

Politics and the Press: A Case Study of the Times of Swaziland and the Swazi Observer; 1992-1994

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Abstract

The cultural institutions within the social formation . . . including the . . . mass media are primarily ideological in form and functions, and together they help to confirm or deny the power of the ruling status quo (Gramsci, 1971). This study attempts to make an analysis of the Swazi press as a cultural institution. It focuses on whether the Swazi press has facilitated in confirming or denying the power of the Swazi ruling classes.

Swaziland has been under a monarchical system since independence in 1968. Arising out of a state of emergency introduced in the country in April 1973 the Swazi monarchy suspended in the 1968 Independence Constitution. Such an event transformed the constitutional monarchy into an executive monarchy. In this political process the monarchy had to use some Repressive State Apparatuses to consolidate and maintain its domination over the Swazi masses. The event also resulted in the suppression of any forms of opposition. Since the beginning of 1992, the political formation has been characterized by continuous contestations between monarchical and political constitution forces on the other. In this contested political constitutional process, the government and the opposition have employed the press to put forward and justify their positions on their preferred political system. The aim of this study is therefore to analyze how the Swazi press has portrayed such political processes.

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Introduction

This study analyses how the Swazi press has portrayed the political processes that have taken place in the country since the beginning of 1992. It aims on focusing whether the media facilitates in the maintaining or challenging the hegemony of the ruling monarch and its alliances.

In modern societies, the media has come to occupy a central role. This is because of its function in acting either as a voice, reflector of public opinion, or the controller, regulator or even creator of public opinion (Agbaje, 1992:26). Adigun Agbaje states:

The media affects/reflects and produces/reproduces not only attempts to construct domination and legitimacy by powerful interests within and among cleavages but also attempts to escape from or resist domination by the socially powerless, the subordinate, the marginalized and the dissenting members of society (Agbaje, 1992:27).

The role of the media in society has been dominated by strong and almost universally held beliefs about its potential as a means of influencing, controlling or directing public opinion. The belief rests on a single and manifest trust: the media makes it possible for one man to address an audience of millions (Burns, 1977 cf Mcquail, 1984:144). The media also structures a very real political environment which people can know about only through it. It filters through and affects even persons who are not directly exposed to the new (Lang and Lang, 1968, cf Mcquail, 1984:45).

The political role of the media is two fold. The first lies in its acting as a medium for the expression of public opinion. The second, in its regulation of society by the government. Both roles are geared towards the influencing of the public to behave or act in a particular way by either individuals, groups or governments (Mcquail, 1984:140).

In taking part in the construction and distribution of society's common sense, the media mirrors the politics of meaning and symbols (Agbaje, 1992:27). The media also mirrors the politics of meaning and everyday resistance as well as the constant struggles over meaning and the manufacture of consent, conflict or dissent (Agbaje, 1992:27). The media are therefore bearers of hegemonic and counter hegemonic symbols.

Division of Chapters

This study is divided into five chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion. [Chapter One](#) focuses on the political processes that have taken place in Swaziland since independence. It analyses how hegemony has been constructed maintained and contested through assessing the political developments that have taken place since independence. Also included in this chapter is an analysis of the class structures existing in the country and the literacy rate. The [second chapter](#) focuses on the theoretical framework used in analyzing the data used for the study. This is carried out through assessing how hegemony and ideology are constructed in society. The [third chapter](#) focuses on the structure of the press in Swaziland. This chapter provides an analysis on the political economy of the press during the pre-independence and post-independence eras. [Chapter four](#) focuses on the political and legal pressures which the Swazi press has been exposed to. It assesses the measures used by the state in an attempt to limit the flow of information in the press. The [fifth chapter](#) focuses on how the press has portrayed the political processes that have taken place in the country since the beginning of 1992.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Background to the Study

Swaziland has been under a monarchical system since independence in 1968. The suspension of the constitution and banning of all political parties in 1973, transformed the constitutional monarchy into an executive monarchy (Davies, 1985:6). Since the beginning of the 1990's, this political formation has been characterised by continuous contestations between monarchical and political constitution forces on the other (Simelane, 1992a:8). In February 1992 the first opposition political organisation called the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) unbanned itself inspite of the 1973 ban. The unneiling of PUDEMO was followed by the emergence of other opposition political groups which also unbanned themselves. In this contested political process, the government and the opposition have employed the media institution (especially the press) to put forward and justify their positions on their preferred political system. The aim of this project is therefore to analyze the role assumed by the Swazi press in relation to such political processes and how these are portrayed.

The analysis of the press and the political processes in Swaziland shall be investigated against the background of the consolidation of the power and ideology of the monarchy. The theory of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) shall be used as a framework for the discussion of the establishment and maintenance of the "hegemony" of the monarchy and how it has been consolidated through the press.

The theory of "ideology and ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) shall also be used as a framework for the discussion of issues of ideology and power and how these have been contested through the Swazi press. Both these concepts are used in the Cultural Studies Paradigm and they offer ways of thinking about the relationship of the media to the broader socio-political and economic structures of society (Tomaselli et al., 1987:6). I will investigate how far the press has been used to disseminate the ideology of the monarchy and how far it has reflected counter-ideologies.

Hegemony: The Negotiation of Consent

Hegemony can be defined as the dominance by one class or social group over other classes obtained by coercion and consent (Gramsci, 1971 cf Agbaje, 1992:12). Hegemony is a principle and a form of strategic leadership that is a guide to political action and has the aim of creating a collective political will (Gramsci, 1971 cf Agbaje, 1992:13). It is exercised through what Antonio Gramsci (1971) terms as "civil society". Civil society consists of the ensemble of educational, religious and associational institutions and has been identified with the ideological superstructure that creates and diffuse modes of thought (Sassoon, 1980:113 Gramsci, 1971 cf Femia, 1987:24). Hegemony is attained through a large number of ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and effective structures whereby people perceive and evaluate social reality (Femia, 1987:24). Coercion on the other hand is reserved to what Gramsci refers to as the "political society" which includes the police, army and the law (Femia, 1987:24).

Keyan Tomaselli and his colleagues (1987) defines hegemony as a ruling class's (or alliance) domination of subordinate classes through the elaboration and penetration of ideology (ideas and assumptions) into their "common sense" and everyday practice (Tomaselli et al., 1987:16). Common sense refers to the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become common in any given epoch (Tomaselli et al., 1987:16). Ideology can be thought of as a coherent set of ideas which have a limited ability to transform the ways in which men live out their "common sense" (Tomaselli et al, 1987:15). Consent can be defined as a psychological state involving some kind of acceptance of the socio-political order or of certain vital aspects of that order (Gramsci, 1971 cf Femia, 1991:36). Consent arises from some degree of conscious attachment to or agreement with certain core elements of the society (Femia, 1991:36). This type of assenting behaviour, which may or may not relate to a perceived interest is bound up with the concept of "legitimacy" with a belief that the demands of conformity are more or less justified (Hibbin, 1978:29).

Consent can also come as a result of fear of the consequences of non-conformity, which may produce punitive deprivations or inflictions, including the loss of self esteem (Hibbin, 1978: 31). This is conformity through coercion, or fear of sanctions. A person may also conform because he habitually pursues certain goals in certain ways in response to external stimuli (Hibbin, 1978:31). Through this type of consent, a person adheres to certain patterns of behaviour not because he consciously values them but because he has seldom entered into situations in which the possibility of their rejection or modification has arisen (Hibbin:1978:32).

Consent can be either "active and direct" or "passive and indirect" (Glucksman, 1982:46). In the active and direct level, consent takes the form of active commitment based on a deeply held view that the superior position of the ruling class is legitimate (Gramsci, 1971 cf Femia, 1987:43). Hegemony, at this level, is characterised by "spontaneous consent" given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on society by the dominant social group (Femia, 1987:44). Those who consent are convinced that the interests of the dominant groups are those of society at large and that the hegemonic group stands for a proper social order in which all men are justly looked after (Sassoon, 1987: 118). In the passive and indirect level consent is created through the force of the law, norms, ideological values and forms of legitimation of power (Sassoon, 1987:117).

Stuart Hall (1987) defines hegemony as existing when a ruling class or rather an alliance of ruling class fractions (an historic "bloc") is able not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but exerts a "total social authority" over those classes. He states:

hegemony is in operation when the dominant class fractions not only dominate but directly lead: when they not only possess the power to coerce but actively organize so as to command and win the consent of the subordinated classes to their continuing sway. Hegemony thus depends on a combination of force and consent...consent is normally in the lead, operating behind armour of coercion (Hall, 1987:318).

On the other hand, Adigun Agbaje (1992) argues that even though hegemony may have its forcible and direct component which consists of elements in the drive toward domination, hegemony has to do with the non-forcible and subtle elements of society (Agbaje, 1992:10) He also asserts that the more forcible and less subtle elements of hegemony belong to the realm of the construction and contestation of dominance and domination, while hegemony, at its most pristine, refers to the construction of consensus (Agbaje, 1992:10). Therefore, the more successful a hegemonic enterprise is, the less it is likely to depend on the direct use of any form of coercion (Agbaje, 1992:10).

Hegemony is a historical process in which one picture of the world is systematically preferred over the others (Tomaselli et al., 1987:14). Hegemony is therefore never a 'once-and-for-all' achievement, but its internal structures have to be continually renewed, recreated, defended and sometimes modified (Tomaselli, 1987:16 Eagleton, 1991:115). No single mode of hegemony can exhaust the meanings and values of any society and any governing power is forced to engage with counter-hegemonic forces in ways which are partly constitutive of its own rule (Eagleton, 1991:115).

Hegemony cannot be won in the productive and economic sphere alone but must also be organized at the level of the state, politics and the superstructures (Sassoon, 1980:112). The state, according to Gramsci (1971), is an instrument of a class in its ability to create and reproduce social relations of production (Gramsci, 1971 cf Sassoon, 1980:112). The use of this instrument is qualified by the constantly changing relation of political forces and the compromises which must always be made by the dominant group (Sassoon, 1980:112). It is therefore his conception of what he terms the "integral state", in particular those manifestations of class rule, which he calls hegemony.

In part, hegemony is achieved by the containment of the subordinate classes within the superstructures but crucially these structures of hegemony work by ideology (Tomaselli et al., 1987:16). This means that the definitions of reality, favourable to the dominant class fractions and institutionalized in the spheres of civil life and the state, come to constitute the primary lived reality for the subordinate classes (Hall, 1987:332).

Gramsci distinguishes between historically organic ideologies and ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic or willed (Gramsci, 1971 cf Tomaselli et al., 1987:15). The first

of these has the ability to organise human masses and create the terrain on which people move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle and so forth (Tomaselli et al., 1987:15). The second only creates amongst others individual movements and polemics (Gramsci:1971 cf Tomaselli et al., 1987:15). Hegemony then operates effectively, yet outside consciousness. It is exercised by self-conceived professionals working with a great deal of autonomy within institutions that proclaim the neutral goal of informing the public (Tomaselli et al., 1987:15). The dominant economic class then does not, for the most part produce and disseminate ideology directly (Eagleton, 1991:116). The task is left to writers, journalists, teachers, bureaucrats and artists organized for production within the cultural apparatus as a whole (Gramsci, 1971 cf Eagleton, 1991:116). These apparatuses include amongst others, the school and the mass media (Gramsci, 1971 cf Buci-Glucksman, 1980:12). For instance, through the educational system, certain available meanings and values through which the different classes live their conditions of life are chosen for emphasis and others discarded (Tomaselli et al., 1987:17). More crucially, the many meanings and values which lie outside of the selective and selecting emphases of this central core are continually reinterpreted, diluted or put into forms which support or contradict other elements within the dominant culture (Buci-Glucksman, 1980:12). The dominant system thus has to continually make and remake itself so as to contain those meanings, practices and values which are oppositional to it (Buci-Glucksman, 1980:12). What then constitutes the "dominance" of the dominant meanings and practices are the mechanisms which allow it to select, incorporate and to exclude elements in the full range of human practice (Bocock, 1986:37).

There is thus no permanent hegemony. Hegemony can only be established and analyzed, in concrete historical conjectures. The reverse side of this is that even under hegemonic conditions there can be no total incorporation or absorption of the subordinate classes. An example of this can be noted in the numerous calls for democracy in the African continent which is a challenge to the hegemony and ideology of the current ruling classes.

Hegemony and the State in Swaziland

The neo-colonial Swazi state that emerged at independence was structurally linked to and penetrated by British and South African capital. The country is dominated by South African and British capital which controls significant sectors of the economy. British capital is dominant mainly in the banking sector through the Standard and Barclays banking groups (Davies, 1985:11). Large scale capitalist agriculture is presently being dominated by South African and British capital. For instance, the Anglo-American Corporation controls 90% of citrus fruit production in Swaziland and another major South African concern, Zululand Food Producers, controls the pineapple and canning industry (Davies, 1985:11). The sugar plantations which provide the largest single source of export earning and other large-scale agricultural products are controlled by British capital (Davies, 1985:11). In the manufacturing and commercial sectors, the most active investor has been the South African conglomerate, Kirsh Industries (Davies, 1985:13). This group dominates the textile and maize milling and importation industry. It also holds franchises for Mercedes Benz and Nissan motor cars (Davies, 1985:13).

State power is used to foster the requisite conditions of accumulation for foreign capital. This has been carried out through the control of Swazi politics and the consolidation of traditional institutions. The state-capital alliance and subordination

of the Swazi economy by foreign capital has been achieved through the formation of the Tibiyo Fund (Daniels, 1983:6). Tibiyo's origin lies in the independence constitution which granted the monarch exclusive control of revenues generated from mineral concessions (Davies, 1985:33). Tibiyo has set up a number of business enterprises, but most significant has been its acquisition of equity in practically every important foreign enterprise (Daniels, 1983:6). In this way Tibiyo has established itself as a solid junior partner with every major foreign investment. Such a situation has led to the prosperity and material position of the politically hegemonic class resting very largely on the profitable investment of capital by the corporation and its partnership with foreign monopoly capital (Davies, 1985:12).

Tibiyo's political significance goes deeper. It has been the means whereby the Swazi aristocracy has transformed its position into a national bourgeoisie, but with comprador tendencies (Davies, 1985:13). It has consolidated and strengthened its bridgehead to foreign capital and the significant fact here is the change since independence in the constellation of capital (Daniels, 1983:6). Such an alliance has resulted in the perpetuation of exploitation and domination of the other Swazi classes by the monarchy and capital alliance through the use of various ideological and repressive state apparatuses (Davies, 1985:17).

Ideology

In discussing this section, it is necessary to distinguish between the conceptualization of class structure and the process of ideological discourse. Classes are identifiable at a structural level through the insertion of individual subjects in the process of production (McMillan, 1986:165). Class practices are also influenced by a complex combination of ideological connotations (Vilane, 1986:132). Hence, while on the surface, the dominant class in the Swazi post-colonial society may appear to be the Swazi ruling class, their class- belonging must be traced to their location in the production process (McMillan, 1986:167). Since the production and reproduction process in Swaziland and the social structure have been dominated by capitalism, the class structure of Swaziland must be conceptualized in relation to the capitalist mode of production (Vilane, 1986:135).

Althusser's approach to ideology focuses on how capitalist societies reproduce themselves by placing special emphasis on the necessary economic and political conditions (Althusser, 1971 cf Tomaselli et al., 1987:7). At the ideological, political and economic levels within society, the state intervenes to ensure the most favourable conditions for the reproduction of capitalist relations. This is successfully achieved by means of two institutions which he calls the "Repressive State Apparatuses" and "Ideological State Apparatuses." The repressive state apparatuses include for instance, the army, the police, and the civil service and the Ideological State Apparatuses include the church, the law, education and the media (Althusser, 1971:14).

Althusser argues that capitalism as a productive system reproduces the conditions of production "on an expanded scale" and this must include social reproduction, the reproduction of labour power and the relations of production (Althusser, 1971 cf Tomaselli et al., 1987:8). For instance, labour power cannot reproduce itself as a productive force without wages. Such an expanded scale of social reproduction then requires the agency of all the apparatuses which are apparently not directly linked in with production as such (Althusser:1971 cf Tomaselli:1987:8). For instance, the

reproduction of labour power through the wage requires the family: the reproduction of advanced skills and techniques requires the education system: the reproduction of the ruling ideology requires the cultural institutions, the church and the mass media, the political apparatuses and the overall management of the state (Tomaselli et al., 1987:8). In this process, the state is the structure which ensures that this social reproduction is carried out with the consent of the whole society (Althusser, 1971 cf Tomaselli, 1987:9). This is because the state is understood as being neutral, and above class interests. However, Louis Althusser (1971) argues that this is carried out in the interest of the continued hegemony of capital and of the ruling bloc (Althusser, 1971:155).

Althusser thus recognizes that the ruling classes do not rule directly or in their own name or overt interests, but via the necessary displacements which are the class neutral structures of the state (Hall, 1987:248). For him, what is important is how these institutions function (Althusser, 1971:233). It was irrelevant for him whether the ideological apparatuses belonged to the state or to private enterprise (Althusser, 1971:233). Private institutions can perfectly well function as ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971:233). In so far as they also contribute to social reproduction these apparatuses reproduce submission to the rules of the established order, give currency to the world view of the ruling groups, and make that perspective the "common sense" of all the classes within the social formation (Tomaselli et al, 1987:7). Althusser's notion of world view, or dominant ideology, supersedes the conventional idea of ideology which sees it as false consciousness (Tomaselli et al, 1987:7). For him, ideology is lived and so far as the individual experiences it, it is real. This reality which each person lives is an image of society which gives him or her an identity and a place in that society (Althusser, 1971 cf Tomaselli et al., 1987:7).

Althusser goes on to say that ideology has a material existence (Althusser, 1971:155). It exists as a set of actual practices and is a state apparatus. It follows that each individual, through his or her lived relations, takes part in the practices and rituals that constitute an ideological apparatus. The identity that ideology confers upon an individual identifies him or her as a subject of a particular practice or set of practices (Althusser, 1971:155).

The term "subject" for him is two fold: it points to the self- initiating aspect of activity and it also indicates that the person is subjected to that activity (Althusser, 1971 cf. Tomaselli, 1987:8). For instance, a Swazi participating in traditional Swazi ceremonies and customs identifies him or her in relation to the higher power of the king and ancestors. This participation in particular apparatuses of society involves an ideological recognition of a seemingly self-evident situation. For the believer engaging in such practices presumes beyond doubt the existence of a higher power (Althusser, 1971 cf Tomaselli, 1987:8). Paradoxically, when subjects believe themselves to be acting as free agents and to be motivated only by what they see as obvious common sense, it is precisely at that time that they are most powerfully motivated by ideology (Sassoon, 1987:125).

For the ruling class or the bourgeoisie, the dominant ideology serves to reassure its members that their place within the structure of society has been appointed by nature or that it is the will of God (Therborn, 1982:57). For this class, the emphasis is on juridical equality, unequal rewards for unequal success, on the virtues of mental labour and on the belief that all objects and men have their price (Therborn,

1982:57). For them it is obvious that their task is to persuade the working classes to accept their conditions of exploitation as if that were the natural order of things (Therborn: 1982:58).

For the petty-bourgeoisie, a dominant element of their ideology is that they should do their duty both towards their employer and country. For the working classes, ideology functions in making them consent to exploitation. However, such consent is not consciously given (Therborn, 1982:58).

Goran Therborn (1982), has identified six types of ideological dominations which enable the state to maintain its domination over the subordinate classes. The first is accommodation which refers to the kind of acquiescence in which the rulers are obeyed because the ruled are constituted to regard other features in the world as more salient to them than both their present subordination and the possibility of an alternative regime (Therborn, 1982:95). Among such features we may mention work performance, consumption, the family, sex and sport which are all central aspects of human activity. Accommodation may be seen to be brought about by a particular distribution of knowledge and ignorance. The oppressive and exploitative features of the present are kept in shadow, while opportunities are spotlighted (Therborn, 1982:96).

The second, called sense of inevitability, refers to obedience through ignorance of any alternative (Therborn, 1982:97). This is a component in the political marginalization of large sectors of the population in capitalist societies. Political marginalization implies exteriorization from the political system, which is seen as impossible to change yet not accorded any attributes of goodness or rightfulness (Therborn, 1982:97).

Thirdly is sense of representation which is based on the notion that rulers are obeyed because they are seen as ruling on behalf of the ruled (Therborn, 1982:103). The rulers and the ruled are seen as belonging to the same universe, however defined (Therborn, 1982:103). The representativity of the rulers may be based on a perception of likeness or belonging.

Deference is the fourth. In this case the rulers are conceived as being a caste apart, possessing superior qualities which are necessary for qualifications for them to rule (Therborn, 1982:104). It is often sustained in personality and lineal clientalistic networks in which petty favours are exchanged for subservience (Therborn, 1982:104).

Fear, which is the fifth, is the effect of ideological domination that brings about acceptance of the established order (Therborn, 1982:106). This is mainly in situations where force and violence operate as a form of rule (Therborn, 1982:106). However, in some cases, some people have opted for death or excommunication instead of obedience. This means that force can never rule alone.

Lastly is resignation which derives from considerations of what is possible in a given situation (Therborn, 1982:108). It connotes a pessimistic view of the possibilities of change. In this context, the term is used for designating a form of obedience that derives from conceptions of the practical impossibility of a better alternative, rather than of the repressive strength of the powers in existence (Therborn, 1982:108).

Traditionalism as "Ideology in Swaziland"

In order to understand Swazi "traditionalism," it is essential to distinguish it from "conservatism". Conservatism, can be explained as "resistance to change, the preservation of old customs and ways of doing things" (*Oxford Dictionary of English*). Though traditionalism may at times be conservative, in the latter sense, it may also be innovative and dynamic (Vilane, 1986:129). Traditionalism then usually involves the putting of new content and meaning into old forms and institutions (Vilane, 1986:130). In order to get a clear picture of what is being discussed, a brief outline of the 1968 Independence Constitution shall be made.

The constitution provided not only for a Westminster-model parliament and cabinet but also recognized the existence of two parts of the Swaziland National Council: the "Liqoqo" which is the inner group of royal advisers and the "libandla," which was held to consist of the queen and certain Swazi adult males (Daniel, 1983:5). The constitution thus legitimized a dual system of government although it concealed the fact that effective control was in the hands of the King and the Liqoqo. These two parties acted through the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), a political party established in 1964 to contest for the first legislative council election (Davies, 1985:21). The pre-colonial Swazi hierarchical structures were then incorporated in the Independence constitution of Swaziland, which is the mixing of old and new forms of government.

To Swazi nationals, traditionalism is the preservation of Swazi customs, norms and values (Matsebula, 1975:15). These include: the love of the king and country and the condemnation of dissenting views of any forms (Matsebula, 1975:13). Through the notion, **Inkhosi, yinkhosi ngebantfu**, (the King is a King through his people), the King is viewed as a symbol of unity and always fighting to preserve the heritage of the nation (Matsebula, 1975:15). This notion correlates with Therborn's (1982) ideological domination, sense of representation in that, the king is traditionally perceived as the legitimate ruler of the Swazi nation and needs to command absolute power and undivided loyalty from the nation (Levin, 1992:9). According to Swazi custom, there is the belief that the Swazi are a humble nation which always resorts to negotiation instead of violent confrontations whenever there are some misunderstandings (Matsebula, 1975:12). Any person who does not subscribe to such norms is considered as an outcast by the nationals (Matsebula, 1975:13).

Traditionalism began to emerge in Swaziland in the 1920s and 1930s as an ideology to be used in legitimating the position of an elite which was seeking to preserve, or rather to restore its position in very adverse circumstances (McMillan, 1986:104). It was used by the colonial government to prevent any forms of resistance from the Swazi nationals. Since the king was presented as an ally of the colonial government, any forms of resistance against the colonial government would have been tantamount to resisting the king's will (MacMillan, 1986:176). In the 1960s traditionalism took the form of an exclusive cultural nationalism, with leaders of the INM using it as a tool for the gaining of votes in the pre-independence election (McMillan, 1986:176). This took a variety of forms which included an increased interest in the promotion and participation in Swazi traditional ceremonies such as, Umhlanga and Incwala. These enhanced the "symbolic capability" of the king, thus legitimizing his domination over the nation (Mugenyi, 1987:280).

On the eve of decolonization, the major issue for imperialist Britain was how to effect a smooth transition to independence in Swaziland (Simelane, 1986:113). Such a transition would best be effected by a class which would bring about ideological unity

in the society by articulating its ideological practice outside the domain of antagonisms arising from the dominant relations of production (Vilane, 1986:132). Swaziland's traditional leaders had emerged from the colonial period as the champions of the Swazi cause (Vilane, 1986:132). The traditional leaders had made a series of deputations to London to negotiate for more land to be given back to the Swazis (Levin:1992:14^[1]). The buy back scheme initiated by Queen Labotsibeni had resulted in 268 093 acres of land being bought back by 1960s (Levin, 1990:50). This image which correlates with Therborn's ideological domination deference, led to the traditional leaders being conceived as possessing superior qualities for them to rule. Their effective control of the land also meant that they had support from the majority of peasants (Simelane, 1986:132). By forming a political party of their own, the traditional leaders were thus able to easily rally support from the rural areas where their role as representatives of the people against the colonialists, on the land issue, had been firmly established (Simelane, 1986:133). They were thus able to use this base very effectively against nationalist opposition parties which emerged in the early sixties.

The political and ideological basis of the monarchy's domination over the masses was thus facilitated by the development of such an ideology (Vilane, 1986:123). According to Hugh McMillan (1986), traditionalism served to mystify the essential contradiction in the Swazi society posed at the level of mode of production by capitalist relations of exploitation (McMillan, 1986:167). Through its appeal to the mass of the Swazi people based on Swazi nation land, the monarchy ensured that the essential antagonism of capital remained extraneous to the field of political and ideological struggle that now shifted its centre of gravity towards the resuscitation of popular traditions (McMillan, 1986:168). The retention of specific non-capitalist practices by the Swazi society has ensured the continuity required by capital in general for sustained accumulation and expansion (McMillan, 1986:168). The monarchy has thus far proved itself capable of diffusing class struggles through the reproduction of elements of pre-capitalist Swazi society (McMillan, 1986:168). Particularly crucial here is the influence which the king has exercised over the peasantry and semi-proletariat based on Swazi nation land (McMillan, 1986:169).

Forms of State Repression

The following are some of the ways employed by the state to facilitate in the domination of the other classes in Swaziland by the monarchy and its allies.

The Land Tenure system

The land tenure system is a system whereby the chiefs have control over the allocation of land (Mugenyi, 1987:278). Land allocation in Swazi nation land is carried out by the chiefs who have the power to forcefully remove or banish anyone from any piece of land at their discretion (Mugenyi, 1987:278). Thousands of peasants have been either forcefully removed, resettled, banished from pieces of land, or simply dumped in the middle of nowhere for reasons such as not paying allegiance to the chiefs and being disrespectful or defiant to authorities and community leaders (Levin, 1990:59). For example, in Ekupheleni, in the Northern part of Swaziland, forty families consisting of about four hundred members were ordered out, and given a month to "get off the land or face forceful eviction" (**Times of Swaziland**, May 5, 1984). It was alleged that these people were not paying allegiance to the chief of the area (Levin, 1990:59). Other nationals hearing of the

dispossessions tend to remain docile and subservient. This is because they fear facing the same consequences. Such forceful evictions exemplify Therborn's ideological domination, fear. This is because the Swazi nationals in Swazi Nation Land are forced to accept the established order. The land tenure system has therefore been used as a mechanism for political and social control. The system thus gives an idea how the state uses its power of land allocation as an instrument of social and political control.

Traditional Courts

Taking advantage of the Swaziland Native Administration Proclamation No.79 of 1950, which allowed for the establishment of Swazi Courts and gave the king powers as the sole authority for issuing orders which were enforceable in these courts, the post-independence, traditional rulers have institutionalized the system of Swazi National Courts to run parallel to the modern legal system (Levin, 1990:50). These are presided over by appointees of the monarch and do not allow legal representation and deal with land, marital and other civil cases (Mugenyi, 1987:279). Since the rules of the procedure are not written, the chiefs and other traditional functionaries use the system to consolidate their power and induce compliance and political control (Mugenyi, 1987:280).

Swazi Law and Custom

Swazi Law and Custom is an undocumented and mysterious legal system which is supposed to guide the behaviour of the Swazi at individual, group and state level handed down by ancestors (Mugenyi, 1987:282^[2]). Paradoxically, no single Swazi appears to know exactly what Swazi Law and Custom means nor what function it is supposed to serve (Mugenyi, 1987:282). On a number of occasions, the state has had to refer to this framework to justify its behaviour and rationalize inconsistencies and irregularities that would otherwise be challenged in modern courts of law. For instance, the forceful selection of the king's wives from young girls, who are kidnapped and made wives even if it may be against their will is a violation of human rights which may not be challenged in any court in the country (Simelane, 1992a:45).

The state has also prevented any means of reforming or having Swazi Law and Custom documented. For instance, in 1983, the Law Department of the University of Swaziland secured funds for a project that was to try and document Swazi Law and Custom (Mugenyi, 1987:283). This was blocked by the state. The reasons given were that it was un-Swazi to have such laws documented (Mugenyi, 1987:283).

Against this background of the conceptual clarification of the manufacture, distribution and maintenance of hegemony and ideology (discussed in this Chapter), an attempt to analyze how the Swazi press has portrayed the political processes which have taken place in the country from 1992-1994 shall be carried out in the subsequent chapters. The next chapter attempts to provide an analysis of the structure of the Swazi press.

Chapter 2: Politics in the Swazi State, 1968-1992: Hegemony and Contest

A Historical Background

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a small, landlocked enclave located in the South Eastern part of Africa. It is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa to the North, West and South and the Republic of Mozambique to the East. It covers an area of approximately 1 720 364 square kilometres, making it the second smallest country, after The Gambia in continental Africa (Matsebula, 1975:11). According to the 1986 to 2016 population projections by the end of 1995 Swaziland will have an estimated population of about 927 917 with an estimated population increase of 3,7% per annum, assuming constant fertility, declining mortality and no migration. Out of these, 434 368 are males and 493 549 females. The country is divided into four districts which are the HhoHho with an estimated population of 127 885, Shiselweni with an estimated population of 208 100, Lubombo with an estimated population of 124 760, and Manzini with 256 581 (**The Kingdom of Swaziland's Population Projections for 1986-2016**). The official languages in the country are English and siSwati.

The Kingdom of Swaziland came into being as a result of the regional state formation called the "MFECANE" which occurred in the first twenty-five years of the Nineteenth Century (Davies, 1985:ix). The mfecane came as a result of land, cattle and wealth struggles around the Zulu Kingdom under King Shaka which resulted in a wave of migrations and the emergence of numerous states in Southern Africa (Daniel, 1983:1). The Dlamini clan, which is the present Swazi ruling group, consolidated its dominance over the area which is present-day Swaziland (Daniel, 1983:1). The Swazi kings extracted surplus in the form of tribute from the population of the region and strove, through the creation of alliances, to protect their territory from attacks and subsequent capturing from other ethnic groups (Davies, 1985:x). Swaziland was formally declared a British Protectorate in 1881 (Davies, 1985:x). The protection by the British came as a result of their wishing to forestall the incorporation of the Kingdom either by the Transvaal Boer Republic or by the Portuguese colony of Mozambique (Daniel, 1983:3). Swaziland gained her independence from Britain in September 1968 under a constitutional monarchy (Daniel, 1983:4). However, the political situation in the Kingdom was to change at a later stage. Economically, in 1981, it had her "GNP per Capita estimated to have reached \$800" (Davies, 1986:8), which elevated Swaziland out of the world's 25 poorest countries.

The development of capitalist relations in Swaziland was stimulated by the discovery of gold deposits in the Transvaal in 1886 (Vilane, 1986:126). This brought prospectors flocking into the country seeking land concessions in the quest for more mineral deposits (Vilane, 1986:126). At the turn of the 1900s, the prospectors were joined by a further surge of farmers and cattle herders who were attracted by the country's fertile soils (Vilane, 1986:126). With the increasing numbers of the concessionaires, the royal court came under pressure to grant the settlers land and mineral concessions (McMillan, 1986:186). This resulted in most of the land in the country being concessioned away. For instance, in 1914, only 8% of the land in the country was reserved for Swazi Nationals (Davies, 1985:2).

The advent of concession seekers then transformed both the structure of Swazi society and the trajectory of the historical process in the country (McMillan, 1986:186). In Swaziland, land partition came through the enactment of the Land

Partition Act of 1907. The implementation of the Act, through the recommendation by British colonial authorities in 1908, resulted in two-thirds of the land in the country conceded to foreign concessionaries (Davies, 1985:2). Land partition was followed by the introduction of hut tax^[3] in 1915 as an attempt to force the Swazi peasants to become wage labourers for both the settler capitalists and the South African mining industry (Simelane, 1992:26). The expropriation of land and the introduction of hut tax led to the erosion of subsistence agriculture. A large number of Swazi nationals were therefore forced to seek wage-labour in the mines or farms (Davies, 1985:2). Capitalist production therefore emerged in Swaziland through these processes.

Arising out of the capitalist relations imposed by colonial expansion, the rural areas of Swaziland remain divided into land allocated to individual tenure farms and Swazi nation land (Davies, 1985:32). Swazi nation land is reserved for ethnic Swazis and vested in the monarch "in trust for the Swazi nation". Access to it is controlled by the traditional chiefs operating under the umbrella of the institutions of the monarchical system (Davies, 1985:32). Some form of surplus has to be paid to the chiefs in the form of tribute labour and surplus produce in return for the right to use the land (Levin, 1990:50). At independence, Swazi nation land accounted for 33% of the total land area^[4]. However, because of the "buy-back" scheme embarked upon by the government after independence, Swazi nation land now accounts for 57% of the total land area (Booth, 1986:19^[5]). However, much of Swazi Nation land has been usurped by Tibiyo Takangwane and converted into commercial farms. The rest of the land is title-deed land. This is found mainly in the peri-urban and urban areas. Title-deed land is mainly owned by foreign business-persons because most of the Swazi population cannot afford due to the exorbitant prices charged (Simelane, 1992a:45). At the time of the 1986 population census close to 77% of the population of Swaziland lived in the Swazi nation areas, 18% were allocated on farms in the individual tenure areas and 23% in the urban areas (**Department of Economic Planning and Statistics:Report on the 1986 Swaziland Population Census**).

An Outline of the Class Structure of Swaziland

It has been argued that the appearance of a class society in Swaziland can be traced to the pre-colonial period (Vilane, 1986:126)^[6]. It is asserted the tributary relationship which empowers chiefs to extract surplus labour time from their subjects through a work party, along with their control over land allocation gave rise to the formation of a class of aristocrats comprising the monarchy, senior princes and chiefs, on the one hand and a class of commoners on the other hand (Vilane, 1986:126). The incorporation of Swaziland into the global capitalist system during the colonial era, therefore amplified an already existing process of class formation (Simelane, 1992b:28). However, the major development was that class formation during the colonial period was predominantly determined by capitalist relations (Simelane, 1992b:28).

At the apex of the Swazi class structure is the ruling indigenous class. The ruling indigenous class is a configuration of several class fractions (Simelane, 1992b:28). At its head stands the royal family which is made up of the King, Queen Mother, princes, princesses or descendants of the various past Swazi Kings (Matsebula, 1975:23). The royal family is not directly involved in the process of production. It exists through the expropriation of surplus from the peasantry in the form of material tribute and labour (Simelane, 1992b:28). Below the royal family is found all

the chiefs. Although chiefs are hereditary traditional administrators, they are formally appointed by the king (Simelane, 1992b:28). They exercise some authority in their areas of jurisdiction. They can impose fines, allocate or withhold land, demand labour services of their subjects, and banish people from their areas (Green, 1986:161). Chiefs are the enforcers of the will of the monarch in rural areas. They are also an extension of the authority of the King and, therefore, legitimize their presence through upholding royal traditions and values (Simelane, 1992b:28).

The power of the indigenous ruling class is based on its control of land as a means of production and reproduction (Simelane, 1992b:28). According to the traditional system of land tenure, land is communally owned and the king holds it in trust for the nation (Simelane, 1992a:28). However, effective control and allocation of land is vested in the ruling indigenous class (Simelane, 1992b:28). It is through such control that the other classes are commandeered to remain loyal to the traditional political structure (Simelane, 1992b:28). Its power is also consolidated through the perpetuation of the official ideology of traditionalism discussed in the last chapter. The prime minister as well as most of the cabinet, senators and senior civil servants are chosen from this class (Davies, 1985:32).

Through the domination of the political machinery of the state, the ruling indigenous class has transformed itself into a comprador bourgeois class (Davies, 1985:15). This has been carried out through the formation of alliances with the mainly British and South African dominated capital through the creation of an institution called **Tibiyo TakaNgwane** which is an investment corporation owned by the royal family (Davies, 1985:15). Its head is the king. Tibiyo was formed as an investment corporation to look after the interests of all Swazi citizens. However, it was to be usurped by King Sobhuza and made into his own private corporation (Simelane, 1992b:34). Land initially earmarked for the buy back scheme was instead bought by Tibiyo to establish private farms. Towards the end of the 1970's the corporation had spent approximately Five Million Emalangeni on the purchase of freehold land (Simelane, 1992b:34). Through its ability to acquire land earmarked for Swazi Nation areas, numerous complaints and complaints have been raised by some Swazi citizens. One major complaint is that it has peripherised peasants in terms of access to land (Simelane, 1992b:34). The corporation competes with peasants on the land market, and has in some cases played a prominent role in the process of peasant dispossession. Such dispossession has taken the form of forced removals and eventual establishment of commercial farms on land previously occupied by the peasantry (Simelane, 1992b:35). For example, when the Simunye Sugar Estate (to which Tibiyo is a major shareholder) was established in Eastern Swaziland, over three thousand peasants were evicted to provide land for the estate (Simelane, 1992b:36). Tibiyo also has significant shareholdings in every major foreign investment in the country (Davies, 1985:15). Such an alliance and the effects it has had has been discussed in the last chapter.

The ruling indigenous class has also incorporated an important section of the Swazi petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia into its institutions of economic and political power (Simelane, 1992b:28). Such incorporation has facilitated in the sustenance of the groups dominance over the other classes because of its powerful financial status (Davies, 1985:20).

Another significant class force is that of the Swazi petty bourgeoisie. This can be divided into two class fractions, which can be classified as the imperialist or imported

petty bourgeoisie and the indigenous petty bourgeoisie (Simelane, 1992:28). Historically, the imperialist petty bourgeoisie has varied origins with some dating back to the second half of the Nineteenth Century as part of the colonial period (Simelane, 1992b:28). This class was employed as administrators in the colonial government (Simelane, 1992b:28). The majority came during the post-colonial period as employees or agents of multi-national firms (Simelane, 1992b:29). These became the pillars in the on-the-spot supervision of the domination of the Swazi economy through ownership and control of foreign monopoly capital (Simelane, 1992b:29). This class includes on the one hand small scale capitalists and petty commodity producers, and on the other, professionals and wage earners who occupy parts allocated to relatively educated persons in the mental and non-manual division of labour (Davies, 1985:47).

The indigenous petty bourgeoisie is a dependent class with its members scrambling for positions within and through the state apparatus (Simelane, 1992b:31). At the top of this group is the category of leading politicians, top bureaucrats in the different ministries and parastatals, the military brass, and some leading academics (Simelane, 1992b:32). Below this category is the fraction of professionals who comprise the lower salaried groups in the civil service, parastatals, private sector and educational institutions (Simelane, 1992b:31). The dependent nature of this class has resulted in some collaboration with the indigenous ruling class. Its members therefore strive to achieve positions through the well established channels of upward mobility determined by members of the indigenous ruling class. Such striving correlates with Goran Therborn's (1982) contention (discussed in Chapter one) that the dominant element of ideology for the petty bourgeoisie is that they should do their duty both towards their employer and country (Therborn, 1982:58).

The majority of the population in Swaziland who live in the Swazi nation areas depend on the regular sale of their labour power in the wage sector for a living (Davies, 1985:35). Thus, far from constituting a peasantry, a majority of the population in these areas is semi-proletariat (Davies, 1985:35). The Swazi semi-proletariat class consists of paid employees in all sectors classified under the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories (Davies, 1985:35). The semi-proletariat class constitutes a substantial amount of the Swazi population comprising just over one third of all Swazis between the ages of 15 and 65 (**Report on the 1986 Population Census**). In applying the classical sociological definition, these workers can be defined as depending for their existence on the regular sale of the labour power of one or more homestead members in the wage sector at any given moment (Haralambos, 1980:116). Their role in providing labour power for the capitalist classes and their poor market conditions as compared to other classes also distinguishes them as semi-proletariat (Davies, 1985:42).

At the bottom of the Swazi class structure is the peasantry. These are concentrated in the Swazi nation areas and are petty commodity producers. These are characterised by a high level of illiteracy and poverty due to shortage of enough land and cattle for subsistence farming as a result of the land alienation implemented by the colonial state during the imposition of British Colonial rule and Tibiyo's usurping of swazi nation land for commercial purposes (Simelane, 1992b:30). Most of them are also not fully fledged peasants because for a living, they rely on regular sale of their labour in the agricultural sector (Simelane, 1992a:30).

A 64% literacy rate was estimated by the 1986 population census. This included people who had partly, or completed, primary and secondary education. Most could only read and write siSwati, the Swazi-mother tongue. A considerable fraction of these can read and write English. Only 1% of the population had by 1986 acquired university degrees, diplomas or vocational training (**Report on the 1986 Swaziland Population Census**). However, judging from the government's major investment policy on education, the percentages must have considerably risen by now.

Political Struggles Since Independence

Monarchism and Constitutionalism

The Imbokodvo National Movement (INM) led by King Sobhuza won the 1967 pre-independence elections. It emerged as the party which was to take over from the British (Daniel, 1983:6). The opposition Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC), led by one Dr Ambrose Zwane, obtained 20% of the votes (Davies: 1985:8). The NNLC represented the radical Swazi petty bourgeoisie and had strong support in the working class sphere of the population (Davies, 1985:9). In terms of the independent constitution, the country was to be governed by a Prime Minister and Cabinet drawn from an elected parliament. The King was to become the Head of State and constitutionally he retained limited executive powers. The NNLC was to become the opposition party (Simelane, 1986a:144). This form of government continued until the political crisis following the 1973 elections. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

The INM was a political party formed by King Sobhuza and the Swazi National Council and dominated by the indigenous ruling class (Simelane, 1992b:27). It was formed by the king as a means of organising the monarchy's drive for the control of state power (Mugenyi, 1987:271). Its formation followed the proliferation of political parties formed to contest the pre-independence elections (Macmillan, 1986:115). King Sobhuza viewed the spread of radical forms of African nationalism in the neighbouring South Africa as a threat to his interests and that of capital in the country (Macmillan, 1986:116). He felt that the rise of such nationalism would lead to mass based organisations which would lead to the marginalisation of the indigenous ruling class (Macmillan, 1986:117).

The INM's victory could be attributed to two major factors. The first was the result of the overwhelming support the party had in the rural areas of Swaziland through the monarchy's control over land allocation and the ideology of "traditionalism" (which is discussed in chapter two). This is an ideology used by the ruling classes that the Swazi nation must keep to its customs and traditions so as to maintain peace (Matsebula, 1975:17). According to Swazi tradition, the King is viewed as the father of the nation, incorrupt and always fighting to maintain the heritage of the Swazi nation. In order for him to properly carry out his duties, he requires total support from the entire nation and opposition is not tolerated (Matsebula, 1975:17). This can be evidenced through the second clause of the election manifesto of the INM which states:

The Imbokodvo is in essence an elemental or organic movement of the people. The struggle for independence was piloted by His Majesty for a period approaching half

a century...This struggle was centred around burning issues of kingship with all its institutions (as against paramount chief), Land and Minerals...The Imbokodvo is the product of this struggle for kingship, land and minerals. It represents the interests of the entire people of Swaziland.(The Philosophy, Policies and Objectives of the Imbokodvo National Movement, undated: 4)

The second factor came as a result of support from the white British and Boer settlers through an alliance formed with the United Swazi Association (USA) in 1964 (Davies, 1985:8^[7]). The alliance with the United Swazi Association proved advantageous in that the USA comprised of a section of the population which owned the means of production, finance capital (Davies, 1985:8). The USA also had support from the foreign multi-national capital investments in the country (Davies, 1985:8). The King's denunciation of strikes and worker's unions, as found in the election manifesto for the INM influenced the major strategists of foreign investors in Swaziland to conclude that a form of state in which the king had a central role would be the best guarantee of the general social conditions of accumulation (Davies, 1985:32). Part of the manifesto states:

The Movement lays emphasis on production and not redistribution of wealth. For this reason the movement does not support nationalization. The ownership of firms by private individuals will be protected...it is here that the movement advocates maximum vigilance(The INM's Philosophy and Objectives, undated:5).

The INM's victory in the independence pre-elections thus entrenched the political power of the Swazi indigenous ruling class.

On the other hand, the NNLC had been propagating for a Pan-Africanist, anti-European and socialist ideology. These were viewed as a threat to capital in Swaziland and the owners of capital had to make sure it was sidelined. A press statement issued by the president of the NNLC, Dr Ambrose Zwane on the eve of independence, stated:

The NNLC is a party that draws its authority and its authenticity from the masses of the people...we are a party of dedicated freedom fighters determined to bring freedom and independence to the country...The Imbokodvo is a pawn of international imperialism, a real tool of white settlerism...(Times of Swaziland, June 10, 1968)

The discourse used by the NNLC, which favoured the working classes, led to its base being predominantly in the constituencies which mainly consisted of a large working class population (Vilane, 1986:137). Because of such support, and the significant role the trade unions played in the quest for independence, the alliance between the NNLC and trade unions were viewed as threat to the state and capital (Mugenyi, 1987:280^[8]). In order to maintain its domination and the capitalist relations in the country, the INM government had therefore to introduce some repressive measures

to disempower the working classes and disrupt trade unionism and other forms of popular mobilisation (Vilane, 1986:137).

The measures taken to disempower the working classes came through the replacement of trade unions with works councils and various forms of conciliation. This resulted in a decline in the standard of living for the working classes. For instance, between 1968 and 1973, more than 50% of the total labour force employed in the private sector was faced with either constant or declining wages over and above a 6% increase in the retail price index (Mugenyi, 1987:273). Such repressive measures resulted in the gradual shifting of loyalty from the monarchy to the opposition NNLC. This was manifested in the 1972 elections when the NNLC obtained victory in three constituencies which meant, it was to get three seats in the House of Assembly (Davies, 1985:46). This led to the unseating of the then Minister for Commerce, Prince Mfanasibili Dlamini who was also the accepted leader of the lineage which expected to provide the successor to King Sobhuza (Davies, 1985:53). The NNLC's victory was viewed as an insult and a direct challenge to the monarchy and ruling alliance (Davies, 1985:53). The governing party in effect totally refused to accept the elected NNLC members into Parliament. For instance, the swearing in of the NNLC's Members of Parliament had to be postponed because it was boycotted by certain INM Members of Parliament and a quorum could not be formed (Davies, 1985:54¹⁹¹).

A number of crude manoeuvres were also made to exclude the NNLC from participating in the government. One of the most prominent was the deportation of one of their members, a Mr Thomas Ngwenya, who it was claimed was of South African origin (Davies, 1985:54). Parliament passed an amendment to the Immigration Act which established a Tribunal of five members to be elected by the Deputy Prime Minister to deal with citizenship disputes (Davies, 1985:54). The bill was challenged in the High Court of Swaziland. In March 1973 the High Court of Swaziland ruled the Act and the deportation as unconstitutional (Davies, 1985:55). The High Court ruling was viewed as a direct insult to the king. Through the enactment of the King's Order in Council of 1973, he declared a state of emergency. Parliament was dismissed and all political parties dissolved (Davies, 1985:54). All legislative, executive and judicial powers were to be assumed by the king who was to rule by decree. Meetings of more than a group of ten were banned (Davies, 1985:56).

The enactment of the 1973 King's Order in Council was carried out because the constitution and opposition parties were viewed as a hindrance to the monarchy's domination over the Swazi (Vilane, 1986:117). In a speech in parliament the then Prime Minister, Prince Makhosini said:

Many unwarranted restrictions are placed on the executive powers of the ministers and of the king-in-council resulting in the incapacity of the executive to govern the country properly and without continuously encountering irksome and completely unjustifiable obstacles (**Times of Swaziland**, March 20, 1973).

The subsequent banning of political parties has also been attributed to the growing contradiction between capital and labour (Simelane, 1986:145). In early April of the year the constitution was repealed, a strike had broke out in one of Swaziland's

asbestos mines. The workers were demanding a 30% wage increase and cash in lieu of food rations (MacMillan, 1986: 155). This strike coincided with two events. Firstly was sharp worker militancy in South Africa as evidenced in the 1973 series of strikes which saw roughly one hundred thousand workers involved in labour action which originated in Durban (Simelane, 1986: 155). Secondly, **Tibiyo** had just acquired 40% of the mine equity from Turner and Newall who were the proprietors of the mine (Vilane, 1986: 36). The strike was then viewed as a threat to capital in Swaziland. This was echoed by Swaziland's then Minister for Finance, R.P. Stevens who gave countenance to the King's actions. He stated:

Swaziland was on the brink of severe industrial strife as a result of the activities of politicians, political parties and outside influences which had contacts with countries such as Russia and Tanzania. The position was becoming unbearable and the King acted quickly and timeously
(**Times of Swaziland**, April

12, 1973).

To legitimize the punitive actions taken to suppress the opposition, it was argued that the constitution was "unSwazi", highly incompatible with Swazi tradition and a hindrance to the domination of the monarch who is the legitimate ruler of the Swazi (Daniel, 1983: 5). In a speech delivered by King Sobhuza, he stated:

The constitution has permitted the imposition into our country of highly undesirable political practices, alien and incompatible with the way of life of our society, and designed to disrupt and destroy our own peaceful and constructive and essentially democratic method of political activity...increasingly, this element engenders hostility, bitterness and unrest in our peaceful society
(Proclamation by King Sobhuza, April 12, 1973).

What was being referred to here were trade unions, political parties and elections conducted on a universal suffrage (Daniel, 1983: 4). By suspending the constitution, the king seemed to have made certain that the monarchy was to have unquestionable control of all political power in Swaziland. This was a final act of consolidating power and a crushing blow to any forms of opposition from any individuals or organizations.

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Triumph of the Monarchy

Apart from the institutional changes mentioned previously, the period between 1973 to 1978 witnessed a series of institutional and structural changes introduced by the monarchy. The institutional changes included firstly, the unconditional banning of trade unions (Simelane, 1992b: 42). Trade unions were replaced by a system called the "Nduna" system (works councils). The Ndunas were appointed by the king from outside the enterprise but paid by the enterprise (Simelane, 1992: 147). At the level of the enterprise, the Ndunas functioned in handling grievances and disputes at shopfloor level (Simelane, 1986: 147). However, since these were appointed by the

King, they saw themselves as representing the King as opposed to the workers (Simelane, 1986: 147). Thus, although the Ndunas assumed the role of trade unions or workers organisations, they fell short of representing the interests of the working classes.

The second was the enactment of the sixty days detention without trial order (Davies, 1985: 32). The renewal of the term was subject to the discretion of the head of state^[10]. This period was therefore characterized by a spate of detentions of members of the opposition, leading trade unionists and other political figures viewed as a "threat" to the security and rule of the monarchy (Davies, 1985: 32). Such measures succeeded in breaking the opposition and trade unionism. It also led to the depoliticizing of the Swazi masses in favour of increasing loyalty to the monarchy (Simelane, 1986: 43). It can then be argued that the loyalty of the Swazi masses was achieved through the use of such Repressive State Apparatuses instituted by the INM's government.

Political "Reform" and the "Tinkhundla System"

In 1978, King Sobhuza considered the situation sufficiently under control to introduce a new system. This was described as a mixture of Swazi tradition and Western democracy (Davies, 1985: 47). It contained a number of institutions which included parliament, cabinet, **the Libandla** (Swazi National Council), **the Liqoqo**, and the monarchy (Davies, 1985: 47^[11]).

Under this new system, Parliament was to be elected through traditional constituent structures known as "Tinkhundla." These were divided according to chiefdoms which were to function as constituencies (Davies, 1985: 47). Through this system, those elected from the Tinkhundla constituencies were to nominate a group of forty people from amongst themselves. This group would form a body called "The Electoral College". The function of the college was to select members of parliament from a list drawn up by an anonymous person (Davies, 1985: 48). It seems that this "person" was the king and his council of advisers (Davies, 1985: 48). This meant that those elected in the constituencies were not directly elected into Parliament but were to function as nominators for the Electoral College which would in turn select other people (Davies: 1985: 50). The Prime Minister and Cabinet were to be selected by the King at his own discretion. The Monarch was still to have control over the executive, legislative and judicial powers and also empowered to dismiss or dissolve Parliament and cabinet at his own will (Daniel, 1983: 12).

The cabinet and Parliament were therefore stripped of independent policy-making authority and to effectively function as administrative bodies which run the Civil Service and oversee the implementation of policies decided upon by the king and his council of advisers (Davies, 1985: 54). Criticism made in Parliament was then to be directed only at the administrative structures rather than the real policy-making institutions (Daniel, 1983: 8). Political power remained at the hands of the king.

The **Liqoqo** functioned as the executive of the **Libandla** and its members were supposed to be appointed by the King and the elders (Davies, 1985: 47^[12]). The Liqoqo's membership was supposed to remain secret^[13] and the libandla had its membership drawn from all chiefs and some members of the royal family. The monarchy, the libandla and the liqoqo were the real policy-making bodies which meant that political power was confined only to the royalist institutions.

This meant that much of the institutional apparatus of the state remained unchanged and continued to function unimpeded. The aims of the reformed state were therefore to ensure that the domination of the monarchy remained unchallenged. John Daniel (1983) has argued that such centralisation of power through the creation of the traditional institutions and the electoral system was designed so as to ensure the domination of the Swazi masses by loyalists to the monarchy (Daniel, 1983:6). What is important here is that the mode of representation was changed so as to suit the monarchy and the traditionalists.

The institutional structure of the Swazi state was then built on a complicated, implicit but nevertheless clear distinction between the "Swazi Nation" and the "Government of Swaziland" (Davies, 1985:16). The former refers to the "ethnic Swazis," particularly in designated Swazi Nation land areas. This institution is organized through the administrative structures of the traditional chieftaincy (Davies, 1985:16). The government of Swaziland consists only of the modern administrative structures of the Swazi state and only deals with public administration, the economic and social development of the country and her international relations (Davies, 1985:16). The monarch presides over both the Swazi nation and the Swaziland government.

To get a clear picture of what is being discussed, an example of the function of the Swaziland government's Ministry of Finance shall be examined:

The ministry is charged with the supervision of the overall budget of the Swazi State and raises its revenue. However, it does not exercise control over the financial assets of the Swazi nation which include, the actual land holdings in the Swazi Nation areas and the mineral wealth of the country. Revenue from these does not enter into the annual budget of the government of Swaziland. These are under the control of a company called "Tibiyo TakaNgwane" which is directly under the control of the King (Davies, 1985:16).

Such a state of affairs displays that two separate administrative institutions are in operation in Swaziland's social, political and economic system. The Cabinet and Parliament do not play any effective political and economic role in policy-making. This is because political power is entirely concentrated in the hands of the King and whatever policy decisions they make are subject to his approval. He can veto, alter or discard any policy which he views as a threat to his dominance. Also the issue of public finance highlighted in the above example leaves a lot to be desired.

In 1982, King Sobhuza died at the age of 83. During the period after his death until the coronation of King Mswati III the country was under the leadership of the council called the "LIQOOO" (Davies, 1985:51). This period was characterised by factional fighting between the Royal Family over who was to hold the political power during the interim period. A spate of arrests of some members of the Royal family and their aligned Swazi citizens followed.

During this period very minor political institutional changes were made to the favour of the majority. The only remarkable change made was the unbanning of trade unions (Davies, 1985:60). King Mswati was officially crowned as the next King of the Swaziland Kingdom in 1986.

The Politics of Illegality

The newly crowned king also followed direct in the footsteps of King Sobhuza through not showing any interest in instituting any kind of institutional changes (Mngomezulu, political activist, Interview, July 1995). This prompted some Swazi citizens to start questioning the King's total authority manifested through the Tinkhundla system. This came first in mid-1988 through the distribution of politically oriented pamphlets by an underground political movement calling itself the "Peoples United Democratic Movement of Swaziland" (PUDEMO) (Levin, 1992:40). These pamphlets were distributed in the main city centres of Mbabane, Manzini, Nhlangano, Piggs Peak and Siteki. These had a lot of questions pertaining to the social, economic and political disparities existing in Swaziland. The Swaziland government was charged with corruption and nepotism (Tsabedze, political activist, Interview, July 1995). Numerous other opposition groups were formed who were also questioning the power relations and calling for the reinstatement of the constitution repealed in 1973 by the INM's government (Khumalo, newspaper journalist, Interview, July 1992). Numerous other demands were made which were calling for:

the replacement of the Tinkhundla system with a Western-style multi-party democratic system. Under this system, the King would either function only as a constitutional monarch, which means he would not be involved in politics, or he would form his own political party and contest in a democratic election. This would mean the king surrendering the total executive and legislative powers in favour of a legislative council and a more representative parliament. The conducting of a national referendum to ascertain whether the Swazi citizens were satisfied with the present system of government or not was also demanded. Swaziland was also to draw a new constitution which would cater for the present and future interest of her population at large instead of only the few privileged classes (Dlamini, Interview, July 1992).

The demand for the establishment of platforms to express political views was also made (Tsabedze, Interview, July 1995). Under the present system, the expression of opposition views is a heresy which is disadvantageous to the social, political and economic development of the country. Any person caught up in such a situation is subjected to the 60 days detention without trial order, which has been replaced by the Non-bailable Offences Act of 1994 (Masuku, practising journalist, Interview, July 1995). For instance, a number of Swazi citizens have been detained under the claim of being a threat to the security of the state.

The reasons for the expression of discontent were manifold. The major reason can be attributed to the global political changes which emanated from the Eastern Bloc (Matsebula, newspaper editor, Interview, July 1992). These were the democratization of the political systems in the socialist states as a result of the "glasnost and perestroika" policies introduced in the former Soviet Union in favour of more democratic dispensations. The movements towards the democratisation of the Republic of Zambia and other southern African States also played a role. Such events affected the Southern African region as more and more governments were changing their political institutional systems (Dlamini, political activist, interview, July 1992).

The political and institutional changes introduced in the Republic of South Africa also played a major role. The unbanning of political parties, scrapping of certain apartheid laws and the opening of negotiation platforms by the National Party government in 1990 was viewed as a highly progressive step by the entire Swaziland population including the ruling class itself (Ndlovu, university lecturer, Interview, July 1995).

In spite of all these changes internationally, the Swazi State seemed only to be paying lip service instead of instituting changes through either making reforms or completely transforming her political system (Masuku, Interview, July 1995). Swaziland is also one of South Africa's important allies because of her links through capital and the Southern African Customs Union (Daniel, 1983:13). Also during economic sanctions against South Africa, Swaziland was one of the countries which overtly expressed disagreement to the move at every international forum she could get (Daniel, 1983:15). If South Africa was making such changes for the improvement of its power relations, Swaziland being an ally was not to remain behind (Dlamini, Interview, July 1992).

In mid-1990, a number of Swazi citizens were rounded up by the Royal Swaziland Police for allegedly being members of PUDEMO, an organization which was responsible for the distribution of the pamphlets (**Times of Swaziland**, July 5, 1990). These consisted mainly of civil servants, trade unionists, professionals, academics and some University, College and High School students. Subsequently, ten of them were charged with High Treason for their alleged involvement in the organisation. A series of charges were also laid against them which included:

the distribution of seditious pamphlets, the convening and attendance of an illegal political meeting, the uttering of political statements in a meeting, and the formation of a political organisation (Dlamini, Interview, July 1992).

The trial attracted the attention of various foreign diplomatic offices in Swaziland and Amnesty International which sent two assessors to follow up the case (**The Weekend Sun**, September 13, 1990). The USA Embassy in Swaziland released a statement to the effect that the ten must be given a "fair and open trial." They also condemned the detention of the ten as a violation of the right to "Freedom of Expression" (**The Weekend Sun**, September 13, 1990).

However, they were all acquitted on all charges except one, which was the attendance of an illegal gathering. Sentences ranging from one to two years were given to them and some received suspended sentences (Dlamini, Interview, July 1992). After their release, a series of class boycotts by university and college students followed. These resulted from the expulsion of four university and college students and a lecturer from the University of Swaziland for their involvement in their trial (**Times of Swaziland**, October 4, 1990). The students were demanding the unconditional reinstatement of the expelled four. They expressed that their expulsion was unfair and a violation of their right to education and employment (Speech by UNISWA SRC president, October 3, 1990). Their dismissals were also condemned as a government way of suppressing opposition instead of facing and finding probing the cause of the grievances (Maseko, practising journalist, Interview, July 1992). The students were also supported by members of the public who also expressed great disappointment at such a move (Maseko, Interview, July 1992).

The boycotts were followed by a series of repressive measures instituted by the government. Towards the end of 1990, an offensive was waged by members of the Swaziland army and police forces who attacked students at the University of Swaziland, beat them up, resulting in a number being seriously injured (**Times of Swaziland**, October 14, 1990). The offensive on the students was followed by the indefinite closure of the University of Swaziland and six of the ten former treason trialists detained under the "Sixty Days Detention Order". The six were alleged to have instigated the boycotts and were labelled as a threat to the political stability of the country (**Swazi Observer**, October 24, 1990).

The offensive waged on the students and the subsequent detention of the six was condemned by some Swazi citizens. It was viewed as a punitive measure taken by the government to suppress resistance. This was expressed through local newspapers mainly, **The Weekend Sun** and **The Times of Swaziland**. **The Weekend Sun** was the most vocal, totally condemning the move. In one of its editorials, it called for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry to establish who had given orders for the police and army bashing of the students (**Weekend Sun**, Nov 15, 1990). Also, a series of letters to the editor followed and were published in these two newspapers. Various foreign diplomatic offices also condemned the move and called for the establishment of an inquiry. This was carried out through press releases published in the local newspapers (**Times of Swaziland**, November 21, 1990). Swaziland was also threatened by the international community with the suspension of foreign aid if she did not release the detainees held under the sixty day detention order (**The Weekend Sun**, December 4, 1990)

This era marked a drastic change in the political climate of Swaziland. It was for the first time, since the banning of all political parties, that the country's newspapers and the public in general openly criticised the government (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). The country was also subjected to intense pressure from the USA, Great Britain and other European and African States which were demanding for the opening up of forums for the discussion of the future political system of the country. They also advocated for the Freedom of Expression, which was to include the Freedom of the Press a move viewed by the press as providing it with some backing (Maseko: interview: July 1992). Journalists therefore felt that the backing from the international community would provide a palliative to the press controls initiated by the government.

Reforming the Tinkhundla System

Due to the pressure exerted from within and outside, the monarchy was in August 1991, forced to appoint a commission to review the political system practised in the country (Dlamini: Interview: July 1992). This was headed by one Prince Masitsela. The Commission toured the various chiefdoms to solicit views on what political system was preferred (**Times of Swaziland**: August 12, 1991). Most of the submissions made to the committee proved to be against the "Tinkhundla" system of government in favour of Western multi-party democracy. One member of parliament making a submission said:

I got to know that I have been chosen into parliament through the press. I still do not know who chose me and what qualities that particular person saw in me. I just know that I am a parliamentarian but who am I meant

to represent? (**The Weekend Sun**, November 20, 1991).

In spite of the negative submissions made to the Commission, its report published that the majority of the population were in favour of the system. One of the statements issued by its chairman, Prince Masitsela stated:

...the people of Swaziland are not for the opinion of throwing away what is theirs, unique and belongs to the Swazi only. They have decided that the Tinkhundla System is the most suitable for the country and changing it would result in bloodshed (**Times of Swaziland**, February 19, 1992).

However, the paradox was that such a statement was contrary to the submissions made to the commission which were widely published in the Swazi media. In reaction to the Commission's report, a press statement issued by PUDEMO president stated:

...its composition was highly questionable and it even lacked the smallest semblance of representation...it showed obvious biases and untruths (**Times of Swaziland**, February 22, 1992).

In February 23, 1992 PUDEMO declared itself legal. A statement issued by the organization stated:

The people of Swaziland are sick and tired of the double standards played by the monarchy... Our government is illegal in that it violates our right to choose the people who are to lead us...we are therefore declaring ourselves as legal because we are fighting for a just course...we view the banning of parties as illegal... (and) it is our right to organize and we are prepared to face any consequences thereafter (**Times of Swaziland**, February 24, 1992).

After the launching of PUDEMO, numerous other organizations also declared themselves legal. These included amongst others, the Swaziland National Liberation Front and the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (Lukhele, Human Rights Lawyer, interview, February 1994).

As the political pressure was increasing, in mid-1993 the King was forced to reform the election system to be used in the country. Representatives of the various constituencies were to be directly elected into Parliament (**Times of Swaziland**, July 12, 1993). However, half of the members of the lower House of Parliament, and the House of Senate and Cabinet were to be chosen by the king (**Times of Swaziland**, July 12, 1993). The king still holds all the powers and the form of state and institutional structures remain the same.

An Analysis: Maintaining Hegemony

In analyzing what has been discussed above, reference shall be made to Antonio Gramsci's (1971) theory of the role of the state in the exercise of hegemony (discussed in Chapter One). He asserts that the state is an instrument of a class in its ability to create and reproduce the social relations of production (Gramsci, 1971 cf Sassoon, 1980: 112). Gramsci's conception therefore perceives the state as an instrument used by the dominant classes in maintaining their dominance over the other classes (Sassoon, 1980: 112) He states: the normal exercise of hegemony is carried out by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating over consent (Gramsci, 1971: 80). The post-independence political struggles in Swaziland have to be perceived in the context of a systematic attempt by the monarchy and capital alliance to dominate the Swazi masses.

The use of coercion to maintain hegemony by the Swazi State can be exemplified by the enactment of the 1973 King's Proclamation and the subsequent repressive measures instituted thereafter. The banning of political parties, trade unions and annulling of the independence constitution should therefore be viewed as an attempt by the Swazi State to maintain capitalist social relations in the country. These were perceived as being a threat to the monarchy and capital alliance. This can be evidenced in the statement issued by King Sobhuza which was to the effect that political parties, trade unions and the constitution were fostering disloyalty to the authorities. Such a perception came as a result of the NNLC's support in constituencies which had a large working class population. The Pan-Africanist and Socialist oriented discourse used by the NNLC in its election campaigns also led to it being viewed as a threat to the monarchy and capital alliance.

Hegemony has also to be continually renewed, recreated, defended and sometimes modified (Tomaselli, 1987: 15 Eagleton, 1991: 115). Any governing power is forced to engage with counter-hegemonic forces in ways which are partly constitutive of its own rule (Eagleton, 1991: 115). The Swazi state has had to continually modify its hegemonic control through firstly, the introduction of the Tinkhundla System by King Sobhuza in 1978, and secondly through reforming the Tinkhundla System in 1993 by King Mswati III. The aims of the reformed state were to ensure that the domination of the monarchy remained intact. Much of the state institutional apparatuses have remained the unchanged. The retention of the traditional institutions has led to the domination of the Swazi masses by loyalists to the monarchy. The counter-hegemonic forces have therefore been engaged in a way that is partly constitutive of the monarchy's rule.

The role of the press in the Swazi political formation should therefore be understood against the background of the maintaining and contestation of the hegemony and ideology of the Swazi monarchy. The next chapter focusses on outlining how hegemony and ideology are constructed and contested in society.

Chapter 3: The Structure of the Swazi Press

In providing an analysis of the structure of the press in Swaziland, it has to be highlighted that a critical analysis of the media and its structures has currently not been carried out. Previous works have focussed on the role of the press and broadcasting in development communication and have been carried out by students, (Tsabedze, 1990 Hlatshwayo, 1992) government officials and numerous experts from inside and outside the country. These have utilized the structural functionalist paradigm which is highly uncritical and has a limited scope of analysis. This section is based on a chronological history of the Swazi press. It derives from detailed interviews conducted between July 1992 and July 1995. This section is therefore a reflection of the views expressed by practicing and former media professionals, journalists, editors, political activists, trade unionists, academics, the owner of The Times group of newspapers, (which is one of the two media groups currently in existence) opinion makers and the general public.

The Pre-Independence Press

The press can be traced to as far back as 1897, when Sir Allister Miller, Swaziland's then British Resident Commissioner formed **The Times of Swaziland**. This was the first Swazi newspaper to be established (Mangena, retired newspaper journalist, Interview, July 1992). **The Swaziland Chronicle** was formed in 1933 by a white settler resident in Swaziland (Mangena, Interview, July 1992).

Both newspapers were printed in Johannesburg and published fortnightly. The main reason for printing these in South Africa was that Swaziland lacked adequate printing facilities (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). Another reason was that **The Times of Swaziland** was established by the Colonial Government which meant it had to be printed at the United Kingdom Information Office in South Africa (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). Circulation was mainly centred in the major towns of Swaziland, the then Bremersdorp, later to be known as Manzini, and Mbabane (Magagula, retired newspaper editor, Interview, July 1992). The **Swaziland Chronicle** is now defunct. **The Times of Swaziland** is still in existence as a daily.

The British Government financed the costs of the printing, publication and circulation of **The Times** (Loffler, proprietor of **The Times**, Interview, July 1992). Towards independence, the British Government withdrew its subsidy for the newspaper and it was bought by the South Africa media conglomerate, the Argus group of Companies, which also established the Swaziland Printing and Publishing Company where **The Times** was then printed (Loffler, Interview, July 1992). The Argus group ran the paper until Swaziland obtained independence in September, 1968 (Loffler, Interview, July 1992). During this period, an offer to sell the newspaper and printing company to the government was made by Argus. The offer was refused by the Swaziland government in favour of establishing its own newspaper later, to be known as **Umbiki** (The Reporter) in 1969. However, the government bought the printing company in 1969. It later sold the it to a private company due to loss making (Magagula, Interview, July 1992).

The content of the news published in **The Times** was geared towards the dissemination and legitimation of British colonial policies in Swaziland and to keep

the Colonialists informed about the activities going on in Britain and the rest of the world. The most popular features were therefore British news and Commentary from Britain (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). An insert printed in Zulu called **Izwi LamaSwazi** (Voice of the Swazi) was published with every issue of **The Times**. This mainly consisted of issues pertaining to the activities of the Swazi and the promulgation and justification of newly enacted government legislations, orders, and government appointments and dismissals (Mangena, Interview, July 1992).

The Post-Independence Press: The Government Owned Press

After independence, the Swaziland Government assumed control over the United Kingdom Information Service and formed the Department of Swaziland Information Services (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). In 1969 the Department of Information Services was merged with the Department of Broadcasting Services thus forming the Department of Broadcasting and Information Services (SBIS), which fell under the then Ministry of Home Affairs (Mangena, Interview, July 1992^[14]).

Umbiki, was published fortnightly in English and siSwati by the Department of Broadcasting and Information Services (Malinga, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information, Interview, July 1992). Due to escalating costs for printing and publishing, it is currently a three monthly publication (Malinga, Interview, July 1992). It is circulated free of charge to government departments and mailed to subscribers (Kasoma, 1992:86). The newspaper focuses on the activities of the civil service, publication of newly gazetted laws, government appointments and dismissals, and justification of newly enacted government policies and Acts (Kasoma, 1992:86).

Another government publication is **Swaziland Today**. The publication is aimed at informing readers throughout the world about "up-to-date" Swaziland. Its contents is mainly on tourist attractions and other issues which may be of interest to foreign business persons wishing to invest in the country (Kasoma, 1992: 87). Also included in the publication is a mixture of official government write-ups, human interest stories and poetry (Kasoma, 1992:87). It is circulated quarterly and free of charge.

News From Swaziland is another government-owned publication. This is a handout produced daily by the printing section of the Swaziland Broadcasting and information services (Malinga, Interview:July1992). Its content is mainly based on keeping civil servants informed about the operations of the various other government departments (Kasoma, 1992:87). About two hundred and fifty copies are printed daily and it is circulated free of charge to all government departments. The distribution list includes senior government officials, members of trade and commerce establishments, senators and news desks of the various media houses (Kasoma, 1992:86).

Due to the losses incurred by these publications, they are directly funded by the government. Such losses can be attributed to the failure by these to attract advertising revenue emanating from their circulating patterns which are not audience maximizing (Malinga, Interview, July 1992). **Swaziland Today** has been the only one which manages to attract some advertising revenue because of its tourist content. However, it is not sufficient to cater for all the expenses needed to keep it running (Malinga, Interview, July 1992).

The Commercial Press

The Swazi Observer and Weekend Observer

The **Swazi and Weekend Observer**, are both English publications published by The Observer Media Group of Newspapers, a subsidiary of the Tibiyo TakaNgwane National Trust Company whose head is the King and the Prime Minister, its chairman (The Observer Media Group Rate Card, Undated). Its editorial policy is a duplicate of the International Federation of Journalists "Principles on the conduct of Journalists" with only minor alterations. The policy states: The policy of the Observer Media Group, Publishers of the **Swazi Observer and Weekend Observer** is based on:

- 1) Respect for truth and for the right of the public to know the truth which is our first duty;
- 2) At all times to defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right to fair comment and criticism;
- 3) Reporting only in accordance with facts of which the origin is known and shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents;
- 4) Using only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents;
- 5) Doing the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate;
- 6) The observing of professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence;
- 7) The awareness of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion and national or social origins;
- 8) Regarding as grave professional offenses the following: Plagiarism Malicious misrepresentation. Calumny, slander, libel. The acceptance of a bribe;
- 9) Within the general laws of the Kingdom of Swaziland shall recognize jurisdiction of only the King (at the time) or the head of the royal family to the exclusion of every kind of interference by others;
- 10) Considering it our duty to observe faithfully the principles state above (The Observer Media Group Policy, 1980: 3).

Clause #9 indicates that the newspaper only functions in the interest of the monarchy who are its proprietors. Any report dealing with issues pertaining to the monarchy has to be printed in the first page and constitute the main headline

(Lenaghan, **The Observer's** newspaper managing editor, Interview, July 1992). Failure to do so may result in the subsequent expulsion of the editor responsible (Lenaghan, Interview, July 1992). The newspaper rarely publishes editorial comments. On the rare cases that they do appear, they are only concerned with social issues (Starriter, newspaper journalist, Interview, July 1992). Criticisms levelled against the state, including any issues deemed politically hostile to the monarchy are either never published or published with a highly biased and subjective tone (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). Focus is then based on sport, entertainment features, crime, foreign news (which are in most cases outdated and based on political conflicts) and development news (Starriter, Interview, July 1992).

In an interview carried with one of its journalists, it was established that the Prime Minister, as chairman of Tibiyó, usually gives out orders as to what to publish and what not to publish. In some cases, some reports which were to be included in the newspapers have to be cancelled as a result of orders from above. Reporters are thus never sure of what issues to report on and what to exclude (Motsa, **The Observer** journalist, Interview, July 1992). This was confirmed in an interview with one of its editors who said: Where the privately owned press is critical, we try to be objective (Sibisi, **The Observer editor**, Interview, July 1992).

Adhering to **The Observer** policy has had adverse effects on the sale of the newspaper. One journalist commented: How can we expect to sell a newspaper whose main headline is always about the Prime Minister officially opening a bridge? (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). As a result, the newspaper is gradually losing readers who opt for the other newspaper (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). This is manifested through the copies the newspaper claims to be selling daily which is between two thousand five hundred to three thousand copies^[15]. Advertisers have also gradually withdrawn from the newspaper because of the readership it commands (Lenaghan, Interview, July 1992). The newspaper has reacted to such withdrawals by lowering the advertising rates so as an incentive for attracting advertisers (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). This was confirmed by one of its journalists who said "had it not been for the subsidy we receive from Tibiyó, The newspaper would have long folded up as a result of the losses accrued" (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). Despite the losses, Tibiyó has continued to maintain the newspapers from revenue derived from its other projects. What was also established was that the salaries earned by the staff are higher than those derived from the other newspaper (Motsa, Interview, July 1992). The salaries then keep the staff relatively content. Such conformity reinforces Gramsci's (1971) contention that society may conform not because people consciously value certain patterns of behaviour, but as result of pursuing certain goals in life (Hibbin, 1978: 32).

In analyzing the role played by **The Observer**, reference shall be made to Olav Stokke (1971) on his assertions on state-owned mass media. He argues that the political ideology of a government may also influence the degree of independence of the mass media (Stokke, 1971: 76). Therefore, such governments will not be content with passive and non-committal mass media, but will consider them as instruments to be actively used to perpetuate their ideologies (Stokke, 1971: 76). The political ideology and the achievements of such regimes may be most strongly and favourably reflected, and dissident or critical reports may be consistently excluded (Stokke, 1971: 77). The consistent exclusion of opposing views exemplifies Therborn's (1982: 96) ideological domination, accommodation. **The Observer** keeps the exploitative qualities of the monarchy concealed through the distribution of

knowledge which is pro-monarchy. The newspapers are therefore linked to the state apparatus and also used to promote various forms of personality cults of the monarchy. This has taken the form of featuring any news dealing with the monarchy on the first page and constituting the main headline (Starriter, Interview, July 1992). This is carried out regardless of how insignificant these events may be. The newspapers can then be termed, according to what Graham Murdock and Peter Golding (1983) refer to, as "flagships", for the monarchy. Such legitimation also reinforces Therborn's (1982: 104) Ideological domination, deference. The tendency of not criticising the state has led to the monarchy being perceived as having qualities which are necessary qualifications for the monarchy to rule. The newspapers therefore explicitly reinforce the "hegemony and ideology" of the monarchy through legitimating the status quo.

The Times Group of Newspapers

The Times Group of Newspapers is under the ownership of Mr Douglas Loffler, a Swazi based British Businessman. Newspapers under this group are: **The Times of Swaziland, Tikhatsi TakaNgwane** which are daily publications, **The Swazi News, The Times Sunday, and Tikhatsi Ngelisontfo**, which are weeklies (Loffler, Interview: July 1992). Its policy states:

- 1) We are a private newspaper with the main goal of making profit. We are therefore part of the private sector constituency and we fully support the private enterprise system.
- 2) We are purveyors of news and we accept paid advertising without any prejudice.
- 3) We are a non-partisan group with no political affiliations and we therefore discourage and avoid bias at all costs.
- 4) We promote and defend ideas that promote democracy and other basic freedoms which include the promotion of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," and the expression of the views of the voiceless (The Times Group of Newspapers Media Policy, Undated: 1).

The Times daily sells an estimate of about fifteen thousand copies a day and **Tikhatsi**, (which is a siSwati version of the daily **Times**) seven thousand five hundred copies a day. The weekly **Times Sunday and Swazi News** sell an estimated ten thousand copies a week and **Tikhatsi Ngelisontfo** (The Times on Sunday which is a siSwati version of **The Times Sunday**) four thousand copies a week (Loffler, Interview, December 1994). The newspapers have also attracted a large pool of advertising. For instance, the English language newspapers have advertisements in almost all of their pages, excluding the classifieds.

The content of these newspapers is dominated by crime, business news and foreign and domestic political issues (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). Different views (including political views) from the different sectors of the public are published through the letters to the editor sections (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). The newspapers have made some considerable criticisms on the Swaziland government. These include amongst others criticising policies created at government level, newly enacted government legislations and various other government policies (Matsebula,

Interview, July 1992). These are criticized through editorials and letters to the editor. Some of the criticisms have achieved considerable success in that notable changes were made by the government (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992).

An example can be made through the enactment of the "Land Evaluation and Transference Bill"^[16>] which in one of its provisions stated that, the evaluation of a piece of title-deed land is vested upon the jurisdiction of the Minister for Justice in the case of a dispute arising out of the buyer and seller (**The Times of Swaziland**, June 11, 1991). The bill also empowered the minister to force the sale of any piece of land to any person if the seller refused. Failure to comply would have resulted in a prison sentence (**The Times of Swaziland**, June 7, 1991).

The Bill was widely criticized by the various sectors of the community with **The Times** spearheading the campaign (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). A series of editorial comments and letters to the editor from the public complaining about the unfairness of the Act were published (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). The Bill was described as being "unfair and an instrument of depriving the residents of their right to land ownership and determination of the price they may wish to sell their land" (**Times of Swaziland**, June 11, 1991). It was also highlighted that the bill would scare foreign investors from investing in the country. Such criticism led to the subsequent suspension of this act by the king (**The Times Of Swaziland**, September 1, 1991).

What has to be noted however, is that the newspaper gave so much attention to this bill because it was also affecting the business sector. Since the newspaper's policy explicitly states that it supports the free market system, it therefore follows that any policies viewed as a threat to capital are strongly criticised. The government may have also gave in to such criticism because of fear and pressure from the business sector. This is because the country's economic sector is dominated by foreign capital. Those who had invested in the agricultural sector were therefore not to be secured of their land holdings.

Focus on labour issues is usually narrow and mainly based on the reporting of events rather than conditions (Dlamini, trade unionist, Interview, July 1995). The issue of labour exploitation in the country, for instance has been downplayed. For example, a government document called **A Guide to Investors**, states:

the government operates on four major aspects: Swaziland offers a guaranteed cheap and docile labour force. Wages are low in Swaziland as compared with those of other African countries. Government policy is designed to maintain this situation (**A Guide to Investors**, Undated:6).

In spite of such conditions the masses are exposed to, in the reporting of industrial actions which have mushroomed since the beginning of 1992, most reports concern themselves with particular events (Dlamini, Interview, July, 1995). This is carried out through treating each and every strike action as a separate event (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Focus has also been on the disruptions at the work places rather than the structural conditions the working classes are exposed to which include amongst others: low salaries in an economy faced with a high inflation rate: appalling working conditions in the work places: lack of job security: retrenchments at the will of the employer: longer and unpaid for working hours: racist employers

and a generally low standard of living (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). There is also the tendency of stressing that industrial action is detrimental to the country's economy and negating the fact that a symbiotic relationship exists between the employer and the employees (Nxumalo, trade unionist, Interview, July 1995).

Numerous other major issues directly affecting the Swazi citizens have also been left unquestioned by the newspaper. An example has been the issue of nepotism. Numerous complaints have been made to the effect that senior posts in both the public and private sector have been given by favour as opposed to merit (Mabuza, political activist, Interview, July 1995). This has been neglected by the newspapers which has led to such allegations being labelled as unfounded. The only time they are reported is when there has been a case reported and the treatment given only focuses on them as events rather than as on going practices (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995).

The newspaper has also not addressed the issue of the shortcomings of the present political system as manifested in the unveiling of opposition political groups at the beginning of 1992 (though these were banned in 1973) (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). News on the opposition political groups is treated as individual opinions rather than opinions representing the underprivileged and exploited part of the population (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). Stress made through the editorials has been placed on the notion that opposition organisations constitute individuals who have sinister motives and want to achieve their political goals at the expense of the Swazi population (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). However, the organizations have stated that their main goal is to propagate for a system which allows every Swazi citizen to actively partake in the decision-making process of the country (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995).

On the activities of the government, reliance is on "authoritative sources" (Tomaselli et al, 1987:65). These include findings of government enquiries and parliamentary debates. Any comments made on the such issues are based on the contents derived from them. For example, in July 1992, the government revealed the findings of a commission it had established to ascertain the performance of the Central Transport Administration (CTA), which is a Government Department responsible for the maintaining and buying of government vehicles (**The Times of Swaziland**, July 24, 1992). Although prior to setting the inquiry by the government, the newspaper was aware of corruption in the Department, it never conducted any independent investigations on the issue (Maber, former **Times** journalist, Interview, July 1995^[17]). It was only after the publishing of the enquiry findings that some comments on the scandal were made by the newspaper. Most of what was commented on was based on the content derived from the report (Maber, Interview, July 1995).

The Weekend Sun

The Weekend Sun was a weekly publication owned by Dr. Allen Nxumalo, a private businessman who is a retired politician and former cabinet minister (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). **The Weekend Sun** had no overt documented editorial policy. The reason given was that policies limit the newspaper's ability of publishing news which may not be agreeable with the policy (Magagula, Interview, July 1992).

The reason for the formation of **The Weekend Sun** was according to one of its editors to provide a paper that would portray the political and economic relations as they were (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). The other newspapers were seen as publishing a distorted view of the relations thus leaving the voiceless without any platform for expressing their plight (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). What was interesting is that the establishment of the newspaper coincided with the period when the challenge to the monarchy was just starting. The newspaper had one major strength over **The Times** and **The Observer**. This was its ability to embark on investigative journalism. Numerous government scandals were investigated and concrete facts established by this newspaper (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). One famous scandal was the revealing of a government cheque amounting to Five Million Emalangeni which had been deposited in the personal account of Tibiyo's legal adviser who is also the son to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs (**The Weekend Sun**, November 30, 1991). A facsimile of the cheque was also published with the report. The investigation led to an uproar amongst the population of Swaziland and potential foreign donors questioned the legitimacy of giving out such a large amount of money when Swaziland is always appealing for aid (**The Weekend Sun**, December 6, 1991). The cheque was subsequently returned to the Central Bank of Swaziland (**The Weekend Sun**, December 12, 1991).

Because of **The Weekend Sun** being viewed as a threat to the political, social and economic establishments, numerous measures were used to frustrate the newspaper's survival. These included advertisers who refused to place their advertisements in the newspaper which meant it had to rely on the sale of the publications for income (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). Secondly, local printing companies refused to print the editions which meant the newspaper had to be printed in South Africa. Printing was therefore carried out at high costs incurred in transportation. Most distribution outlets utilised by the other newspapers turned them down for fear of victimisation (Magagula, Interview, July 1992). This led to inconsistency in the number of issues published weekly. The newspaper's circulation pattern was grossly affected which resulted in loss of revenue (Magagula, interview, July 1992). Because of these problems, the newspaper was forced to close down in mid-1992 (Magagula, Interview, July 1992).

Problems Faced

One of the major problems the press in Swaziland is faced with is the lack of properly qualified journalists. Most of the media houses have employed reporters who did not receive any formal training in journalism. Reporters are recruited from fresh school leavers who are not acquainted with journalism ethics. The presentation skills are poor which has led to reports which are full of grammatical errors. Such ignorance has resulted in an increase in the workload for the editors who have to cross check every copy very carefully (Ziyane, practising journalist, Interview, July 1992).

Swaziland has no journalism school and the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Swaziland is not yet fully established. The government has also not concentrated on the training of newspaper journalists rather favouring radio and television journalists.

An Analysis of the Print Media Outlets

The distribution of newspapers is the sole responsibility of the publishers. There is no agent designated with the function of distributing newspapers. Newspapers are sold in grocery shops, supermarkets and street parlours in towns. In the rural areas, the outlets are mainly centred in shops which serve the community's needs. These can either be hardware shops or general dealers. This displays that circulation is countrywide which makes access to newspapers easy for everyone. However, access to newspapers may not be available to all the sectors of the population. Given the fact that most of the working class

population earns very low wages, the affording of the price for buying newspapers is difficult for them. They have to rely on the radio for news.

State Intervention and Harassment

The State, through the government has displayed a negative attitude towards the role of the press in the political formation. It has now and again implemented measures in an attempt to limit the flow of information in the country. State control in the press has ranged from legislations, censorship, detentions, intimidations, and death threats to individual journalists. These shall be discussed in the next chapter.

An Analysis: The Swazi Press as "Ideological State Apparatuses"

In assessing the political role played by Swazi press, reference shall be made to Louis Althusser's (1971) assertions on the media as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). He states:

Ideological State Apparatuses (consist of) a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialised institutions. ISA's are part of the private domain and they include churches, (political) parties, trade unions, some schools, most newspapers and cultural ventures. ISA's function by ideology and their function is to reproduce the relations of production. It is through them that the role of any ruling ideology is heavily concentrated (Althusser, 1971:22&24).

The Times policy states that the group promotes and supports the "free market" system (Times Group Media Policy, Undated: 1). The Observer policy also states that it recognizes the jurisdiction of only the king or head of the royal family (Observer Media Group Policy, Undated: 3). Since the **Tinkhundla** system of government provides a fertile ground for capitalist relations of production and exploitation, the press therefore promotes the ideology and hegemony of the Swazi traditional ruling classes. The rule of the monarchy has been portrayed as legitimate and suitable for the Swazi citizens and the Tinkhundla system of government as having brought prosperity and peace to the Swazi Nation (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). Any effort to challenge the present establishment is discouraged by the press. The organizations opposing the Swazi state are presented as individuals having "secret agendas" (**Times of Swaziland**, January 20, 1993).

The press has portrayed corruption in the government as a result of corrupt individual officials. Such portrayal has led to the Tinkhundla system being presented as administratively inefficient. This has concealed the lack of transparency in the system which has resulted in it being inundated with public service corruption, labour exploitation, nepotism, poverty and lack of a system of checks and balances (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). This reinforces Murdock and Golding's (1982) contention that the owners of communication companies use their control of cultural production to ensure that the dominant images and representations support the existing social arrangements (Mudorck and Golding, 1982:139).

In spite of the press's support of the present ruling establishment, the Swazi state has introduced some control measures in an attempt to limit the flow of information in the press. These have ranged from direct to indirect state intervention. The next chapter attempts to provide an analysis of such measures.

Chapter 4: Political and Legal Pressures on the Press

In discussing the press and the law in Swaziland, it is necessary to highlight that the Swazi state's intervention into the function of the press correlates closely with the press's sporadic efforts to articulate the views of the existing opposition and other pressure groups which are perceived as a challenge to the monarchy's rule. Government control on the press should then be viewed within the broad context of the state's reaction to resistance against it. Such an assertion is based on the contention that the legislations aimed at controlling the press also most effectively restrict the activities of the prevailing opposition groups in the country. Also, prior to the unveiling of opposition movements in the country, the state operated without any punitive measures in attempts to control the press. Also, government officials have constantly accused the press of promoting dissent within the Swazi population. The State has thus stressed that the role of the press should be to promote the developmental needs of the country. However, such information has been conceptualised as the coverage of the launching of various social and economic government development plans and projects. Any vigorous or negative analysis of these plans have been viewed as being "unpatriotic, and a threat to stability and nation-building which shall not be tolerated" (Masuku, Minister for Economic Planning, Speech, July 1995). One senior government official commented thus:

...a responsible press is always in line with the developmental efforts of the government. Our press is always undermining the government and always portrays the negative side of the government under the guise of democracy and freedom of the press. There are hidden elements behind that to prove that Swazis are an incapable and corrupt nation (Malinga, Interview, July 1994).

The state is therefore particularly suspicious of the media which is seen as a tool for the sowing of dissent. Journalists are then taken as intruders, rebels and people who constantly blackmail the state and always waiting to report on the blunders made by the government (Magongo, practising journalist, Interview, July 1992).

Onuora Nwuneli (1985) characterises one party states as an attempt by the ruling powers to...remain in power to ensure the fruition of their economic development

objective...at the same time attempting to control the information machines of their countries...to make it possible to disseminate only what they consider essential information (Nwuneli, 1985:32). To achieve this objective, the Swaziland government has gone to the extent of introducing repressive measures, ranging from direct to indirect intervention to suppress opposition.

Forms of State Control

Dhyana Ziegler and Molefi Asante (1992) identify three measures which may be employed by the state in an attempt to control the flow of information in the press (Ziegler and Asante, 1992:115). These are legislative acts, pre-publication censorship and self-censorship. Robert Moore (1992) defines pre-publication censorship, as the deletion of parts or all parts of a story. Reporters may also be often prohibited from covering certain news or events. On the other hand, in self-censorship individual journalists, because of either past experiences or fear of repercussions, may decide to omit some sections of a story or not to publish it at all (Moore, 1992:38). This is common in the Swazi press due to the lack of clearly defined media guidelines and the sedition laws. Francis Kasoma (1992) gives another form of censorship which he refers to as post-publication censorship or harassment (Kasoma, 1992:48). This type consists of reprisals and indignities that media people and institutions are subjected to after they have disseminated information that is objectionable (Kasoma, 1992:48 Tomaselli, 1987:78).

The Swazi press has been subjected to such kinds of control which have at times been implemented in a highly punitive manner. These are exerted by the government through the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information Services, which the press falls under. However, as mentioned above, these should be understood as the state's attempt at subverting opposition.

Legal Acts

The most punitive Act has been the Sedition and Subversive Activities (Amendment) Bill, of 1994, (which is an amendment of the 1938 Sedition Law) which makes it a criminal offense to make or publish any "false or derogatory" statements about the king, the Indlovukazi (Queen Mother), their immediate successors and the government (The Sedition and Subversive Activities Bill:1994). Anyone contravening the act is liable to a minimum ten years and maximum twenty years imprisonment, or a fine between ten thousand and twenty thousand Emalangeneni. In the case of a company, liability will rest with the managing director, manager, editor, or publisher while the state has a right to seize any seditious publications relating to an offense under the Act (The Sedition and Subversive Activities Bill, 1994). The bill defines sedition as an intention to:

(a) bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the person of His Majesty the King, the Indlovukazi (Queen Mother) His Heirs or successors, or the Government of Swaziland as by law established: or

(b) excite His Majesty's subjects or inhabitants of Swaziland to attempt to procure the alteration, otherwise than by lawful means, of any matter in Swaziland as by law established: or

(c) bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection against the administration of justice in Swaziland: or

(d) raise discontent or disaffection amongst His Majesty's subjects or the inhabitants of Swaziland: or

(e) promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of the population of Swaziland: or

(f) makes or publishes false or derogatory statement about His Majesty the King or Indlovukazi/Queen Mother (The Sedition and Subversive Activities Bill, 1994).

The Sedition and Subversive Activities Bill also allows for the establishment of a Special Tribunal at the discretion of the Prime Minister. Such occurs when a person charged under this law is perceived as a threat to the security of the country. The Tribunal is appointed by the king at his discretion and has the same powers, privileges and immunities as the supreme court. All the proceedings relating to an offence under this Act are to be held in camera if the prosecution so requests and no other authority has any right to challenge any decisions taken by the tribunal (The Sedition and Subversive Activities Bill, 1994). In defence of the amendment the justice minister expressed that it was meant "...to protect the monarchy from the press and other individuals who have down-played the development efforts of the kingdom...which is viewed as a threat to the sovereignty of the state" (Simelane, Minister for Justice, Speech in parliament, May 1994).

Censorship and Harassment

The government, through the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information Services regularly gives out orders to the press regarding the publication of certain news about the government. These have come in the form of orders and regulations given out to the various media houses which usually prevent the covering of certain issues or prescribe the way in which they are to be written (Motsa, practising journalist, Interview, July 1995). For example, in mid-1991, the government issued an order to the press which stated that press statements of all matters dealing with the government would be issued by the government spokesperson who was also the director in the Ministry of Broadcasting. Journalists were required to submit written questions to him and he would then seek answers from the various ministries and issue a press statement thereafter. The reason given for such a move was that there were constant misrepresentations of information appearing in the press and given out by unauthorised persons (Tembe, Director of Broadcasting and Information Services, Press Statement, June 1991). The order made it difficult for journalists to obtain information from the government because the director did not have much time to respond to the questions. Sometimes he would go on for days without responding and in some cases he never responded. Information about the government was also highly censored and lacked some of the facts (Motsa, Interview, July 1995).

Another example was in late 1991, when there was the Masitsela Commission appointed by the king to solicit for views on how to improve the Tinkhundla System of government. The Commission went all over the country soliciting for views and most of the contributions spoke for the replacement of the system with a more

appropriate transparent government system. On fearing the impact from the contributions, the government issued an order banning the coverage of the sittings (**The Times of Swaziland**, November 11, 1995). The reasons given were that such coverage prejudiced those areas whereby the Commission had not visited. People were being polluted by some of the contributions made which would result in them not making any constructive contributions to the Commission (Tembe, Press Conference, November 10, 1991).

Swazi journalists are vetted before covering official functions attended by the country's royal ruler, and accreditation is denied to some journalists as a result. This was explained by one journalist as a way of avoiding negative reporting of state occasions by some of the reporters. It is also a way of "alienating the bad boys" in the profession (Maber, Interview, July, 1995). One senior government official commented, how can they cover a story about the king at the same time being negative to his government? We do not want deviants next to our king (Malinga, Principal Secretary to the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information, Interview, July 1995).

The Swazi Observer, which is state-owned, has suffered the most in terms of pre-publication censorship and these have been mentioned in the last section. On the other hand, **The Times** has occasionally ignored orders from the government and has now and again published reports which are critical of the government. For example, during the banning of the Masitsela Commission, **The Times** vehemently criticised the order and led a campaign for its lifting (**Times of Swaziland**, November 13, 1991). This resulted in the lifting of the ban by the then prime minister, Obed Dlamini who termed it as a careless mistake by some government officials (**Times of Swaziland**, November 19, 1991). As a result of ignoring some government orders, the role of **The Times** is viewed with caution. It has therefore been labelled as promoting dissent in the country and a threat to the peace enjoyed by the Swazi nation (Nxumalo, Deputy Prime Minister, Speech, February 1995). One government official commented thus:

The Times has perpetually polluted the minds of the Swazi citizens which its preachings under the guise of democracy and freedom of speech. This is known to everyone that it is "un-Swazi" and shall not be tolerated by any patriotic citizens. The Times has been used by certain individuals who want to realise their political dreams at the expense of the Swazi Nation. It has a secret agenda (Nxumalo, Deputy Prime Minister, Speech, February 1995).

Swazi journalists have been exposed to detention, death threats and intimidations from politicians and government officials. Journalists have claimed that they have been personally intimidated by government officials for reporting negative things about them. For example, three journalists received death threats after they had published a debate in parliament which was criticising the Prime Minister's plans to buy a fleet of luxury cars worth in the region of three hundred and thirty thousand United States dollars (**The Times of Swaziland**, March 16, 1994). It is alleged that one of the journalists was "grilled" for two hours over the phone and was accused of promoting opposition parties (Motsa, Interview, July 1995). One editor also stated that he had been more than once called to various government ministries to answer questions about some of the reports which appeared in his newspaper (Matsebula, Interview, July 1993^[18]). Although the government has persistently denied such

allegations proof can be found in what one cabinet minister uttered about **The Times** when he accused it of having formed a political party to oppose His Majesty's Government, a point which needed to be given attention (Nxumalo, Speech, July 1993). Such allegations were expressed in reaction to a series of reports and letters to the editor which were questioning the legitimacy of his appointment as minister for justice while he had prior been involved in a fraud scandal.

Some journalists have been detained for reporting what the government termed as subversive. For example, in 1984, two **Times of Swaziland** journalists were detained for reporting about the presence of RENAMO bases in Swaziland (Motsa, Interview, July 1995). The report led to the Mozambican authorities lodging complaints to the Swaziland government. The journalists did not want to reveal their source of information (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). In 1991 an editor of **The Times** was also detained for publishing a story which was "slanderous" to the government (Motsa, Interview, July 1995).

An Analysis: Fear as Ideological Domination

In analysing the measures used by the government to control the press, reference shall be made to Therborn's (1982) notion of fear as ideological domination (discussed in Chapter Two). He asserts:

Force and violence operate as a form of rule only through the ideological mechanism of fear. Society (therefore) consents because of fear of consequences of non-conformity. Fear brings about acceptance of the state of affairs (Therborn, 1982:97).

The reprisals, which have come in the form of intimidations and subjection to the Sedition and Subversive Act, have led to Swazi journalists to "consent". Such consent has come in the form of practising a lot of self-censorship. Sally Hibbin (1978) defines such consent as conformity through coercion (Hibbin, 1978:31). The punitive actions taken by the state in attempting to control the press has resulted in stifling the degree of criticism on the government published in the press. Helge Ronning asserts:

Contemporary African governments use the media they control to stifle criticism and suppress dissent in the name of national unity political stability and nation building (Ronning, 1994:10).

The mass media is thus perceived by the Swazi state as having to participate in securing national independence, social and national integration and economic development. However, such a process has been to the benefit of the monarchy and its allies. The press has seldom been used to combat illiteracy, poverty and building political consciousness. It has rather been used to maintain and consolidate the power of the monarchy and its allies at the expense of limiting individual human rights as a means to that end. The Swazi dominated masses have been left without any forums to voice out their aspirations in a system inundated with poverty, labour exploitation, nepotism, corruption and the alienation of the general Swazi population from taking part in decision making. The press controls initiated in the name of

nation-building were then designed to maintain political power and to deny access of information to the masses.

As it has been stated in Chapter three that the press has supported the monarchy, it seems paradoxical that the Swazi state has introduced such punitive measures to control the press. An explanation for taking such measures could be that the state has misunderstood the press's support of the monarchy and capital alliance. There is also less necessity for the punitive actions to be applied to **The Observer** because it is a "flagship" for the monarchy. The next chapter focuses on the role assumed by the press in portraying the political processes, which have taken place in the country between 1992 and 1994.

Chapter 5: The Role of the Press in the Political Formation

Olav Stokke (1971) asserts that there exists a direct relationship between the nature of a society and the quality of independence of its press (Stokke, 1971:21). Because of such a relationship, the press does not have an independent existence of its own and cannot be isolated from other institutions in society (Stokke, 1971:21). The role of the press is therefore largely determined by the political, social and economic atmosphere of the society under which it operates. The media's role has to be analyzed in terms of how it portrays the socio-political and economic atmosphere at a particular time and context.

In order to provide an analysis of the role of the press in the political formation in Swaziland, it is therefore necessary to make an overview of the historical relationship which has existed between the press and the state.

The Historical State and Press Relationship: 1973 to 1992

The Conservative Period: 1973 to the late 1980s

During the period 1973 to the late-1980s, the Swazi press was dominated by news which was not at all critical of the government. The major reason given was the autocratic political nature of the system. The Swazi political system was totally negative towards any form of criticism (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). This was also confirmed by the proprietor of the Times group of companies:

Because of the autocratic nature of the political system, the publishing of any issues viewed as being hostile to the government could not be carried out because the government viewed this as a threat to nation building. This would have led to the subsequent closure of the newspaper. The press then had to choose from either closing down or complying with what the state dictated (Loffler, Interview, July 1992).

One of the justifications used was that Swaziland had just obtained independence. The monarchy was still trying to implement a political, social and economic system which was to be conducive for the development of the country and maintain peace

and stability (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). The state therefore insisted that every Swazi citizen should be patriotic and ostracise negative views on the government (Loffler, Interview, July 1992). Criticising the government was considered as a heresy and destructive to nation-building (Loffler, Interview, July 1992). Appeals for patriotism were disseminated through public speeches made by the King and the Cabinet both internationally and locally, through the press (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). In explaining such a state of affairs in the African continent, Simon Fisher (1984) asserts:

At independence, African leaders, sometimes almost in desperation, turned to the mass media they had inherited to help them assume and hold their political positions...and to build a favourable self-image in the world family of nations (Fisher, 1984: cf Ronning, 1994: 13)

Dissenting views in Swaziland were suppressed through the enactment of the Sixty Days Detention Order, which came as a result of the 1973 King's Order in Council (Davies, 1985: 48). The Act forbid the publication of any material which perceived as critical to the state (Mangena, Interview, July 1992). The media was consequently vulnerable to subjection under the Act. Journalists for fear of victimisation had to be extremely cautious in their reports.

Another reason could have been that the print media was by then not fully developed (Maber, Interview, July 1995^[12]). **The Times** was the only local commercial newspaper and there were few trained Swazi journalists in the country. For instance, until the late 1970s, **The Times** daily had only one trained Swazi journalist at its employ. Other trained Swazi journalists had been employed in the broadcast media (Matsebula, Interview, July 1995). Most of the press journalists comprised of British expatriates who in most cases feared for their job security. The state could at any time order for their deportation, non-renewal or withdrawal of their work permits (Sowerby, BBC Correspondent in Swaziland, Interview, July 1992). It was only after 1980, when the **Swazi Observer** was formed that there was a proliferation of Swazi press journalists (Maber, Interview, July 1995).

The only type of news published during this period was pro-government which included information on newly created government laws and policies, civil service appointments and dismissals, national state celebrations and events and so forth (Loffler, Interview, July 1992). These were always published on a positive note and letters to the editor and opinion columns which were in opposition to the government were not published (Loffler, Interview, July 1992).

The press at this time was therefore used as an instrument for promoting the monarchy's dominance over the Swazi population. It helped in establishing a framework of consensus and developing a climate of conformity. Dissenting views were totally suppressed and alienated.

Cracks on The Wall: 1989-1991

The late 1980s witnessed a dramatic turn in the approach used by the media in portraying the government. Numerous reports and letters to the editor which were criticizing the government appeared in the newspapers and these had not been seen since the "1973 King's Order in Council" was enacted (Ndlovu, university lecturer, Interview, July 1995). Reasons for the transition from non-criticism to criticism can

mainly be attributed to the detention of ten Swazi citizens who were charged with treason because of their involvement in the formation of an opposition movement and distribution of politically oriented pamphlets, and the events which followed thereafter discussed in Chapter One (Matsebula, Interview, July 1992). The diplomatic offices, led by the United States embassy also advocated for the implementation of freedom of expression, which was to include the freedom of the press (Motsa, Interview, July 1995). Therefore, any measures taken to suppress the press were to be condemned by these countries who form a formidable force in global politics (Maber, Interview, July 1995).

A transitional period in mid-1989 which was characterised by passive comments in the editorials on certain government policies was thus noted (Maber, Interview, July 1995). As time went by, the criticism intensified from merely passive comments to direct attacks on government moves and decisions (Maber, Interview, July 1995). For example, in 1990 a cabinet minister was dismissed by the government for reasons given as being in the "public interest" (Lukhele, Chief of the Civil Service, Speech in Parliament, November 1990). In fact, it was rumoured that the said minister had refused to sign a sixty day detention order for some political activists charged under the Public Order Act (Maber, Interview, July 1995). His dismissal was directly challenged through the newspapers in letters to the editor and editorials. The minister had not been implicated in any scandal and the public had not raised any negative criticism on him (Maber, Interview, July 1995).

Another government policy to be criticized was the controversial citizenship bill which discriminated against the Swazi coloured community (Springle, school teacher, Interview, July 1995). Many complaints had been made by the coloured community to the effect that they were being discriminated against by the government. These alleged to have encountered problems in obtaining full citizenship which led to difficulty for them in obtaining, amongst other things, travel documents (Bennet, Letter to the Editor, **Times of Swaziland**, July 3, 1991). Discrimination against coloureds was strongly condemned through and by the press. Calls for the redrafting of a new Citizen Bill to include all the races living in the country were made (**Times of Swaziland**: July 20, 1991)

Another example was the appointment of the foreign affairs minister's son as Swaziland's Ambassador to the European

Community (**Times of Swaziland**: October 10, 1991). It was alleged that he did not have the necessary qualifications. These included having either lived in Swaziland or served in the civil service for a specified period (Dlamini: practising journalist: Interview: July 1992). His appointment was condemned by the press as the perpetuation of nepotism (**The Times of Swaziland**: November 6, 1991).

What can be noted is that this period was characterised by some negative reporting on the government. This meant that there was a shift in the mode of the press's reporting on the government.

Political Reporting in the Swazi Press: 1992-1994

The Press, the Monarchy, the Government, Labour and the Opposition

The beginning of 1992 was characterised by a shift in the political atmosphere of the country. This was evidenced in the unveiling and subsequent mushrooming of opposition political organisations and the proliferation of industrial action by the Swazi working classes. The unveiling meant there was to be open confrontation between the government and the opposition. The opposition groups were challenging the legitimacy of the monarchy who wields all the executive, judicial and legislative powers. In this contested process, the opposition, labour movement and the government have employed the press to put forward and justify their positions. The following section therefore aims at assessing the role assumed by the press in portraying such processes.

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The Press, the Government and the Monarchy: Supporting the Status Quo.

Although the government has now and again attacked the press for being anti-government and supporting the opposition movements, it can be asserted that such a view is shortsighted. My assertion is that the press has continued to support the existing status quo and has vehemently down-played the role of the opposition and progressive forces. The press has portrayed the Tinkhundla system of government as legitimate and suitable for the Swazi nation. This can be evidenced in the overt support the newspapers have displayed to the current political reform program instituted by King Mswati III as from 1993 (Maber, Interview, July 1995). The newspapers have published voters' rolls and numerous other campaigns which in most cases called for maximum support for the reforms (Maber, Interview, July 1995). Through editorials, the King has been praised and the press has pledged its support for the reform program and its implementation (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995). For instance, one of the editorials in **The Times** daily stated: ...the reforms displayed that the king was in touch with the aspirations and wishes of the peace loving Swazi nationals which is a positive step towards democracy (**Times of Swaziland**, January 20, 1994).

The implications of the reforms instituted by King Mswati III have been the consolidation of the monarchy's domination. Firstly, the reforms were contrary to the submissions made to the Masitsela Commission and given wide coverage in the newspapers (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995). Most of the views were advocating for the complete transformation of the Tinkhundla system with a more transparent and representative democratic system (Mzizi, Interview, July 1995). Secondly, the reforms have only resulted in changing the system of electing members of parliament. The King still wields absolute power. Parliament and Cabinet still function as administrative bodies with no power to implement any effective policies (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995). Thirdly, the state has not lifted the state of emergency enacted through the 1973 Kings Order in Council (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). Political parties are still banned and the state has introduced more punitive measures to counter the opposition. For example the Sedition and Subversive Bill (discussed in Chapter Four) and the Non-Bailable Offenses Bill of 1994, which has provisions for the refusal of granting bail to suspects charged under the contravention of the Public Order Act of 1963 (The Non-Bailable Offenses Bill, 1994:3). This can be evidenced in a letter written by PUDEMO to the king which partly stated:

The Tinkhundla system does not have a democratic foundation based on the will of the people. This institution was founded on fraud, (and)

supported by intimidation of the population. This is why the system cannot operate without the state of emergency secret committees which are, in reality, responsible for political authority in the kingdom and other instruments of repression. This is why the system could never ensure supremacy of parliament (Letter from PUDEMO to His Majesty the King, March 31, 1993).

This was also echoed by one former journalist who in an interview commented:

The Swaziland government is infested by dishonest politicians who are always preaching against progress. We therefore have an incompetent minority government and an incompetent press. Despite their very often public disagreements, the two must be seen for what they are: bedfellows who keep each other in business by their mere incompetence (Maber, Interview, July 1995)

As it has been pointed out in Chapter Three, the press has in most cases relied on "authoritative sources" for issues dealing with the government. These include amongst others, commissions of enquiry, government press statements and parliamentary reports and debates. In portraying government scandals, stress is placed on individual attacks rather than treating them as a result of officials serving in a corrupt and unaccountable system of government (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995). The tendency to stress on individual attacks has led to the system being viewed as administratively inefficient. Such a perception then relegates the fact that the government's mode of operation lacks accountability and transparency (Mzizi, university lecturer, Interview, July 1995). Although government scandals are a recurring problem, the press treats them as separate events and rarely draws parallels to other previous and similar scandals (Maber, Interview, July 1995). The press also never conducts its own independent investigations to reveal irregularities within the government. One university lecturer commented thus:

Our journalists are not interested in providing a thorough going analysis on issues relating to the government. Their reports are weakened by focus on personality issues which take priority, as opposed to social, historical and sociological analysis. They also do not solicit for opinion about the government from the masses. They always want a pat on the back from the power stakeholders (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995).

Government criticism carried out in the press also steers well away from the king (Maber, Interview, July 1995). For instance, the King's total control of the executive, legislative and judicial powers has not been criticised by the press. The king is above the law and he commands absolute power. Policies taken by him are never challenged or criticised (Maber, Interview, July 1995). For instance, a lot of state money is spent through the celebration of state events which is at the expense of the tax-payer (Mzizi, Interview, July 1995). All these and numerous other issues affecting the Swazi masses have not been addressed by the press. One interviewee commented:

This makes changing the system highly impossible. How can you criticise only the manager who is carrying out instructions and policies enacted from above? (Mzizi, Interview, July 1995).

The Press and the Opposition: Unfavourable Portrayal

Whenever the opposition is the subject of reporting about, it is during times when they are in confrontation with the law. Focus is then based on reporting on demonstrations, marches and the detention and trials of political activists (Maber, Interview, July 1995). The discourse used in portraying opposition organisations emphasises the notion that they are anti-monarchy and terrorists who advocate anarchy (Maber, Interview, July 1995). For example, in 1994, seven members of PUDEMO were arrested during a peaceful demonstration and charged for contravening the Public Order Act of 1963 (**The Swazi Observer**, March 23, 1994). In one of the reports published in **The Times** daily, it stated that these had threatened to "bomb the monarchy" (**Times of Swaziland**, June 23, 1995). However, it was later established from one of the formerly charged activists that none of the seven had made such utterances. The report was perceived as a ploy to discredit the opposition (Shongwe, former charged activist, conversation with writer, July 1995).

In reporting about trials involving the opposition, the newspapers have in most cases relied on information from the government. This includes the police, the Director of Public Prosecutions and court proceedings (Maber, Interview, July 1995). Comment from officials representing the opposition groups is never solicited (Maber, Interview, July 1995). This has resulted in the public being flooded with one sided reports which are in most cases biased against the opposition (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). The numerous follow-ups made are also built upon the journalists misrepresentations of the first facts.

The press has also portrayed the opposition organisations as composed of groups of individuals who want to manipulate the Swazi masses in order to fulfil their greedy political needs (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). Negative portrayal of opposition organisations has been expressed in editorials and features published in the newspapers. Reports about trials which involve political activists also stress on discrediting the opposition (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). The opposition has therefore had a dirty picture painted on it. Opposition organisations have also been treated as a bunch of ultra-left eccentrics who do not know what they want (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1995). As a result, the public has lacked a clear stand on the type of political dispensation that would guarantee the necessary human freedoms (Mzizi, Interview, July 1995).

In the presentation of views and activities of opposition organizations, the newspapers use three types of bias. Robert Cirino (1971) defines bias as:

...input of disordered news (which create) bases for (a reader's) opinions and actions. This situation enables the newsman to ship his bias into the news, unnoticed by the news (reader) whose attention is focused on the event itself (Cirino, 1971:130).

The first one is bias through selection of news. This is defined as decisions to select news which are viewed as newsworthy by newspapers or any other media (Cirino, 1971:134). In most cases, the newspaper reports on the opposition emphasizes on portraying them as a bunch of hooligans. Whenever the opposition is reported, it is when they are at loggerheads with the law. This implies that the selection procedure for opposition news by the press makes them appear in an unfavourable manner.

Bias through the omission of news falls under the second category. This is defined as omitting parts of a story which readers are not supposed to know about (Cirino, 1971:160). When the newspapers publish issues on the opposition, some of the important parts which may be favourable to the opposition may be omitted. Only a distorted and slanted view of the news may be given. The press' reliance on the government's perspective in times of political trials is evidence to bias through the selection of news.

Bias through the use of words falls in the third category and has been defined as the use of carefully chosen words by a reporter, editor or broadcaster so as to discredit people or organizations (Cirino, 1971:160). An example can be drawn from a report about one political activist who was found in possession of a catapult and a knife during a demonstration (**The Swazi Observer**, September 8, 1994). The press report which followed the day after, termed him as having been found with "dangerous arms of war" (**The Swazi Observer**, September 8, 1994). This was regardless of the fact that the said accused was not detained or charged.

Press statements given out by the opposition have been presented as opinions from the officials who issue them. reference is made to individual officials. Instead of referring to the organisations represented by the quoted officials, reference is made to individuals (Mabuza, Interview, July 1995). This is common in headlines. For example a report on a press statement issued by PUDEMO, secretary general Dominic Mngomezulu, the headline read: "We are not going to tolerate being harassed, says Dominic" (**Times of Swaziland**, March 6, 1993). The press has also persistently used phrases such as, "dissident groups" and "anti-monarchy" press to refer to opposition groups (**Swazi Observer** September 9, 1994 **Times of Swaziland** May 10, 1994). Such terms have had negative connotations and greatly influenced the perceptions of the public about the opposition organisations (Ndlovu, Interview, July 1994).

The Press and Labour: Politicising the Non-Political

In presenting the labour movement, the press has translated events on the labour front into political events (Dlamini, trade unionist, Interview, July 1995). Conflict between employers and employees have been interpreted as a political threat even if there is no political content in the worker demands (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Commenting on such kind of portrayal, one trade unionist stated that it was systematically being propagated, through the press by the state and employers as a ploy to discredit the role of the trade unions (Nxumalo, trade unionist Interview, July 1995).

Labour reporting in the Swazi press has been centrally concerned with strikes and other labour disputes of various kinds (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). This selection does not exhaust the issues of working arrangements, type of worker action and organisation, the process of mechanization, unemployment or the structure of the economy (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). The reports concern themselves with particular events. Each and every industrial action is treated as a separate event (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Focus has also been on the disruptions at the work places rather than the structural conditions the working classes are exposed to (Nxumalo, Interview, July 1995). There is also the tendency of stressing that industrial action is detrimental to the country's economy which is infested by a drought and an economic recession (**Times of Swaziland**, February 18, 1994). This

has thus down-played the symbiotic relationship existing between the employer and employees.

In reporting about strikes, emphasis is in most cases placed on the demands for wage increments. Other issues such as demands for remuneration for extra hours worked and the improvement of working conditions at factory level are negated (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). For example, in June 1994, a strike was reported in one of the country's agricultural sectors, called Crooks Plantations. The article which appeared in one of the newspapers, on the first page and constituting the main headline stated: "Workers on Strike, demand for 131% wage increase (**The Times of Swaziland**, June 17, 1994). In reality, the workers were demanding a minimum salary of fourteen Emalangeni, a day for the lowly paid workers (Dlamini, Interview July 1995) The perception created through giving the amount in percentages blew the issue out of proportion as an unrealistic demand (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Other issues included in the dispute included amongst others compulsory paid maternity leave for females and the provision of protective gear for the workers by the management (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). However, these were concealed and the dispute presented as an unreasonable act of defiance by the workers. Commenting on the report, one trade union official stated:

This was meant to discredit the labour movement and confirm the government's accusations on us, that we are propagating for anarchy. It also down-played the role of the trade union movement which is to mediate between the employers and employees (Dlamini, Interview, July 1994)

Reports on strikes have also subjectively published one side of the issues which in most cases is obtained from the management (Nxumalo, Interview, July 1995). The workers' point of view is never published except occasionally, through trade union officials and never from the workers who are involved in the disputes (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Independent investigations in times of unrest are also never carried out by the press (Nxumalo, Interview, July 1995).

The content of labour disputes mainly focuses on singling out the trade union leadership as being the instigators of industrial unrest (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). These are therefore presented as inciters and individuals who are manipulating the Swazi working classes for their personal sinister motives (**The Times of Swaziland**, February 18, 1994). The role of the trade unions as a signifier of the "workers struggle" against exploitation is thus concealed.

Reporting industrial action has resulted in the neglect of cardinal issues which have affected the working classes in the country. These include labour exploitation carried through the payment of low wages. For instance, according to the Employment and Wages statistics, the minimum wage as per government regulation is two Emalangeni and fifty cents a day (E2.50) (**The Employment and Wages Statistics:1994**). Also average monthly earnings in the manufacturing industries are six hundred and seven Emalangeni (E607.00) and three hundred and twenty Emalangeni (E320.00) for male and females skilled labourers respectively: one hundred and seventy seven Emalangeni (E177.00) and one hundred and one Emalangeni (E101.00) for semi-skilled and one hundred and twenty seven Emalangeni (E127.00) and one hundred and four Emalangenin (E104.00) for unskilled (The Employment and Wages Statistics: 1994). Workers are also exposed to

long and extended unpaid for working hours, poor working conditions and in most cases, no provision of protective clothing in the agricultural sector (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995). Labour exploitation has led to poverty and the decline in the standard of living. For example, it is estimated that for every one hundred economically active people, there is an average of about one hundred and fifty people, economically dependent on them (**Report on the 1986 Swaziland Population Census**). It is also estimated that 49% of the population with houses have an average of two rooms or less in their dwellings (**Report on the 1986 Swaziland Population Census**). The result of poverty and poor working conditions has been the escalation of strikes by the workers in an attempt to alleviate their plight. The crime rate has also dramatically rose (Dlamini, Interview, July 1995).

Conclusion: Legitimising the Status Quo

In analyzing the role assumed by the Swazi press in the political formation, reference shall be made to Gramsci's (1971) assertions on the role of media in society. He states:

Cultural institutions within the social formation . . . including the . . . mass media are primarily ideological in form and function, and together they help to confirm or deny the power of the ruling status quo . . . (Gramsci, 1971 cf Agbaje, 1992:12)

Gaye Tuchman (1978) asserts that a society's mass media necessarily legitimates its status quo. . . through limiting the frames within which public issues are debated (Tuchman, 1978:156). From what has been covered in this essay, it can be asserted that the press in Swaziland has so far facilitated in legitimating the monarchy's dominance over the Swazi populations. Such legitimation has been carried out through justifying and maintaining the hegemony of the monarchy and capital alliance. This can be evidenced from both the pre-independence and post-independence eras when the press was used by the state to promote its own inspirations.

Through the overview of the pre-independence press, it can be asserted that the press was used as an instrument for justifying and maintaining colonial rule and domination by capital. During the colonial era, the news content disseminated by the press which was geared towards serving the interests of the British colonists. any issues viewed as hostile to colonial rule were shunned upon. The post-independence press has been used as an instrument for the justification and maintaining of the monarchy and its alliance's dominance over the Swazi masses. The legitimation can be evidenced from the overt support the press has expressed for the reform program instituted by the state as from 1993. The press has not criticized actions taken by monarchy.

The Swazi press' tendency of slanting issues hostile to the monarchy has resulted in the public not being well informed about the "agenda" of the Swazi citizens calling for change. Opposition organisations have as a result been viewed as individuals who want to manipulate public institutions for their own ends. The objective for socio-economic and political change is concealed. this has contributed to the slowing of the

pace towards democracy. The Swazi press is therefore sceptical about social, political and economic change.

The other classes existing in Swaziland have also been neglected. Through its tendency of not embarking on investigations on the social and economic conditions of the working classes, the standard of living for these classes has declined. This has resulted in the perpetuation of their exploitation by the capitalist firms. Strike action emanating from grievances such as low wages and poor living conditions has been presented as unnecessary acts of defiance. Hence, the voicing of the aspirations of the subaltern classes has been suppressed.

the press has also not set up commentaries and editorials to facilitate in the improving of the socio-political and economic system. Presenting dissenting views has been left to individuals through letters to the editor. In most cases, no follow ups are made. This has reinforced the notion that the opposition is made up of individuals with sinister motives.

In conclusion, it could be stated that in its role as a bearer of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic symbols, the Swazi press has facilitated in the construction of the monarch's legitimacy and domination of the Swazi masses. The political news published in the Swazi newspapers is mainly geared towards serving the interests of the ruling monarchy and capital alliance. Such has been carried out through slanting issues perceived as hostile to the monarchy. The press has also not criticized actions taken by the monarchy. Attempts made at challenging the monarchy's dominance have been presented as efforts by individuals who manipulate public institutions for their own needs. This has concealed the objective for socio-economic and political change. The press is therefore sceptical about social, political and economic change. Such scepticism has resulted in aspirations and interests of the powerless and subordinate classes being neglected.

It can then be asserted that the Swazi press has limited the frames with which public issues are debated. Such has narrowed any available political alternatives. The press has therefore largely contributed to the slowing of the pace towards the democratizing of the socio-economic and political system in the country. What is needed is a progressive press which will facilitate in the voicing of the aspirations of the marginalised classes.