-tv news content and style. The first study conducted by du Plooy-Cilliers and Buzuinendhout (2003) also reveals that:

They (young adults) tend to have a preference for the way news is presented on e-tv, compared to the formats used by SABC 1, 2 and 3. They perceive the news presenters of e-tv as more relaxed and informal, and they say use language they can identify with. They also like the fact that these news programmes include more background information and they especially like the entertainment section.

One participant in this current study observed that: “SABC is outdated in terms of style and e-tv is presenting in a way that is understandable.” For most participants, most appealing about e-news reporters’ style and presentation was their simulation and imitation of certain aspects of news events they report about. One example given in this regard was that when an e-tv reporter reports on something that had happened at the hospital, he or she would dressed up like relevant personnel of that particular section of the hospital. This “acting news” was considered to be educational and enhancing the
understanding of the event being reported on. "I also prefer e-tv news. Its reporters are creative and they can relate the story to the viewer," one participant observed. Another participant emphasized: "They (e-tv news reporters) are trying to make us understand. They dress like the situation they are representing. They act the news. They are part of the news." Another participant noted that:

That's why I like e-tv. I think they report things in far more professional manner. They always have someone in site and then they switch between him/her and the presenter in the studio instead of just adding inserts of visuals of the area. ...It adds another exciting element to the broadcast that makes us feel like we're getting real news.

Young adults' perception of SABC and e-tv news content

Although this is not a content analysis study, it was decided that it would be prudent to allow participants to freely comment on the contents of respective broadcasts. Examination of the relationship between young adults is critically important. News content, unlike other aspect of news, is the actual product. It literally is news. It also reflects news production process (Eichholz, 2000:10). It is important therefore to ascertain how young adults South Africans perceive local television content and if they are likely unlikely to watch either SABC or e-tv news programmes for their content.

In short, literature and survey studies dedicated to the examination of the relationships between young adults and television news media, so far, demonstrates that young people are becoming less interested in mainstream television news content. Young people argue that the content of mainstream television news is not targeted them. They feel alienated from it and also suggest that it is when mainstream's news content changes to reflect their interests that it would appeal to them.

Scope and variety

The range of subject-categories within which e-tv's E-news live @ 7 frames and narrates corresponding subjects appealed to most members in the sample of participants. These
participants felt that these varied subject-categories provide audiences with a range of choices and they gratify assorted interests of heterogeneous demographics.

The perceptions and opinions of the majority of these participants are summarized by one participant who said that: “I prefer e-news live @ 7. It talks to all people...e-news talks about a number of things: arts, entertainment, (etc). It covers everything.” This observation is shared by another participant:

Personally, I prefer e-tv news. It caters for all people. SABC News is for adults. It is very much into politics. In e-news, there is politics, entertainment and sports. They cater for all of us. E-tv caters for all age groups.

A conspicuously small number of participants, of two to three in each discussion session, defended and demonstrated preference for SABC news’ content. They argued that the diversity of SABC newscast also accommodated varied interests of its viewers. One participant noted that “…just like e-news SABC caters for politics, entertainment and commerce. It caters for everything.”

It is necessary to explain here how participants seem to have different conceptions of diversity of subject-categories in their respective news programmes. Indeed SABC news broadcasts also provide miscellaneous news-categories as e-tv does. The fundamental difference between SABC and e-tv news broadcasts is not content diversity per se, but scope— with respect to duration, depth and subject-matter compartmentalization.

E-tv runs a full-hour daily newscast (at the time of data collection) and is seen to (and can) accommodate wide a variety of news items that the SABC news broadcast structure cannot accommodate in its traditional half-hour news broadcasts. The structure of e-tv news is such that it is segmented according to comparatively bigger and lengthy themes or categories of political news, entertainment, business, sports, arts, etc. Furthermore, although e-tv has one authoritative central newsreader, the presentation of each of these themes/categories is by different anchors. This organization of news gives an impression that e-tv takes each news category more seriously within the broader framework of its newscasts. Each news category is given personality and character. Many young people felt accommodated by e-tv’s entertainment section.
The SABC does provide diverse news-categories as well, but these are only limited to political, business, sport, and weather news categories, with latter two presented in brief. It has one central newsreader who presents all news items, interspersed with actuality-footages narrated by a 'live' reporter or voiceover. SABC does not provide entertainment news as a section or theme on its own.

The typical duration of SABC news programmes, in all channels, is (traditional) thirty-minute. This arrangement means, in essence, that SABC news programmes can accommodate and present quantitatively less reports and items in comparison to hour-long e-tv news programmes.

The presentation of fewer news reports seems to count negatively against SABC news broadcasts. Some participants felt they were not getting enough from the SABC news programmes. "The thing is e-tv produces more news than SABC. You find things on e-tv and you look at SABC, those things are not there. You ask yourself why".

Despite low preference for SABC news programmes, participants spoke positively about SABC2's Mourning Live news programme. For them Mourning Live is "more conversational and enjoyable to watch because of [its] tone; [it is] not too casual but not stiff either." Another participant observed that the "Mourning Live on SABC2 in the mourning, mourning live is the best." Participants also liked the fact that Mourning Live, a magazine-type of a programme had "variety". What the majority of participants also did not like about the SABC news programmes was their saturation with politically-orientated news stories; this seems to be the issue with some working-class and many mainly middle-class oriented participants.

**Political news**

The majority of the participants had a least preference for the SABC news programmes in all of the networks' channels. These participants observed that the SABC news programmes were dominated by political news stories and did not have a wide variety of subject-categories that accommodated other interests. One participant observed: "I hate SABC; they always have (Thabo) Mbeki on for ages as the first story. SABC always a has a long story first, about where Mbeki has been each day. It is always political." Another participant concurred: "I agree.... SABC has too many political stories up first, which are
only half way through one-tv”. A male frequent viewer concluded: “There is definitely not much politics on e-tv.”

The least preference for political-orientated news reinforces the notion presented somewhere in this study that some young people are not or no longer interested in knowing about political affairs. The majority these participants showed interest in human interest stories, more especially as presented on e-tv News @ Seven.

**Human interest stories**

The human interest stories that e-tv predominantly report on and the way it prioritizes them makes e-tv to appeal to young adults. Participants’ motivations towards human interest or soft news stories are summarized by one respondent who noted that:

> The thing is with SABC3... like if you are waiting for a shark attack [story], they do not have that... they have like government thing. I can’t like wait through it, so I go to e-tv which has it like at top of their stories.

This respondent and the others one who supported her reveal two things about themselves with respect to the type of stories that e-tv covers. She reveals an orientation of themselves and the television station towards human interest stories. Second, she reveals a preference for the placement of these stories at the top of news agenda. E-tv has indeed demonstrated a tendency of prioritizing human interest or soft news stories over hard, national political news stories.

**Visual appeal**

The majority of the participants found e-tv studio set up visually appealing. One participant expressed that: “I like e-tv news the whole setting. SABC 3 is the norm. (It is) boring”. Another suggested that:

> I prefer e-tv. I like their colour scheme. I think SABC 3 is dull; it is like wet England. E-tv has got this nice red and blue thing.
SABC3 has got this weird blue that makes me really uncomfortable. E-tv is visually appealing.

William Bird (1999), of the Media Monitoring Project, also comments on e-tv news’ studio’s visual composition. He characterizes it as a slightly dimmed newsroom with and a neon-blue “E” making up the background.

The point is that while a significant number of young adults in these focus groups might have preferred e-tv’s postmodern look, there is still a number of young adults who deconstruct this look as a devaluation of how a news programme should present itself to the public. It is through young adults’ polysemic readings of SABC and e-tv’s news programmes’ compositional aspects that we question the culturally de-contextualized generalizations, in youth-news media discourse, about what young people want from news programmes. The other element that participants commented on was these television news programmes’ mode of address.

Mode of address

e-tv news’ mode of address:- informally-dressed news-presenters and semi-informal mode of address- appealed to many participants. On the other hand, participants felt that the SABC news’ mode of address had adult audiences as inscribed viewers/reader given its formality in address. With respect to the SABC3 news, one participant proposed that: “they should make it funnier. It really is serious, so serious, boring and methodic.”

Those participants, it be argued, who wanted to buy into the adult status of seriousness, traditionalism and conservative ways of presenting national news, preferred SABC, but those with a far cosmopolitan outlook and were globally-oriented opted for certain aspect of e-tv. Besides the mode of address, the other news factors that participants had to talk about were the principles of objectivity and truth with respect to the new programmes in question.

Principles of objectivity and truth

The transformation of news reporting from communicating partisan information to a balanced practice that represents various opposing factions introduced the notion of objectivity addressed in one this study’s chapters. News reporting in contemporary ideologically liberal societies has to ensure it is not only factual information, but an
objective and a balanced one as well. There legislations prescribing adherence to this; they aim to ensure that news providers dutifully conform to the professional notions and principles of objectivity, accuracy of facts, fairness of reporting, etc, in their processes of gathering and dissemination of news (cf. Gerbner, 1977; Gallagher, 1982; Retief, 2002; Oosthuizen, 2001). But do young adults concern themselves with these notions and principles? To a very large extent they do. In the focus-group discussion they commented on the issues of objectivity and balance with respect to the SABC and e-tv news. Commenting with about the SABC and e-tv news one participant said:

You find the exactly the same news clip on both channels, but on SABC3 it's first and e-tv it's fourth or fifth in the line up. Also, SABC edits all the clips to show positive things about Mbeki [the president of South Africa]. Both channels show the same snippet but SABC shows Mbeki shaking hands with everyone and e-tv shows the masses striking behind him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SECTION B

At least three specific areas benefit from this study: the area in the field of mass communication that is focused on the examination of the relationship between youth and news media, particularly television news; the general public that is interested in the relationship between youth citizens and news media; and the television news industry that is interested in knowing how young adults feel about its news broadcasts. The framing of the conclusions of this research study has to be understood in view of the fact that more than one area of public life is the target of these conclusions. Although effort is made to distinguish between those conclusions that benefit one area more than the other, it is recognized that in reality there is an obvious interplay between these areas as this study has demonstrated.
Conclusions and recommendations for the academic area in the field of mass communications

This research study set out to enter the discussions on the relationship between youth and news media through the examination of the specific relationship between South African-produced television news broadcasts and the country's young adults. Before the reasons for undertaking this study were provided in CHAPTER ONE, two other salient aspects that served as the motivation for conducting this research work were presented in the introduction to the study as whole. These motivations prompted the contribution that this study set out to make in the area of mass communication that preoccupies itself with the examination of the relationships between youth and news media, particularly television news.

These motivations were the identification, in the thinking about the study and review of literature in the field, of the common observations and conclusions in this particular research area are that the consumption of television news broadcasts is steadily declining among young people in general. Second, it was the identification in the South African-based media industry and academic research of the ambiguous and contradictory conclusions about the state of the relationship between South African-produced television news broadcasts and the country’s youth.

- In this respect, this study cautioned against taking at face-value the conclusions and observations of Western researchers with respect to relationship between youth and mainstream television news. The study reasoned from the outset that this body of international work (noting the qualitative and quantitative decline in the share of young adult news consumers) is limited in its current state in fully presenting and reflecting the relationship between South African youth and television news. This limitation is observable in both the South African-based and Western research work on the subject matter in question - on the following grounds:

- First, the substantial part of youth-television news research work is conducted in America and in some European countries. Correspondingly, the reviewed
literature for this research study reveals, to a very large degree, American and European youths' indifference towards television news (and other forms of news media). Therefore, this body of work, illuminating as it is, cannot reasonably be taken to be directly reflecting South African youths' relationship with television news. Equally, it cannot be taken not to be.

- The study concluded that the inconsistencies and contradictions in the South African youth and television news research, both academic and media industry-based, underscore the recurring main point, in the study, that conclusive conclusions cannot be unequivocally stated, at this stage, about whether young adult South Africans' interest is declining or increasing in television news broadcasts. It further argued that there is an absence of reasonably enough empirical evidence and generalisable research work for these generalisations to be made. Evidence provide in this study from focus group reveal that young adults differ in their preference of various aesthetical aspects of locally-produced television news; generalisations have to be read cautiously.

- Given that the raison d'etre of programmes such as television news is to communicate pertinent information indispensable in the (re-)production and maintenance of an informed citizenry, and that there is a paucity if research in this said area of research, this study recommends a variety of research studies that investigate the capability and efficiency of locally-produced television news broadcasts in performing this permanent social responsibility with respect to youth audiences. The necessity for this assessment is obviously more pressing in a developing democracy like South Africa.

- Studies on the relationship between South African youth and television news have to recognize the simply fact that young South African, because of their location in the country's social classes, have differential access to television and by strong implication to television news. So far this fact has been taken for granted.
• Apart from this, social class seems to mediate young people’s reading of locally-produced television news content and style.

• In the continuous search for a better understanding of the relationship between young adults/youth and television news there is a necessity to explore other research methodologies. So far the studies in the area are conspicuously grounded in qualitative research paradigm— a research paradigm that naturally limits possibilities for generalization. They are of limited research scope for one to draw credible generalizable and conclusive conclusions about the relationship between the country’s youth and news media— on their bases at this stage.

• There is a necessity for studies in this area to draw their data from samples beyond the South African institutions of higher learning, as it has been the case so far. The extent to which the student population composition of these institutions, where respondent samples are drawn, in the South African socio-economic and historical context, is representative of the youth ‘outside’ of these institutions has not been robustly engaged with as yet.

• There is a necessity for studies in this area not to limit their examination of the relationship between youth and news media to newspaper and television media. There is a need to focus on other news media where youth might be getting their news from.

**Conclusions for the media industry-based research area in the field of mass communications**

• There is a need draw from large and longitudinal survey studies that are specifically aimed at ascertaining the qualitative and quantitative relationship between South African youth and television news or news media in general. This requires public/private research institutions, academic and media industry partnerships.
• There is a need for South African media industry-based research to rigorously, regularly and/or periodically engage in survey research activities that are specifically tailored, in part or as a whole, at consciously and directly ascertaining the nature of the relationships between local youth and general news media.

• Furthermore, the local media industry-based research has to be characterised by a determined, specific news research that, among other things, reflects unambiguously on the relationship between South African youth and locally-produced television news, specifically.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

What motivate or can motivate young adult South African to watch locally-produced television news broadcasts?

The responses provided by the collective sample of young adult student participants, as responses to the research questions, sub-problem and assumptions being investigated, present a clear conundrum for this study. They reflect participants’ differences in terms of what motivates them to watch various South African-produced television news broadcasts. These differences make it difficult for one to come up clear cut conclusions.

• It is recommended that providers of locally-produced news broadcast not only sincerely cater for the varied interests of the young adults but also create a strong perception that their news interests are looked after. The perception that locally-produced news broadcasts are targeted at young adults is the common area among participants in this study. Despite their varying news viewership patterns and differences in news broadcast orientation, young adult student participants generally felt that South African television news broadcasts do not particularly cater for their interests. In this regard, the SABC has more work to do in terms of convincing young adults that its news products are also meant for them.

• Tabledisation of locally-produced television news is most likely to turn young adults off. Young adult participants demonstrated a particular distaste for news
broadcast that would be too tabloid, too informal and radically different to the news styles as are traditionally conceptualized.

One participant argued that:

No. I don’t think they should be made more youthful at all. As I said, news is a serious thing. That will never change. To make news more youthful will be to take away from it its informative value. Also, if you make it more youthful what will happen to the older generation? Surely they don’t want that at all. I think what they can do is to incorporate youthful aspects into news the news. Chat maybe about issues that are relevant to be youth.

- Participants demonstrated that they are most likely to be motivated by news broadcasts that are quasi-informal-formal, which incorporates some youth interests while retaining adult-centric elements at the same.

- At the same news providers should not try too hard to appease young people to an extent that this attempt is seen as a transparent ploy. One participant saw some aspects of the e-tv news set up as trying to hard to please young people. She said:

  I think it’s funny from cynical point of view. I appreciate the attempt like trying to engage young people, but like sitting on the desk instead of sitting behind it. I think it’s funny, because it is transparent to me as in like almost there is a manipulative ploy itself to get young people engage, I think funny.

Another respondent also made reference to e-tv’s format: “E-tv – they try catch up with youth and they just don’t get it. They should get it like the right way.”

- It can be concluded that young adults are most likely to watch news programmes whose stories are normally illustrated in a creative way, while retaining educational value and enhancing understanding. E-tv’s simulation of stories as away of narrating stories scored high in this regard. Young adults prefer news reporters who are creative and can relate the story to the viewer well.

188
• Young adults are most likely to watch magazine-type, 'variety' news programmes such as SABC2’s *Mourning Live* news programme. For them *Mourning Live* is "more conversational and enjoyable to watch because of [its] tone; [it is] not too casual but not stiff either."

• Young adults are least likely to watch news broadcasts that are dominated by political-orientated stories.

• The principles of objectivity, truth, accuracy of facts, and fairness of reporting do matter for young adults.

• Reporting on business news has to be made accessible beyond the people in the field or discipline of commerce. Part of what focus-group discussions revealed was that most of participants were less likely to view television news for business news reports. From justifications provided for this negative attitude towards business news category, it can be deduced that many participants did not see the immediate impact of business news to their lives. The content of business news was perceived to be irrelevant, aloof, abstract, and not talking about the situation of the people it addressed.

• Young adults participants differed greatly on the likelihood to view news programmes for sport news. Some participants clearly disliked sport news. Their responses ranged from: "Basically, I hate sport;" "I would not watch it," to "I turn off the channel or switch to another one."

• Participants' responses differed markedly with respect to whether they were likely to watch news programmes that were anchored by people like themselves. A significant number of participants considered any introduction of young adult news-presenters as tantamount to devaluing the stature of the television news genre itself.
What emerged out of the focus-group discussions with respect to preference for either in-depth or brief and summarized news stories was that most of these young adult participants were most likely to watch televisions news that included in-depth news reports. The majority of the participants reported that they would want more background, context and in-depth discussion on the issues so that they would have better understanding of the subjects at hand. The majority of the participants felt that news was not presented in ways that enhanced comprehension of issues for youth.

Is there a necessity for a youth centric television news broadcasts?

- Certainly something has to be done to increase youths' interest in news, but a youth-directed bulletin might not be enough or necessary. Although the youth feel disregarded and misunderstood when it comes to what they want in terms of being included in the news, the feeling among them is that such a bulletin would in turn make them feel patronized and talked-down to.
- One a participant summarized young people's feeling about a news broadcast exclusively at them.

_The youth does not want to be made to feel special and unable to blend with adult world. They want to feel special to it. It is fact that the youth of today is growing up too fast and becoming adult-like far too quickly. One only has to look as the average age of sex, drinking and drugging compared with that of twenty years ago, in order to see this. The youth do not want to see themselves as any less of an adult than their mother or father is, even when it comes to making big decisions. Providing these young people with a news bulletin aimed and adapted specifically to what adult feel youth want to hear only push them further away_

- One of the strategies to attract youth to the news would be to blend both the current adult directed news bulletins with issues and items that are more of interest and attractive to the youth, the youth will hopefully feel pulled towards
watching the news. They will at the same time feel a sense of power and equality that they are currently lacking.

- News directors do not have to go as far as to change the whole format or make entirely separate newscasts for this specialized group, but perhaps incorporate specialized news items that will again their interest without a threat of losing older viewers.

- Participant felt that there is no need for a news broadcasts only for them. "I firmly believe that there is no need to have a specific newscast just for the youth. Those individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 who are interested will make an effort ...", said one participant. Another said:

\[
I \text{ don't thing that } e\text{-tv or SABC would benefit from pandering to the youth's needs when all the information is readily available and more accessible than ever it's ever been. At time some stage it has become the young individual's responsibility to be come an informed citizen, which should subsequently enable audiences to fulfill their democratic rights and duties.}
\]

- Participants argued that there are so many obstacles that the news industry would have to overcome in order to see any reward from a youth broadcast. Issues such political socialization, addressing language barriers, allocating suitable time slots without replacing more popular programmes, speaking to the youth with the correct tone and attitude so as not to offend them but so they understand that they competing with other medium.

- There is no over-whelming necessity among young adults for the inclusion of celebrity stories in the news broadcasts. This does not mean that they are not at all interested in these kinds of stories. Participants did not quite agree that it would be ideal for celebrity stories introduced as an option and newsworthy unless the particular celebrity was fundraising or doing something else for the good cause.
- Participants demonstrated that they need news anchors that are and appear intelligent who can be assuring about the quality of the news being presented in terms of it being truthful and objective. The majority of the presented that anchors should be believable and trustworthy.

- Participants showed soft spot for soft news. As this participant asks: What about if the last couple of news stories consist of ‘soft’ news, more local everyday concerns? I think that will make me stay and watch.”

- There is a general interest in on-the-spot location news broadcasts.

- They liked the idea of weather reports with animated graphics and most supported.

- They liked the idea of stories about people like themselves as interesting topics for news.

- There was a general conclusion that certain celebrity personalities can used to attract youth to the news.

- Political socialization should start at home and this brings more news engaged youth.

- Youth tend to be interested in those categories of news that relate to their academic disciplines. One participant said he watches the news because of what is happening in the judicial system as he studying law. (Relate this point to the role of academic institutions in socialization.

- The results from the focus group indicate that the participants feel an affiliation with the more formal and old-fashioned SABC.
• The participants point out that a preferred interactive style SABC Mourning Live should be taken into account.

• The recommended broadcast should feature discussions of between presenters and a person of importance on relevance topic.

• News should incorporate interactive aspects, which might be a motivating factor.

• The interaction between the presenter and a guest will enable the audience to see how a topic is relevant to their lives and it affects them.

• Headlines play a big role in facilitating the decision about what to watch, if it is of any significance and about whether to continue watching.

• As much as youth want to be entertained, they a draw a line when it comes to news being transformed to into entertainment. “News is news. MTV s MTV. If I wanted ton watch MTV I would just do that”.

• One can choose to change the channel whenever they feel like. So if one chooses to watch news, it is because one chooses to watch the news. On does not want to watch MTV. If you cannot tell the difference, what is the point of having different programmes

• They felt that news anchors with popularity and status of e-tv Deborah Petta would attract young people.

• The idea of mixing too much entertainment and information seems unprofessional and unorthodox.

• The prospect of finding out some entertainment news in the process of finding out about politics issues kept youth hooked. The reason they did not mind this
intrusion of MTV type news was because it was not highlighted as a significant factor. Following the basic structure of news broadcasts; the most important news is at the beginning and entertainment is fine just as long as it is at the very end of the news.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Among the respondents there were minor variations in their perception of, motivation for, and preference for either SABC or e-tv news programme contents. In each focus-group discussion, however, despite these variations, there was a significant and conspicuous preference for e-tv’s e-news live @ 7’s content and format.

It is presented above that the differences of opinion and the diversity of perception and interests make it difficult to ‘over-prescribe’ the specific type of format that would accommodate every young adults’ motivation for watching news. There are motivations that are conditioned by socio-economic class differences to which young adults embedded. Some are a product of cultural socialization, generational differences notwithstanding.

Young adult participants demonstrated surprisingly good levels of critical engagement with various aspects of news texts despite evidence in the media studies literature to the contrary. The testimony to this is demonstrated by the quality of observation and answers they provided in the processes of focus-group discussions.

Perhaps as statistical information demonstrates that different youths are loyal to different news programmes, young adults’ different preferences for and perceptions of different news programmes were hardly surprising. They generally offered very intriguing and sophisticated observations of their own preferred news channels and the ones they avoid.
# APPENDIX A

Source: TV Diary (SA) 1999/4
Oct: New Adult
Weight: Population
Table: 16-24
Units: 1000's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV994 %</th>
<th>A01BD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>7248</td>
<td>7687</td>
<td>7743</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>1679</td>
<td>4075</td>
<td>7306</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC1 News 19:30-20:00 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>3267</td>
<td>3604</td>
<td>3653</td>
<td>10.32</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>1725</td>
<td>3209</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC2 News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>-14.24</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>-19.14</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC3 News 20:00-20:30 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>-3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>-4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eTV News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>42.31</td>
<td>38.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>34.18</td>
<td>37.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B

Source: TV Diary (SA) 1999/4
Oct/Nov Adult
Weight: Population
Table: 16-24
Units: 1000's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4771</td>
<td>5025</td>
<td>5147</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SABC1 News 19:30-20:00 Mon-Fri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>2651</td>
<td>2862</td>
<td>2901</td>
<td>7.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>1475</td>
<td>2717</td>
<td>1213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SABC2 News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>16.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>20.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SABC3 News 20:00-20:30 Mon-Fri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>18.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

eTV News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TV994</th>
<th>TV003</th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>45.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A01BD</th>
<th>TV003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
<td>Access to TV in Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128.9</td>
<td>139.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: AMPS 200</th>
<th>BD - Main, Total Radio + TV</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>29007</td>
<td>7743</td>
<td>21264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>28915</td>
<td>7306</td>
<td>21609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC1 News 19:30-20:00 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12159</td>
<td>3653</td>
<td>8506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>9783</td>
<td>3209</td>
<td>6574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>112.5</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC 1 - 0000-2400 Mon-Fri Week Cume</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18719</td>
<td>5746</td>
<td>12973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>18377</td>
<td>5569</td>
<td>12808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>69.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC 2 News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5875</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>4621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>8354</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>7046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>107.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC 2 - 0000-2400 Mon-Fri Week Cume</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12129</td>
<td>3252</td>
<td>8876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>14518</td>
<td>3236</td>
<td>11282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC 3 News 20:00-20:30 Mon-Fri</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3200</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>5371</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>4370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>107.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SABC 3 - 0000-2400 Mon-Fri Week Cume</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8403</td>
<td>2329</td>
<td>6074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>11820</td>
<td>2942</td>
<td>8878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>103.8</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>%Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eTV News 19:00-19:30 Mon-Fri</td>
<td>3610</td>
<td>4391</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total e-TV - 0000-2400 Mon-Fri Week Cumc</td>
<td>10067</td>
<td>12711</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3117</td>
<td>3780</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX D
### Title: ENG MON-SUN EXCL THUR MAR'00 PROF

**All Adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ENG THU MAR'00 PROF

**All Adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ENG MON-SAT MAR'01 PROF

**All Adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ENG SUN MAR'01 PROF

**All Adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ENG MON-SAT MAR'02 PROF

**All Adults**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

199
### Title: ETV MON SUN MAR'00 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Adults</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ETV MON THU MAR'01 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Adults</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ETV FRI SUN MAR'01 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Adults</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ETV MON THU MAR'02 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Adults</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ETV FRI SUN MAR'02 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Adults</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td>AR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Title: ZULU XHOSA MAR'00 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ZULU XHOSA MAR'02 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Title: ZULU XHOSA MAR'01 PROF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>AG16</th>
<th>AG25</th>
<th>AG35</th>
<th>AG50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: AMPS 2001 BD</td>
<td>Main Total Radio AG1BD</td>
<td>Weight: Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 16-24</td>
<td>Units: 1000's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SABC1 News 19:30-20:00</th>
<th>SABC 2 News 19:00-19:30</th>
<th>SABC 3 News 20:00-20:30</th>
<th>eTV News 19:00-19:30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>7743</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>1,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>7308</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>169.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>*45</td>
<td>*64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>265.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>119.2</td>
<td>152.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>*98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>1347</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>*92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>101.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Province</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Col</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>133.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>%Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1819</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>115.1</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>170.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>630</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>443</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101.4</td>
<td>142.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3859</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4164</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105.9</td>
<td>100.8</td>
<td>100.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3884</td>
<td>1752</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3142</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>915</td>
<td>*171</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>322</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>718</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>114.5</td>
<td>108.5</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>809</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>136.4</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>141.7</td>
<td>102.1</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>924</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 7</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 403</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.5</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 8</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 320</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>133.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 9</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 270</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>120.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSM Group 10</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 285</td>
<td>*30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban (40 000+)</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 3132</td>
<td>1677</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113.5</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (less than 40 000+)</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 4611</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>102.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No School</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>*115</td>
<td>*27</td>
<td>*14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Primary</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 480</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>**76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Complete</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps 325</td>
<td>*131</td>
<td>**57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%Row</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Resps</td>
<td>%Col</td>
<td>%Row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Row Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High</td>
<td>4436</td>
<td>2144</td>
<td>2780</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>732</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>328</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>319</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>251</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technikon Diploma Degree</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>*66</td>
<td>*6</td>
<td>**17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Degree</td>
<td>*33</td>
<td>**5</td>
<td>**5</td>
<td>**8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Post Matric</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**31</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**31</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>6283</td>
<td>3279</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>848</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>358</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>179</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>224</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Borchers, R. & Kurgan, A. 1990. Social reality and media reality- a cross-cultural study of the perception of social conflicts in television news and fiction by adolescents. MA, University of Cape Town.


Black Kids more clued up. 1987. City Press. 22 March :4


Buckingham, D. 2001. E-mail from Dr. David Buckingham. Reader in the Culture, Communication and Societies in the Institute of London. 04 December.


Maluleke, J. 1998. Molefe, the newmaker: he decides what we should and shouldn't see. Drum, Sep.:112-113.


Matlack, C. 1992. We have met the anomic and he is us. National Journal, 24 (10) March 7:


Ndlovu, M. 2003. SABC’s expansion in Africa: South African media imperialism? (Paper read at Conference on Globalisation, regionalization and the information


Roopnarain, A. K. 1997. Investigating South African television news as a genre through which to develop critical thinking in the senior secondary English classroom. MA University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban); School of Education.


\[\text{1} \] It is fully understood here that mainstream conceptualization of news is not as homogenous as it appears in this context; the same can be said of youth-oriented understanding of news.

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{a}}} \] (cf. van Zoonen, 1991:217)

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{ii}}} \] There are internal debates in the discourse in this regard (cf. Buckingham, 1997a)

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{iv}}} \] It is fully understood here that mainstream conceptualization of news is not as homogenous as it appears in this context; the same can be said of youth-oriented understanding of news.

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{vi}}} \] (cf. van Zoonen, 1991:217)

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{vii}}} \] It is fully understood here that mainstream conceptualization of news is not as homogenous as it appears in this context; the same can be said of youth-oriented understanding of news.

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{viii}}} \] (cf. van Zoonen, 1991:217)

\[\text{\footnotesize{\text{ix}}} \] The reigning debate, for example, regarding the status of tabloid media as news providers reflects a historical lack of precision in news definitions.