

Radio Lesotho in a Changing Broadcasting Environment

By

Thabiso Kenneth Saka

(201508175)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF MA IN THE
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME IN CULTURAL AND MEDIA STUDIES.
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES (CCMS),
FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, DURBAN SOUTH
AFRICA

SUPERVISOR

PROFESSOR R.E. TEER-TOMASSELI

NOVEMBER 2003

DECLARATION

I, Thabiso Kenneth Saka, do declare that the following research thesis is my own work. All work done by other people and cited in this thesis has been duly acknowledged. I further declare that the thesis has never been submitted before for any degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signature

All work for this thesis was completed at the former University of Natal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitudes to all people who assisted me in various ways to make the work presented here successful. This could not have been possible without their support.

My profound appreciation goes to my supervisor Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and to my tutor and mentor William Heuva for their inspiring and untiring guidance in the planning and execution of this work. Their patience has been a source of encouragement and hope throughout the research and writing of my dissertation.

I would also like to thank Professor Keyan Tomaselli, Elaine Binedell, Nhamo Mhiripiri, Eunice Invala, Arnold Shepperson, Ts'iu Ts'iu and many other CCMS staff members and students for their valuable comments on several drafts of the research proposal.

My sincere gratitude also goes to my wife Abigail 'Mats'ele Rethabile Saka who encouraged me to pursue a post-graduate degree. Her love, patience and continuous support were sources of encouragement. The dissertation is dedicated to her and to our daughter Selloane Saka.

I would further like to express my thanks and appreciation to the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS) of the Government of Lesotho and the National Research Foundation (NRF) for financial assistance. Without their assistance this dissertation could not have been possible.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCP – Basotho (formerly Basutoland) Congress Party

BNP – Basotho (formerly Basutoland) National Party

CR – The Catholic Radio owned by the Lesotho Catholic Bishops Conference

IBA – The Independent Broadcasting Authority of the United Kingdom

LNBS – Lesotho National Broadcasting Service

LTA – Lesotho Telecommunications (Regulatory) Authority

PC – People’s Choice Radio, which is privately run commercial station in Lesotho

RCM – The Roman Catholic Church (Mission)

RSA – The Republic of South Africa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
List of Abbreviations	iv
Table of Contents	v
Abstract	vii
CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
CHAPTER 2	
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	3
Introduction	3
Significance of Radio	3
Liberalisation	5
<i>Monopoly</i>	6
<i>Media Pluralism</i>	7
<i>Market Competition</i>	8
Normative Media Theory	15
<i>Authoritarian Paradigm</i>	15
Media System and Policy Shift	17
Conclusion	19
CHAPTER 3	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
Introduction	20
Reviewing Documents	20
Interviewing	22
Method of Analysis	23
CHAPTER 4	
BROADCASTING IN THE POLITICS OF LESOTHO: REVIEW	26
Introduction	26
Defining Radio Lesotho	36
Historical and Political Background	27
<i>BNP Elected Government (1965 – 1970)</i>	27
<i>BNP Dictatorship (1970 – 1986)</i>	29
<i>Military Rule (1986 – 1993)</i>	31

<i>One-party State 'Democracy' (1993 – 1998)</i>	34
End of Government Monopoly of the Airwaves (1998)	36
Conclusion	38
 CHAPTER 5	
RADIO LESOTHO IN THE NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK	40
Introduction	40
Media Laws on Broadcasting	40
Establishment of LTA and its Regulatory Status	42
Regulation of Broadcasting	45
Re-arranging the National Radio	47
Radio Programme Policy	50
Radio Commercials	52
Conclusion	53
 CHAPTER 6	
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	55
Bibliography	58
Appendix list	I

ABSTRACT

The Kingdom of Lesotho undertook a number of liberalisation initiatives in broadcasting in the late 1990s. These include several attempts to formulate the media policy document as well as the opening of the airwaves for private broadcasting in 1998. However, Lesotho has not yet succeeded to remove the government control of the broadcasting sector. This thesis examines the process of liberalisation in Lesotho's broadcasting. It assesses the media policy as reflected in several policy documents. It further evaluates the introduction of independent regulation in broadcasting sector in 2001. The thesis argues that the government has not been fully committed to liberalisation of broadcasting sector and, as a result, it continues to control the sector.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Kingdom of Lesotho introduced an independent regulatory body in its broadcasting sector in 2001 (LTA Act, 2001), in the wake of ‘liberalisation’ and ‘regulated pluralism’ (Barker, 2001: 23). This development came only a few years after the government had indicated its intention to make the country’s broadcast services, particularly the national Radio Lesotho, autonomous in 1998 (Lejakane, 1997: 127). In the advent of democracy the key functions of independent regulation include attainment of media pluralism. This thesis evaluates the regulatory framework and the government policy on the national radio with regard to media pluralism in Lesotho. As used in this study the term ‘media pluralism’ refers to a practice of allowing different, or opposing public voices, beliefs, opinions and politics to come forth through media (Gunther & Mughan 2000: 412). Liberalisation in information and communications refers to the opening of monopoly services to competition (Straubhaar, & LaRose, 2002: 543).

Focusing on the national Radio Lesotho, this study aims to explore the national media policy as reflected in the new regulatory policy framework in Lesotho. Media policies are generally defined as public policies, usually made by – but not restricted to – the government that “cover the whole gamut of mediated modes of communication” (Tehrani, 1999: 72). The study also attempted to investigate the government’s intention or reluctance to reform the National Radio by exploring initiatives made within restructuring and liberalisation processes. The main research question, which this study has set out to answer, is: To what extent does the independent regulation make government-run media pluralistic in Lesotho? This is an empirical question that seeks to elicit and explore independent regulation of the government-run broadcasting in terms of media pluralism.

This study did not include the actual broadcasts (content) of Radio Lesotho and other radio stations though these are significant, particularly in terms of media diversity and plurality. This is because of its scope and the time limit within which it had to be conducted. Therefore, it focuses on changes in national media policy as reflected in media laws and how the changes impact on the National Radio. Radio programme policy for Radio Lesotho is also included. The relation between the independent regulator and the government is considered in terms of

the functions and jurisdiction of the former and how it is able or unable to carry out its mandate with regard to government-operated broadcasting.

The research design for this study derives from both the exploratory research objective and question as stated above. It is interpreted as a *qualitative content analysis* (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 14; Mouton, 2001: 166). *Qualitative content analysis* is defined as a research study that analyses the content of text, in which case ‘content’ refers to communicated messages such as “words, meanings, symbols and themes” (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 14). The objective of *qualitative content analysis* design has been to enable the research to investigate the aim of independent regulation in the government-run broadcasting where prior research information is relatively limited (Du Plooy, 2001: 83). For this purpose, qualitative methodology has been adopted. It entailed review of media policy documents (published and unpublished)¹ and unstructured and in-depth interviewing as methods of generating data. It also incorporated *conceptual content analysis* as a method of data analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 492).

The study is divided into six chapters. In **Chapter 1**, which is an introduction to the study, I have introduced in brief the subject matter of the study. I briefly stated the aim of the study. I then outlined both the research objectives and question and indicated specific issues that are dealt with. In addition, I stated the limitation of the study.

Chapter 2 deals with a theoretical framework of the study. It discusses liberalisation, which is the key theoretical concept underpinning the study. **Chapter 3** discusses the methodological approach adopted in the study. **Chapter 4** reviews a brief history of radio broadcasting in Lesotho. **Chapter 5** examines in detail the regulatory policy framework and its requirements for the national Radio Lesotho. **Chapter 6** sums up the conclusions reached. In doing that the chapter relates salient themes to the concepts and theory discussed in Chapter Two.

¹ Lesotho has not yet established a national media policy document to be necessarily prescribed for regulatory functions and service delivery in the Kingdom.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Radio is the most important medium in Lesotho. Broadcasting in this country is tightly controlled. In the light of this the present chapter aims to discuss concepts and theories that informed the research enquiry conducted in this study. It is divided into four sections, the first of which outlines a significance of the broadcast radio. The second defines liberalisation as the key theoretical concept that underpins the study. The section also incorporates definitions of both media monopoly and pluralism as two alternative policy practices, as well as market competition as the intended outcome of liberalisation (Barker, 2001). The third section discusses the normative media theory, which informs liberalisation of broadcast media. It focuses on one variant of normative theory; the *authoritarian* paradigm which prescribes how media should operate, hence, directly influences a national media policy. This is because of its relevance to the broadcast media experience in Lesotho. The last section clarifies the direction of the media policy shift in Lesotho from the time the country returned to civilian rule in 1993 up until 2003.

Significance of Radio

The modern media are generally acknowledged as the most effective sources of information and potent means of communicating to the largest possible audiences. The broadcast radio service in particular has an uncontested primacy for poorer communities in Africa because radio is “most easily available” (Barnard, 2002: 2). Illiteracy and lack of electricity, which are associated with the rural poor are not barriers to radio listening (Teer-Tomaselli, 1994: 585). As Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss (2000: 16) contend, “radio is relatively cheap, efficient, immediate and undemanding as a technology”. People can listen to radio while they are driving, working or reading. So, radio is the most ubiquitous of all the forms of electronic media among African communities in general (Mytton, 2000; Mbennah, Hooyberg & Mersham, 1998: 38 – 9).

With the advent of advanced technologies, radio is even far more widespread than the other media. Its ability to adapt changing technologies has been an added advantage for its omnipresence. For instance, radio receiver sets range from simple cellular phone-receiver size, or perhaps smaller, to combined radio-cassette or –CD players, or both, to suit different settings and choices of listening. As Stephen Barnard (2002: 2) points out, “the car radio,

once a luxury addition to motor vehicles, is now a universal feature of vehicle production in virtually every country in the world, and in-car listening accounts for over 25 per cent of all radio listening in Britain alone". Teer-Tomaselli and Villiers (1998: 152 – 153) note the following features and advantages exhibited by radio as compared to other mass media:

- **It stimulates the imagination** ... as the listener attempts to visualise what he or she hears and to create the owner of the voice in the mind's eye. The pictures, which are created, carry emotional content – a crowd at a national celebration, a commentator at a soccer match.
- **It speaks to millions.** Radio's ability to move with the times and with audience has never been greater. ... Radio has the biggest reach of all mass media in Africa. ... [Therefore], more people listen to radio than watch television or read newspapers.
- **It addresses the individual.** Unlike television, radio often appeals more to inner thought process; therefore it often has greater personal impact than other media. Radio is direct and personal, and is frequently listened to individually. At the same time, in ... less developed regions of the world, radio listening can be group experience.
- **It is flexible.** Radio is transportable, and can be listened to anywhere – while travelling, at work, at home or outside. It can be used as an intensive medium to which the listener gives all his or her attention, or in a more tenuous way, as background music or for companionship.
- **It is easy to distribute.** Unlike print media, it is distributed immediately, and this immediacy gives it an advantage over more traditional forms of media such as newspapers, magazines or books. Radio has no ... territorial limits.
- **It is cheap.** Relative to other mass media, both capital cost of setting up a radio station and the running expenses of radio are small ... Receiver sets are far less costly than television sets.

Although many people would acknowledge the qualities and advantages such as these mentioned above, Ronning (1998) cautions against quoting them out of perspective. He asserts that

while it is true that radio is by far the most widely utilised medium with a daily audience of a little under 50 per cent of potential listeners, it is still the situation that in the rural areas approximately 50 per cent of the population never use any

media at all, including the radio, and that radio listening as well as other forms of media consumption is concentrated in the cities (Ronning, 1998: 9).

Ronning is not alone in this view as Andy Mason (2001: 91) argues that broadcast media, including radio, “necessarily involve high levels of capitalization, and lend themselves to top-down, unidirectional and non-dialogical information flow”. Nonetheless, radio has been, and continues to be, inevitably significant for cultural and political communication as it poses potentially the largest audience reach at the same time with relatively low costs. As Mason (2001) hinted above, political communication in particular tends to be the major reason for exclusive access to radio though this tendency has been declining in Lesotho since the 1998 liberalisation of the airwaves. Such tendency is evident in the historical background of the national radio service in Lesotho where both colonial and post independence regimes restricted broadcast radio operations to British subjects and the right to own or run a radio station to the state until 1998 (Foko, 2000: 12).

Liberalisation

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the concept of liberalisation as exemplified by Vincent Mosco (1996), Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan (2000) and John Barker (2001). Liberalisation refers to the process of state intervention in the economy to increase the number of competitive service providers, and thereby enabling the creation of new private competitors in a monopoly marketplace (Mosco, 1996: 202). It is a social process that has a dual significance for communications media. On the one hand it provides access to media by opening up the market, for instance, in postal services, telecommunications and broadcasting for new competitive providers of communication services. As Mosco (1996: 203) and Barker (2001: 19) assert, liberalisation aims specifically to increase competition into the markets that were previously served by the state or public sector only. On the other hand, it encourages diminution of monopolistic control of communication of significant political and socio-economic issues by breaking up or undermining communication service monopolies held privately or by governments (Rideout & Mosco, 1997: 94; Hirsch & Petersen, 1998: 216). As will be seen later in this study, the 1998 opening of the airwaves in Lesotho is an example that could be referred to here, in which the government not only allowed private broadcasters to come on air but also intended to privatise part of its own media (Sixth National Development Plan 1996/7 – 1998/9: 246).

Monopoly

Liberalisation as defined above entails structural reform (Rajagopal, 2001: 36) from monopoly towards pluralism. Monopoly is about power of control held by a single entity – a person, government or a media house – and not shared by others. Pluralism is about the acknowledgement of differences between interest groups and their equal representation in media. As Joseph Straubhaar and Robert LaRose (2002: 41) explain, “a monopoly exists when one company dominates an industry”. The company in the monopoly has control over what is made available in the market and to some extent influences how sales are made (Doyle, 2002a: 8). Therefore, it can promote only one message, a single point of political view and exclusive cultural representation in the media output such as radio news programmes. In the process of liberalisation, structures of access (i.e. ownership, supply and output) to the media that support monopoly are diversified with intent to undermine the monopoly, hence, to make them conducive for media pluralism.

In Lesotho, as will be seen in the next chapters, state monopoly of broadcasting has transformed into the government monopoly of state radio and television alongside many emerging and private stations. The government alone is seen to be holding ownership of state media, supplying input to their programmes and therefore can determine what is to be broadcast as output when there are no regulatory restrictions. The Broadcasting Rules (2002), which have been issued by the independent regulatory institution, Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA), limits monopolistic practices in the media input on political party programmes.

Drawing from several examples in the United States, Vanda Rideout and Vincent Mosco (1997: 95) argue that integrated media ownership monopolies were dismantled into smaller scales to increase competition in the domestic markets. However, these were later re-allowed to take greater opportunities through liberalisation initiatives “to expand vertically and horizontally across the domestic and international markets” (Rideout & Mosco, 1997: 96). In the case of Lesotho, domestic markets are the only meaningful markets that are practically accessed by the media. Therefore, transforming the existing government monopoly of state media into public ownership would be another key step towards pluralism in media, following the 1998 liberalisation of the airwaves, in which case the government was praised as being committed to the policy of “free, independent and pluralistic media” (Matobo, 1998: 26).

Media Pluralism

Unlike monopoly, pluralism is about the power of control held by separate autonomous entities, each being able to act on its own. With regard to radio programmes, for instance, pluralism is about “diversity in what is made available [by separate independent suppliers for the public to access] rather than what is actually consumed” (Doyle, 2002b: 12). As Figure 1 illustrates below, pluralism is determined by diverse factors among which is a public policy such as a communications or media policy, which affects – and is affected by – technology. For instance, media policy in Lesotho does not make provisions for satellite broadcasting because the local radio and television broadcasters have not started using satellite to send their broadcast signals to the intended audiences.

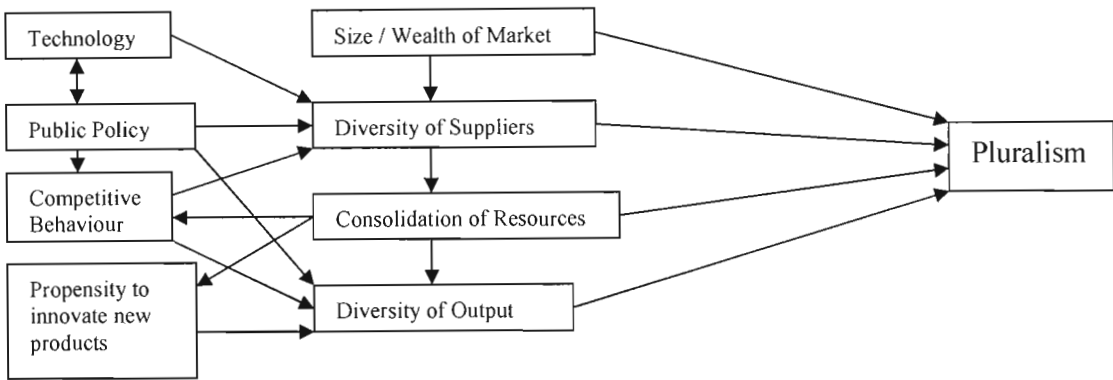


Figure. 1 Determinants of Media Pluralism (Doyle, 2002b: 15)

According to Gunther and Mughan (2000: 412), media pluralism concerns not only the diversity of media (e.g. different newspapers, radio and television services) in a society. It also entails different and often conflicting political objectives of individual journalists, whether they are employed in the same or different newspapers, radio and television stations. There is more pluralism when the roles of those individual journalists or radio stations reflect the very political objectives each has in a given society. Those objectives contribute towards well-informed popular opinion of the public, which is more desirable in democracy than an exclusive political view promoted by a monopoly media system. Other writers (e.g. Tehranian, 1999; Doyle, 2002) share this view. For instance, Majid Tehranian (1999: 56) argues that, “Pluralism in voices requires pluralism in structures of media access [i.e. media pluralism]”. As he points out, the role of media in democracy is “(1) to allow for the diversity of voices in society to be heard and (2) to channel that diversity into a process of democratic

integration of public opinion and will formation” (Tehrani, 1999: 71). Similarly, Gillian Doyle (2002b: 14) maintains that

Pluralism is not simply about the presence in a given market of several different products, or even several separate suppliers, for their own sake. The need for pluralism is, ultimately, about sustaining representation within a given society for different political viewpoints and forms of cultural expression.

So, liberalisation in terms of media pluralism means more than just relaxation of state control over the media in favour of a free market economy. It suggests, with respect to radio broadcasting, more than removal of entry barriers to the market; making it open to more radio stations. It entails allowance of all voices from different interest groups to be heard as well as accommodation of conflicting points of political views as a necessity for public opinion. This is not only to let the views compete but also to make structures of radio accessible (i.e. radio ownership, radio programme contributors and the actual programmes) in order to enable those views to be competitive in the market. Therefore, restrictive monopolistic media ownership or merely allowing private broadcasters into the airwaves to compete “does not in itself promote pluralism” (Barker, 2001: 21). Liberalisation initiatives to attain pluralism in Lesotho’s broadcasting would necessitate transformation of the government-operated stations into public entities and their decentralisation to make them more accessible. Alternatively, private stations would be subsidised to pit them against the government stations (Munyuki, 1996: 176).

Market Competition

Market competition as the key objective and immediate outcome of liberalising (i.e. enabling new actors to access the market in the) broadcast media is in response to at least three issues of concern about monopoly services. The first is that monopolies are usually considered to be less efficient than competitive service providers. So they are less likely to produce innovative and diverse products and services that ensure adequate quality and choice in the market. As Doyle (2002a: 168) cautions, “monopolists may become complacent about product quality and about the need to create new products, to the detriment of consumers [and the public at large]”. Liberalisation and privatisation in Lesotho are deemed as key elements of socio-economic recovery “designed to bail out government from the economic blunders it made by supporting unprofitable enterprises” (Mokatse, 1999: 5).

The second relates to the issue of pricing since the bigger monopoly there is the greater the power it has to set prices (McQuail, 2000: 202). As Lawrence Grossberg, Ellen Wartella and Charles Whitney (1998: 378) note, “a monopoly becomes almost wholly free to charge what it will... and any effort by outsiders to establish competition can be suppressed by the monopoly, which can control necessary resources and make the cost of attempting to compete prohibitively expensive”. The transmitter network of the Lesotho National Broadcast Services (LNBS), which is also used by some private stations on rental charges, holds much relevance in this regard. The third is the view that the media market is not solely a ‘commodity’ market (i.e. the market for commercial goods and services only), nor is the media service solely for profit-making purposes. This view entails notions of ‘cultural commodity’, ‘public good’ and ‘citizenship’ (Doyle, 2002a; Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000; Strinati, 2000).

Doyle’s (2002a) analysis of mass media market as a ‘dual product market’ (for commodities that do not only generate profit but also fulfil some other social functions) may be a starting point in discussing the need to liberalise and attain competition in the broadcast media. As he explains, mass media firms generate two forms of products, content and audiences, which become pre-eminent commodities for the communications media market.

The entertainment or news content that listeners, viewers or readers ‘consume’ constitutes one form of output which media firms can sell. The audiences that have been attracted by this content constitute a second valuable output, insofar as access to audiences can be packaged, priced and sold to advertisers (Doyle, 2002a: 12).

Media contents are considered as cultural commodities because they exhibit the public character that derives from the “fact that information, culture and ideas are considered as the collective property of all” (McQuail, 2000: 190). First, because of the meanings made thereof from attributes of culture, which are immaterial (Hall, 1997: 2), broadcast content is “not destroyed in use” and, as such, its use and consumption by “one individual does not reduce [its] supply to others” (Goldsmiths Media Group, 2000: 20; Doyle, 2002a: 12). For instance, the act of listening to a radio news programme or reading a newspaper story does not in any way reduce the chance for more people to listen to the programme or read the story (McQuail, 2000: 190). The same holds true for television programmes, whose costs do not relate proportionally to the number of viewers who watch them. “The cost of putting together and transmitting a given programme service is fixed, irrespective of how many viewers tune in or

fail to tune in” (Doyle, 2002a: 13). Similarly, packaged access to audiences in terms of reach/ratings and actual services can be sold to many advertisers without being used up and the same package can be supplied continuously to additional advertisers.

The second feature of media products as cultural commodities is that they exist continuously in the public domain because of the underlying fact that public information and communication (i.e. any information for public knowledge and how it is communicated) constitutes the essence of mass media operations (Zaffiro, 2001: 99). This entails a number of issues, ranging from cultural and political use of the media commodities, to the rights claimed on them. For instance, a choice of music to suit a radio or television programme and an individual viewer’s preference for African rather than European soccer matches, or vice versa, on television are examples of cultural use; while an election campaign on a national channel may be an example of political use by consumers and citizens. Patent and copyrights protection laws, which are mainly commercial issues (Tehrani, 1994: 75), protect the rights of producers and distributors, while broadcasting rules may seem to seek social protection in the public interest for people who may be negatively affected by the media broadcasts.

Therefore, market competition that results from an intended liberalisation² of broadcast media comprises independently active competitors, who are not in any way disadvantaged by a policy that favours monopoly interests. The liberalisation policy necessarily calls for more than just an open market. It entails equally regulated competitors in the market. In addition, it ensures accountability of media organisations to their societies. It ultimately necessitates reform of government-run radio, for instance, which is “considered as part of public administration, as it is funded by the state, providing a public service, and performing an administrative function”³. The reform of the radio can be achieved by either privatising it (Rideout & Mosco, 1997: 96), which is what the government of Lesotho in 1997 intended to do with the broadcast media it controls (Lejakane, 1997: 126 – 127), or transforming it into full-fledged public service radio (Ronning, 1998: 10) in accordance with the liberalisation policy adopted.

² According to Mughan and Gunther (2000: 13), liberalisation of media sometimes comes as an unintended result of adopting the policy of a free market economy.

³ Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. State into Public: the Freedom of State TV in East Central Europe. (<http://www.osi.hu/ipf/publications/AlinaMP-PublicTV.pdf>). Accessed July 22, 2003.

Proponents of ‘liberalisation’ and ‘pluralism’ in southern African broadcasting denounce any government-operated-station because of historically known state ‘muzzling’ of broadcast media in the region. Instead, they largely emphasise the normative role that national radio services could play with the aim to consolidate democracy when they are unleashed from direct overall (operative, regulatory and policy-making) powers of the state governments (Ronning, 2002: 115; Carver, 2000: 193; Chanda, 1999: 5; Manyarara1998: 101; Teer-Tomaselli, 1994: 599). The function of the radio in this regard is “that of information and presentation of alternative viewpoints” (Ronning, 1998: 4). In Helge Ronning’s words,

The media should inform citizens on matters of public policy by presenting and debating alternatives. This has to do with the concept of rights as citizens of a society. The media are to help empower their readers, listeners and viewers by making them aware of their civil rights and political rights, and of why and how these rights should be exercised (Ronning, 1998: 4).

Part of the literature that informs this study highlights the lack of political will by governments to end their control over the national broadcast (particularly radio) services as serious political constraints in the Southern African broadcast media (Barker, 2001: 18; Ronning, 1998: 7). The literature also emphasises the media market as another key economic constraint on the media in small economies like Lesotho. David Balikowa (1994), Helge Ronning (1998) and John Barker (2001) are examples of writers who have gone beyond the usual restriction of study on media constraints to state censorship in the emerging democracies of the least developed economies.

David Balikowa (1994: 605) contends that “state muzzling on the one hand and marketing challenges on the other” are “two fundamental problems that press in Africa finds itself confronted with”. State muzzling entails anti-free press laws and the withdrawal of government advertising in the media that are perceived by the government as subversive (Balikowa, 1994: 607). A typical example in Lesotho is the banning of all government advertising on *MoAfrika* newspaper following its souring relations with the government in the 1990s⁴ (Matobo, 1998; Ralefu, 1999).

Media marketing challenges, on the contrary only require good marketing strategies to deal with, according to Balikowa. For him, the press (e.g. the print newspapers) have only two

⁴ MISA Annual Reports; 1998, 1999, 2000 & 2001

sources of revenue: advertisements and selling of copies. Balikowa compares the patterns of press revenue in the West and in Africa. From the comparison, he contends that, “unlike in the West, where advertising constitutes 80 percent of newspaper revenue, in Africa the ratio is quite the opposite: only 20 percent or less of the revenue comes from advertising and the rest [comes] from circulation” (Balikowa, 1994: 609). Balikowa’s argument is that objective reporting with good marketing strategies lead to more success than does partisan reporting. This is because “objective views are more marketable across the diversified partisan audiences” (Balikowa, 1994: 610). He notes that the predominance of state owned media and the patronage media systems in Africa have only meant continuous neglect of profitability and self-sustainability in favour of state funding and other subsidies. This simply serves to compromise the media’s vital role to support democracy. “For papers to be able to turn the wheels of democracy they must also be able to make money”, which entails identifying the markets that the papers currently serve, and the conceived markets are “more than often composed of the urban elite” (Balikowa, 1994: 611).

Although Balikowa (1994) offers useful insights into the challenges faced by the press in the least developed economies, he makes no mention of the broadcast media. However, radio houses too need to make money in order to be self-sustainable and, ultimately, to support democracy. When discussing the media market, Balikowa also ignores the size of the market that can accommodate good marketing strategies to make a media house economically viable. He, however, acknowledges a limited market as a potential problem and poor marketing as the immediate cause of failure for most press. Stressing the need for good marketing strategies, he concludes that “over 90 percent of papers die in their first or second month: not necessarily because the market cannot support two or three newspapers, but because they have nothing particular to offer the market” (Balikowa, 1994: 13).

Unlike Balikowa, Ronning (1998: 8) includes the size of the market in his analysis of the obstacles in the course of developing pluralistic or ‘democratic’ media in the Southern Africa. Ronning’s first media constraint is state censorship that includes upholding of state monopoly of broadcasting and controlling or avoiding private media houses, which are perceived by the government as subversive. With the same emphasis, Ronning argues that the second and third constraints, which are the media markets and the wealth of the society, are also serious challenges facing all popular media including broadcast radio. Small markets and predominantly poor societies constitute, as Ronning asserts, “severe hindrances to the

development of democratic media” (Ronning, 1998: 8). As a result most media services are confined to major urban centres where they are perceived to be economically viable. The media in Lesotho hold much relevance in this regard. For instance, all local broadcast services are run from the capital Maseru since none of the country’s broadcast media, including the national radio, has offices or studios outside the Capital. Ronning suggests transformation of state broadcasters (i.e. state radio and television) into “true public service broadcasters independent of the government, with a public service agenda, and with a large degree of decentralised programming and transmissions” (Ronning, 1998: 10).

Similarly, Barker (2001) emphasises a traditionally vital role of state funding in a form of either government subsidies or advertisements as a key source of revenue for Southern African media. He points out how a pluralism of political views has been suppressed in the state-owned media, which are “predominantly used as the voice of government and / or the ruling party” (Barker, 2001: 20). For Barker, pluralism – whether political or cultural – cannot be ensured in the media, including much chanted ‘public service broadcasting’ for Southern Africa, unless there are established regulatory “mechanisms that will make it possible for governments to provide funds without directly controlling the media” (Barker, 2001: 22). For this reason, Barker advocates a regulatory body consisting of members who have been first nominated by the public and then appointed by the parliament, and he argues that this procedural appointment is ‘the added safeguard’ against government control of the media.

The liberalisation (i.e. opening) of the airwaves in Lesotho in 1998 facilitated the emergence of private television and radio houses. This move was welcome by the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES)⁵ as a sign of the government’s commitment to “free, independent and pluralistic media” (Matobo, 1998: 26). It was the first major development towards the creation of plurality in broadcasting since the advent of government broadcasting in the early 1960s (Foko, 2000: 12). The regulatory authority was established through the enactment of the Lesotho Telecommunications Act of 2000. This Act seeks to restructure and develop electronic media on the principles of “fairness, transparency, universal service, [and] and accountability” (Lesotho Review, 2002: 66)⁶. It was amended in 2001 “to include, along with

⁵ MILES is the Lesotho chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). MISA , 2003. [http://www.misa.org/oldsite/samd/LESOTHO.html]. Accessed in July 20, 2003.

⁶ Lesotho Telecommunications Act no 5 of 2000 is also available in the *Acts of Parliament and Official Documents* section of the government official website; www.lesotho.gov.ls/.

regulation of telecommunications, the regulation of broadcasting content”⁷. State Radio Lesotho and its sister television are not exempted from the new regulatory policy framework, notwithstanding the fact that they remain government-operated stations.

A regulatory framework in broadcasting generally concerns enforcement of normative functions of broadcasters through statutory procedures. The statutory procedures entail policy and “regulatory documents concerning what [broadcasters] may and may not do, together with formal rules and procedures for implementing the provisions of any regulation” (McQuail, 2000: 184). A number of specific concerns within a regulatory framework, according to Richard Fardon and Graham Furniss (2000: 8), can be summarised in the four questions listed below.

1. Who decides which stations are licensed, who licenses the licensors?
2. How is broadcasting made accountable, if it is, and to whom are broadcasters accountable?
3. How open is access to the airwaves for different shades of opinion and sectors of the population?
4. How are national governments to be prevented from making attacks against peaceful internal dissent?

As these questions indicate, regulatory frameworks are specifically “about the control of the medium and its message in both formal, statutory, terms, and in terms of the way such frameworks are interpreted and implemented practically” (Fardon & Furniss, 2000: 8 – 9). Independent regulatory frameworks, in particular – established on statutory ground – aim to create diversity for choice of sources of news and programmes, to ensure plurality of different or opposing public voices, beliefs, opinions and politics, and to guarantee access to the intended listeners and viewers as citizens⁸ (Hurard, 1998: 139). Independent regulation in broadcasting is therefore a mechanism intended to enforce, among other things, accountability of the broadcasters. The approach to liberalisation and accountability of broadcasters is informed by the normative media theory and a choice of a media policy. These issues are discussed respectively below.

⁷ See ‘General Information’ about LTA’ at [http://www.lta.org.ls/General_Info/About.htm]. Accessed September 26, 2003.

⁸ Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) ‘Why Independent Regulator – Background’ [<http://www.misanet.org/broadcast/regulation2.html>]. Accessed October 11, 2002.

Normative Media Theory

This theory posits the place and role of media in a given society. As its name suggests the theory upholds perceived norms to which mass media aspire, or with which they are made to comply. Accordingly, it prescribes how radio and any other mass media, “ought to operate if certain social values are to be observed or attained” (McQuail, 2000: 8). The normative media theory stipulates various roles and functions of radio in different polities such as the role of community radio in a geographically defined community (Teer-Tomaselli, 2001). It relates to different political philosophies, and to the structures and functions of media systems (Mbennah, Hooyberg & Mersham, 1998: 15).

Since political philosophy differs from one society to another, and changes as societies do, different normative approaches have evolved into many variants or paradigms. For instance, Straubhaar and LaRose (2002: 524) and Mbennah, Hooyberg and Mersham, (1998: 18) discuss almost the same sets of four and five variants respectively, while Nordenstreng (1997, cited in McQuail 2000: 161) mentions a different and new set of five paradigms. Most significant paradigms of the normative theory are the earliest *authoritarian* and *libertarian*, which seem to be polar opposites. The former is appropriate for explaining media relations with a society in which the government is repressive towards the media whereas with the latter the government is quite liberal with low control over the media in a society (Dominick, 1999: 499). According to Dominick, all other paradigms are modifications of these two fundamental positions. Straubhaar and LaRose also share this view as they suggest that the first major seminal analysis, *Four Theories of the Press*, by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956 (McQuail, 2000: 153; Tehranian, 1999: 133) “reflected polarization between nations that took shape during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union” (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2002: 524). Due to its relevance to the past experience of broadcast media in Lesotho, only authoritarian paradigm will be discussed below.

Authoritarian Paradigm

The authoritarian perspective emerged with print newspaper in the late sixteenth century (Dominick, 1999: 499). Significantly, it is expressed in other modifications or supplementary paradigms, for example, developmental paradigm (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2002: 525) which foregrounds government as a powerful actor in the media operations. According to Siebert et al (1956 cited McQuail, 1994: 127) the authoritarian perspective is especially easy to observe

in dictatorial regimes and societies in transition where democracy is not yet fully developed. In this view the authoritarian state systems demand government control of the media. This perspective posits protection of the “established social order and its agents, setting clear and close limits to media freedom” (McQuail, 1994: 128). The authoritarian view is evident in what the Lesotho Military Government Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Moeketse Malebo, outlined as the objective for his government controlled media in 1986. Malebo stated that

[t]he government sees the dissemination of correct and constructive information as indispensable to national development. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will therefore be seen as [the] Government’s instrument for the dissemination of good, reliable, objective and authoritative information (cited in Mwanza, 1986: 7 – 8).

Mass communication, according to this paradigm, is elitist, one-way and top-down flow of information from established authorities and media producers as well as distributors, as professionals, to masses of other citizens.

As seen by the governments, other state authorities and civil society, as well as media organisations themselves who subscribe to authoritarian perspective, mass media should remain subordinate to the established authorities, the state in particular, and should not do anything that could undermine those authorities. The government as a central authority has a clear say in the way the media, state- or privately- owned, function in terms of its (government) own expectations. Therefore, the media should not offend the majority or dominant moral and political values, and “censorship can be justified to enforce the principles” (Mbennah, Hooyberg & Mersham, 1998: 19).

Due to its distinctive features discussed earlier in this chapter, which are attractive for political communication, radio is the most likely tool for authoritarian forces, in this perspective, to legitimise their dominance. As the governments of the authoritarian societies are quite likely to, and usually do, influence radio ownership, performance and the direction of communication by radio, radio organisations are either partisan, most often passive, or opposed to the governments. For instance, the church owned media in Lesotho such as the print newspapers, *Moeletsi oa Basotho* and *Leselinyana la Lesotho* owned by the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church respectively were perceived to be partisan newspapers.

They supported the first post-colonial government and the opposition respectively from 1966 to 1973 (Mwanza, 1986: 17 – 21).

The critique of the authoritarian perspective suggests that it is not in favour of democracy (McQuail, 2000). For instance, its defenders argue, as in the words of the 18th century English writer Samuel Johnson, that “Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore have a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency” (cited in McQuail, 2000: 154). This right does not of course square with the principle of democracy though it may be politically justified. Critics argue that authoritarianism is too repressive to allow media pluralism (Sandbrook, 2000: 121; Tehranian, 1999: 56). Therefore, in the advent of democracy in initially authoritarian states, proponents of liberalisation policy in this paradigm would argue that an intended liberalisation of broadcast media entails change of legislation to reform state broadcasting from the government monopoly access into the public access of the media to ensure media pluralism (Gunder & Mughan, 2000: 414; Rideout & Mosco, 1997: 95).

Media System and Policy Shift

National media policy reflects considerations by government and the public – when the latter get involved in the policy-making process through either representations or consultations – “to restructure and regulate ... the media” (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2002: 43). It is informed by the normative media theory as discussed above and, in turn, it reflects a particular media system to which a given society aspires. As McQuail (2000: 192) defines it, “media system refers to the actual set of mass media in a given national society, despite the fact that there may be no connection between the elements”. Media systems in this sense, argues McQuail, are quite often the result of chance or historical growth that leads to the adoption of the existing media and media related technology with new innovations continuously coming in. Therefore, the national media policy could be seen to be more concerned with total innovations in media than with adoption of the existing media system. Thus, it tends to seek its own relevance, which is why it remains flexible, and hence, needs continuous review at intervals.

Most media policies in democratic societies are underpinned by three main principles; freedom, diversity and equality, and social-cultural order, which McQuail (1999) translates into more specific issues as follows.

Freedom as a principle refers particularly to the following conditions deemed to be necessary for serving public information needs:

- Limits set to state or governmental power over media
- Limits set to economic or business power over media
- Editorial and journalistic autonomy
- Freedom of publication on all publicly relevant matters
- Media access to sources of information.

Diversity and **equality** in respect of media refer especially to the following conditions:

- There being numerous different and independent media channels
- There being an actual (not just potential) media provision of diverse information, opinions, and culture
- There being realistic opportunities for access to channels, even for minority voices.

Social-cultural order refers to a claim for:

- Security from extreme offence and harm in matters of public mores and in respect of the integrity and continuity of the society
- Chances for expression of majority and minority cultural voices
- Support for identity and cohesion of the society and subgroups within it. (McQuail, 1999: 30)

According to McQuail (2000: 208) there are three main media policy paradigm shifts in different parts of the world. The first is the *emerging media policy* shifting from authoritarian control to classical liberty of media. This shift lasted from the late 19th century to the 1920s in the West. During this time, the pro- national and government interests were replaced by ‘no policy’ or ‘hands-off media policy’, which implies absolute freedom of media to operate in whichever way they choose. This phase of media policy paradigm shift is apparently informed by the libertarian perspective of the normative media theory. In the case of Lesotho’s broadcast media this shift never occurred since the country’s sole radio station for many years had been under the government operative and regulatory control, which has been restructured recently with the advent of privately owned stations. The second is the *public service* phase that advocates, on the one hand, freedom from government control and monopoly ownership

and demands, on the other hand, accountability of the media. In this phase, which reached its apex in Europe in the 1970s, media are called to be independent of both the government and private monopoly, accountable to their society and audiences, and to reflect both political and social diversity (McQuail, 2000: 209). This shift, as well, has not been significantly advanced though the government intended to turn the state radio and television it operates into an independent corporation in 1997 (Lejakane, 1997: 26 – 27). The last phase is currently developing as a result of three main trends of internalisation, digitalisation and convergence in which telecommunications take a centre stage for key events. As McQuail asserts,

The dominant values are no longer those of ‘social welfare’ in its wide sense, but include especially openness and transparency of ownership and control, maximum access for all and choices for consumers, continuation of commercial competition and technological innovation (McQuail, 2000: 209).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the conceptual framework on which the study is constructed. It has defined liberalisation, the key theoretical concept underpinning the study, as a socially inclusive (i.e. political, economic and cultural) process through which structures of the media are reformed to accommodate media pluralism. It has linked the concept to normative media theory, which informs liberalisation policy for broadcast media. Finally the chapter has outlined media policy paradigm shifts, leading to analysis of the national media policy in respect of broadcast radio, particularly the national Radio Lesotho. Those are the (i) *emerging media policy*, shifting media from authoritarian state control to classical liberty, (ii) *public service* phase that advocates both freedom of media from government control, monopoly ownership and demands as well as accountability of the media (iii) currently developing phase as a result of three main trends of internalisation, digitalisation and convergence in which telecommunications take a centre stage for key events McQuail, (2000: 208 – 209). The first two paradigms did not occur in Lesotho due to authoritarian colonial and post-colonial powers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Colin Robson (2002: 549) defines methodology as a theoretical, political and philosophical background to social research and its implication for both research practice and use of particular research methods. Methodology, according to this definition, explains why a particular research approach is adopted as a requirement for a study. Therefore drawing from Martin Terre' Blanche and Kevin Durrheim (1999: 6), methodology specifies how I practically undertook the research enquiry. This chapter focuses on the methodological approach adopted in the study.

As has been indicated earlier in chapter one, this study aimed to explore the new independent regulatory policy and its requirements for government-run broadcasting with focus on the national Radio Lesotho, within a *qualitative content analysis* design. Due to the fact that prior research information on the radio broadcast services in Lesotho is relatively limited, generating qualitative data (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 243) from already existing sources was deemed the most appropriate option to obtain required information for the study. Two techniques were employed in this regard. The first of those is a review of documents and the second is interviewing.

Reviewing Documents

Review of documents, or what Ann Majchrzak (1984) refers to as *focused synthesis*, is a qualitative research technique that depends on the already existing information required for the enquiry (Majchrzak, 1984: 59). Although *focused synthesis* may be found akin to *literature review* in that they both involve reviews of written material, the former differs from the latter in two ways according to Majchrzak (1984). First, *focused synthesis* utilises information obtained from diverse sources beyond published books and articles – hence it goes beyond a literature review. Second, while a *literature review* leads to subsequent research by assisting to identify gaps and areas that need more research, *focused synthesis* constitutes both the enquiry and the results obtained thereof (Majchrzak, 1984: 59 – 60).

Preferred use of *focused synthesis* is based on the following facts and advantages. The documents that were produced within (and as a result of) restructuring and policy-making

initiatives on broadcasting have been an immediate and virtually unavoidable source of primary data for the study. Moreover, officially published documents are most easily accessible. In addition, I could also access unpublished official documents, as I was aware of several policy-making forums between 1997 and 2000⁹. As Tim May (1997: 157) argues;

Documents, as the sedimentations of social practices, have the potential to inform and structure the decisions, which people make on a daily and long-term basis; they also constitute particular readings of social events. They tell us about aspirations and intentions of the period to which they refer and describe places and social relationships at the time when we may not have been born, or were simply not present.

An additional advantage of using documents as ‘trace measures’ (Robson, 2002: 347) is that they are non-reactive in that I, as the enquirer, did not need to be in direct contact with the people who produced them hence there is no reason why the information they provide should be influenced by the enquiry (Robson, 2002: 349). Nonetheless, Robson (2002) also states the following as disadvantages of non-reactive measures including documents:

- The person(s) responsible for the trace and / or the population from which they come may be difficult or impossible to specify (Robson, 2002: 349). This has been the case in which people who participated in the drafting policy documents could not be specified beyond being referred to as stakeholders. A list of the participants could not be obtained.
- Similarly, it may not be reasonable to assume that all persons involved make equivalent contributions to the trace – a single person may make a substantial contribution through repetitive involvement (Robson, 2002: 349). In some cases smaller task teams built up in policy-making workshops had produced the documents. I could not find any information relating to how representative the processes of building up the task teams were.
- The available documents may be limited or partial (Robson, 2002: 358). In this regard I collected from different sources more copies of one of the documents in the hope that I would eventually secure a complete copy without missing pages, but all to no avail.

⁹ The enquirer is an employee in the Television section of the Broadcasting Department in the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology.

Diverse documents (both published and unpublished) were collected for review. Some of the collected documents need to be mentioned here because of their significance in the study. Those are; (1) the Acts of Parliament (published), (2) two different drafts of Lesotho Media Policy (unpublished)¹⁰, (3) the broadcasting rules and regulations (published) and the official reports on / or socio-economic development plans by the government and in-house policy guidelines such as the written visions and mission statements. These documents bear what Kasoma (1992: 4) refers to as ‘codified policies’, which have been the main targeted sources of data for the present study.

Interviewing

Interviewing is here defined as a research method of gathering information by asking people questions and receiving answers from them (the people) (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 240). In terms of the aim of this study I adopted unstructured and in-depth interviewing as a supplement to the review of documents (i.e. focused syntheses) discussed above. Unstructured and in-depth interview is a common type of interview that is widely used in qualitative research (Robson, 2002: 269). In an unstructured and in-depth interview, as Robson (2002: 270) states, “the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern, but lets the conversation develop in this area”. However, this type of interviewing has both advantages and disadvantages, which according to Arthur Berger (1998b) may be stated as follows.

Advantages of unstructured and in-depth interview

- A great deal of detailed information can be collected because the enquirer can ask follow-up questions
- The more people talk the more they reveal about themselves and what is investigated
- Unanticipated topics of interest that arise during the interview may be pursued.

Disadvantages of unstructured and in-depth interview

- It can be difficult to handle the enormous interview data
- Transcribing recorded interviews is time-consuming

¹⁰ The two drafts are the 1997 initiated by the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES), a local chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), and a subsequent draft (undated) which has been crafted by the Ministry of Communications.

- It is not always possible for respondents to give meaningful answers because most people do not know exactly why certain actions and decisions are taken. (Berger, 1998b: 57 – 58)

Unstructured and in-depth interviews with the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Communications Mr. Ts’eliso ‘Mokela, the Director of Broadcasting Mr. Lebohang Moqasa, who is in charge of the state radio and television services, and MILES National Director Mr. Malefetsane Nkhahle were conducted and recorded on the 8, 9 and 10 April respectively. Additional interviews of this nature with LTA Broadcasting Manager Mr. Motlatsi Nkhasi, the regulator, the Chief Engineer of the national broadcasting service Mr. Motlatsi Monyane, and the senior Commercials Officer Mr. Maphathe Koloti were conducted but not recorded.

Those interviews aimed to elicit institutional perspectives, where institutional heads were interviewed, and clarifications on specific sections of the regulatory framework and the national radio services. Three of the four interviews conducted with the institutional heads mentioned above were recorded on an audiotape and were later on transcribed (one of them was also translated into English) for careful analysis of the respondents. Note taking technique was used during many of the interviews that were not recorded.

Method of Analysis

A *conceptual content analysis* exemplified by Earl Babbie and Johnn Mouton (2000: 492-3), was used to analyse data that was in the form of several extracts from the collected policy documents, typed field notes and transcripts of the recorded interviews. Although *content analysis* (not be confused with specific sub-type (*conceptual content analysis*) was originally, and generally viewed as, a quantitative analysis method (Struwig & Stead, 2001: 351; Berger, 1998a: 194), it is now “used in a variety of areas [including] qualitative interview data” (Robson, 2002: 351). According to Babbie and Mouton, *conceptual content analysis* method may be used to establish either frequency or existence of coded concepts or themes in the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2000: 492). In this study *conceptual content analysis* has been used to establish existence rather than frequency of coded themes in a six step-process outlined below from Babbie and Mouton (2000: 492 – 3).

1. Level of analysis

As the first step, according to Babbie and Mouton, the data analyst decides on the level, either one *specific word*, a *key phrase*, or a *string of words* at which the data is analysed. With the intent to explore the data and find in them the existence of concepts and themes, I decided on a *string of words* as a unit of meaning for the analysis. This decision is based on the fact that “some units of meaning may be as short as a sentence [while] others may be quite long” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 130). Therefore any string of words that contained an identified theme was categorised (i.e. given a category name).

2. How many themes to code for

All themes that were identified prior to the analysis process were coded for. In addition, some themes that emerged during the process were as well coded for in order to include additional aspects that had not been anticipated.

3. Coding for existence not frequency

With the coding, I aimed to establish whether the themes to which the codes were attached existed in the data or not. The number of times a coded theme appeared in a document did not count.

4. Distinguishing among themes

I first created few main thematic categories, which were different in their conceptual meanings. Main categories included all meaningful instances of the coded theme. The categories were later revised and broken into sub-categories, where the instances of meaning under the same category could not be put together.

5. Rules for coding of texts

Through reading and re-reading of the collected data and the categories as well as the literature I developed *rules of inclusion* (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 137). These rules were based on similar properties of the units of meaning coded and categorised.

6. Deciding on irrelevant information

Segments of the data, which were not coded, were kept safely, separate from the analysis process. When the process was completed, I then decided on the unused segments as irrelevant information.

The following table provides the main categories expressed in terms of, (i) *category name (plus code)*, (ii) *related rule of inclusion*, and (iii) *conceptual meaning* entailed.

CATEGORY NAME (CODE)	RULE OF INCLUSION	CONCEPTUAL MEANINGS
Liberalising Broadcasting (LB)	Entails an end of monopolistic operation, priority and inclusion of plurality of operators, voices, and politics.	<i>End of government monopoly in</i> a) <i>Broadcasting</i> b) <i>Control of public media</i> c) <i>Use and allocation of frequencies</i>
Independent (Autonomous) Regulation (IR)	Being independent or autonomous means being able to act on one's own (i.e. being able to make decisions and plans on one's own and to implement the plans)	<i>*'Independent' means not located within government department(s). Board and staff members of an independent regulatory institution are not civil servants (i.e. government employees). However, they are not independent of government policy.</i> <i>*Independent regulatory institution runs its own affairs without undue interference.</i> <i>*Independent regulator determines who qualifies for regulation and is therefore able to enforce rules and regulations (i.e. able to impose due sanctions and penalties).</i>
Regulatory Objectives (RO)	Objectives derive from possible solutions on identified problems and / or long-term aims	<i>-To promote plurality diversity, quality and access as immediate determinants of pluralism.</i> <i>-To ensure accountability of broadcasters.</i> <i>-To promote competition and attract investment.</i>
Regulated Broadcasting (RB)	Requires permit or licence to start operating.	<i>#Editorial independence rests with operative powers.</i> <i>#Operates on the basis of prescribed standards and practices.</i> <i>#Remains subject to due sanctions and penalties imposed by the regulator.</i>
Pluralistic Radio (PR)	People tend to equate pluralistic media with the quality of being publicly mandated	<i>+Plurality of voices.</i> <i>+Free from repression.</i> <i>+Wide range of programmes.</i> <i>+Ensured public access to the station.</i>
Quality Control (QC)	Prescribed standards and penalties, fines and sanctions to be imposed.	<i>> Code of practice</i> <i>> Sanctions and penalties</i> <i>> Fines</i>
Role of Government (RG)	The role of the government is perceived to be in regulation or funding.	<i>*To provide funding</i> <i>*To operate public media</i> <i>*To establish overall policies</i>

CHAPTER 4

BROADCASTING IN THE POLITICS OF LESOTHO: REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews radio services since the beginning of broadcasting in the early 1960s in Lesotho. It defines Radio Lesotho as the national broadcast service provided by the government. The chapter also covers initiatives made to improve this service. It ends with a review of the diversity of radio services, which are privately provided following the 1998 liberalisation of the airwaves.

Defining Radio Lesotho

Radio Lesotho is formally known as the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS), even though only the radio section of this service is popularly referred to as ‘Radio Lesotho’ (Lesotho Year Book 1996: 161). LNBS comprises the radio section, which is a 24 – hour service with the most widespread local radio coverage across the country, an emerging television service and a transmitter network service. The transmitter network service also facilitates the transmission of broadcasts from some local private television and radio stations as well as international radio services such as the BBC and Radio France (interview: Monyane, April 2003).

Since its inception in the early 1960s, LNBS evolved as a single broadcast media service in Lesotho until the 1998 liberalisation. Besides, it had always been under direct overall (operative, regulatory and policy-making) control of the government (Manyarara, 1998: 101). Despite the transfer of the regulatory role from the government to the independent regulatory authority, (the LTA in 2000 / 2001), LNBS still satisfy some criteria of state broadcasting with its radio and television services, in particular, which are still offered exclusively by the government.

State broadcasting (i.e. state radio and, or television) is historically considered as a “part of the public administration, as it is funded by the state, providing a public service and performing an administrative function”¹¹. According to Richard Carver (2000: 193), “state broadcasters (i.e. state radio and television) were simply departments within a government

¹¹ Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. ‘State into Public: the Freedom of State TV in East Central Europe.’ [<http://www.osi.hu/ipf/publications/AlinaMP-PublicTV.pdf>]. Accessed in July 22, 2003.

ministry”. Carver adds that authoritarian regimes such as colonial administrations and some post independence governments never had legally recognised political oppositions and, as a result, there was no obligation on the state radio or television station “to reflect a range of political viewpoints” (Carver, 2000: 193). In the advent of democracy in which legal recognition of political opposition is binding and encouraged by the policy of liberalisation (Gill, 2000: 48), state radio as just a government department without obligations to ensure a reflection of all points of political view, including the opposition, no longer holds relevance. Radio Lesotho, and the whole LNBS, constitutes a service, which is caught up in the midst of changes brought about by the liberalisation policy adopted by the country, and it is yet to make its direction publicly known.

Historical and Political Background

The historical background of Radio Lesotho to large extent is intertwined with the post-independence history of the country through which it evolved in an exclusively controlled experience. The post-independence regimes not only developed the radio with intention, if at all, for public access but they also secured it for political communication by the government to the public. To put it differently, the radio has been seen first and foremost as a mouthpiece of the government throughout those regimes. Only in the late 1980s did the radio avail itself, though to less extent, for the public to talk back to the government through periodical tours in the districts (Kasoma, 1992: 60). Those regimes are referred to in their succession below, beginning with the Basotho (then Basutoland) National Party (BNP) which came to office at the time of independence in 1966 after winning the last 1965 Legislative Council elections that led to the formation of the first post-colonial parliament.

BNP Elected Government (1965 – 1970)

Radio broadcasting in Lesotho was started by the Roman Catholic Church (RCM) in 1964, and adopted into a national radio service by the first post-colonial Basotho (then Basutoland) National Party’s government. According to Kasoma (1992: 58), the church owned a 100-watt Short Wave transmitter and a small studio at RCM schools secretariat. At the time of the last pre-independence Legislative Council elections in 1965, radio broadcasts, which ran for an hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon, included news bulletins compiled by the church (Mwanza, 1986: 2). As if to celebrate BNP political victory in the 1965 elections,

RCM allowed the use of its transmitter by the national radio service in 1965 and 1966¹² (Kasoma, 1992: 58). However, in December the same year “radio broadcasts formally came under government control following setting up of an Advisory Board for the establishment of Lesotho National Broadcasting Service by the then Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan” (Mwanza, 1986: 2).

When it came into the office, thus leading the Kingdom into independence on the 4th October 1966, the BNP adopted a five-year Development Plan during which the national radio service developed significantly. Shortly after independence in the same year, radio broadcasts increased by three more hours a day, following donations of radio equipment from the United Kingdom and the United States. These donations “comprised five units which included two British 660 Watt Marconi SW transmitters, a 1 Kilowatt RCA FM transmitter and a 10 Kilowatt RCA MW transmitter” (Lesotho Year Book 1996: 161). Subsequently, authoritarian impulses became evident as the radio came under stiff government control. For instance, following a split of the Department of Information and Broadcasting into separate departments “in 1968...the Department of Broadcasting came directly under the Prime Minister’s office to whom the Director of Broadcasting was answerable” (Kasoma, 1992: 58).

At the same time, according to Kasoma, the government had realised that radio was the only effective mass medium in Lesotho, yet it was neither developed to its full potential nor used for much greater purpose. However, the government could not develop the radio as quickly as it wanted due to lack of funding. Therefore, commercial broadcasting was deemed to be a forthcoming source of funds but only if South African companies were allowed to advertise with Lesotho’s national radio for its audiences in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (Kasoma, 1992: 58). So, the government made a request on this matter to the RSA government. In response, the RSA government confirmed that such request from another neighbouring country had already been denied, so, Lesotho’s request would be difficult to defend. In addition, the RSA government said it would enact legislation to prohibit participation of the Republic in any foreign commercial broadcasting if necessary (Kasoma, 1992: 59). However, the RSA government instead offered technical assistance, which enabled

¹² Odendaal, Adries. ‘Peacebuilding in Lesotho: An analysis of political and social conflict in Lesotho and the role of the Centre for Conflict Resolution’. CCR Staff Papers – THE LESOTHO PROGRAMME. [http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/staff_papers/odendaal_Lesotho.html]. (July 2000). Accessed in August 9, 2002.

a further increase of radio broadcast hours from five to nine and finally to 16 at the end of the first Five Year Development Plan in 1971 (Mwanza, 1986: 4).

BNP Dictatorship (1970 – 1986)

At the time of the first post-independence national elections in 1970, the BNP usurped power and declared a national state of emergency when it learned that it was losing the elections to the Basotho Congress Party – the main opposition. Opposition leaders were arrested and King Moshoeshoe II was put under house arrest that forced him into exile in the Netherlands (Mills, 1992: 63). As it became challenged to defend its self-imposed government, the BNP was poised rapidly to develop the national radio so that by 1971 the radio had become a full-fledged broadcasting house officially re-named Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS¹³) (Kasoma, 1992: 60). Three more additional transmitters were donated from Britain to the government while some more were purchased by the government within the second five-year Development Plan that ran until 1976 (Mwanza, 1986: 4).

Following the BNP refusal to accept electoral defeat in the 1970 national elections and their subsequent seizure of political power, the LNBS then became the sole source of information pertaining to governance as private newspapers, the only alternative media, were banned. The objectives of the radio were as stated by the government:

- a) Providing an effective, technically efficient and nationally available channel of communication to disseminate knowledge, information, news and advice of importance and concern to the people in an impartial and attractive format governed by the country's traditions
- b) To supply daily a well balanced programme covering music, literature, drama and discussions as well as to provide factual and educational material
- c) To contribute to further development of the culture of Lesotho and be a unifying force within the country by maintaining the highest standards of impartial reporting and service to the people (Kasoma, 1992: 60).

The genuineness of these objectives is prone to doubt, because the BNP government had already alienated itself from the electorate by refusing to cede power when it lost the 1970

¹³ Lesotho National Broadcasting Services (LNBS) today comprises both radio and television, and a transmitter network service as separate sections under the Department of Broadcasting. The transmitter network service also facilitates transmission of broadcasts from some local private broadcasters and international radio services, such as the BBC and Radio France (Interview: Monyane, April 2003).

elections. For instance, the Prime Minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, ruled the country without any recourse to representative institutions that included the opposition until he was deposed from power in a military coup in 1986. There is no evidence whatsoever to show that the national radio was, as these objectives suggest, pluralistic in its approach to the public without exclusions. Instead the existing literature suggests that the radio, LNBS, was a 'propaganda tool' for Jonathan's government (Mwanza, 1986: 20). Private media, the only alternative to the government-run media, were banned in the early 1970s, in such a way that the national radio and government-run newspapers became the sole media in the country (Tau, 2000: 4). At the same time the government newspapers increased in 1973 – 1975 when the opposition, the BCP, was forced into exile after a failed attempted coup in 1974. Some of the government newspapers were using exclusively the national radio news items (Lejakane, 1997: 115).

In 1972, LNBS began commercial broadcasting. The South African (RSA) government's objection to allow companies from the Republic to participate in foreign commercial broadcasts services had apparently been waived. The revenue generated from the sale of spot advertisements by initially 12 advertisers, including South African firms, according to Kasoma, "and 45 spots per week initially at an average of R5 per spot" was far exceeding "the First Plan target, over R70, 000 per annum as against the target of R12, 000" (Mwanza, 1986: 4). As a result, the significance of commercial broadcasting was then realised as means to improve radio services. This realisation led to a building of a new studio and office complex programmed in the five-year Development Plan (1966 – 1971), but set up only in 1980, towards the end the third five-year Development Plan (Mwanza, 1986: 5).

Towards the end of the Third Five Year Development Plan in 1979, the government commissioned the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) of the United Kingdom to carry out a feasibility study for establishing a television broadcasting and a VHF radio-transmitting network in Lesotho (IBA Final Report 1979). Some objectives for this move were reflected in the IBA report which read in part

- (iv) Prepare a bankable project memorandum for a phased capital investment in VHF and Television network with particular emphasis on the following objectives:
 - (a) Complete national coverage
 - (b) Coverage of major neighbouring towns in the R.S.A

- (v) Design and prepare a training plan for development of local personnel required for running the VHF and Television service (IBA Final Report 19979: 1 Section 1).

These objectives further emphasised two factors. The first is the then perceived profit-generating RSA participation in the LNBS commercial broadcasting and a possible competition with similar broadcast services based in the Republic. It may be added that RSA relevance was not only economic but also political as far as the Lesotho migrant mineworkers were in the Republic, which provided asylum for Lesotho's opposition in exile and, in addition, facilitated its underground attacks against the government at home. The second is that the LNBS staff in general has never been sufficiently trained for broadcast services available in the country (interview: 'Mokela, April 2003). These factors tended to be very decisive in making a broadcast media service nationally available and self-financing, not to mention accountable to the citizens, in Lesotho.

As one of the priorities for the LNBS, the staff members were trained locally and abroad through in-service training (Mwanza, 1986: 2). In 1967, hardly two years after the government had formally adopted radio broadcasting in December 1965, the first two staff members, who had been trained overseas, were sent back for further training. One of them joined the BBC in Britain and the other joined the Deutsch Welle in West Germany (Kasoma, 1992: 58). In 1979 the IBA report also mapped how the staff members would necessarily be trained locally and overseas. Even today, staff training remains "top priority with the advent of changing broadcasting standards and high technology in radio equipment" (Lesotho Review, 2003: 75).

Military Rule (1986 – 1993)

Before it was deposed from power in the 1986 military coup, the BNP had begun to use the national radio not only for propaganda purposes but also to transmit socio-economic and educational broadcasts such as the schools broadcast programmes as reflected on the funds allocations Table 1 in the Appendix. Educational programmes, focusing on both formal and non-formal education, were produced in conjunction with the ministries of education and agriculture and other governments such as the traffic and police services. Under the then subsequent military government of Major-General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, entertainment

cultural programmes were produced through periodical tours to the districts to broadcast sports and record music (Kasoma, 1992: 60).

From the beginning of its rule, the military government of Major-General Lekhanya spread the idea that politics is a dirty game and should be avoided. According to the self appointed chairman of both the Military Council and a subordinate Council of Ministers¹⁴ Major General Lekhanya (Mills, 1992: 65), the politicians carried the blame for the deadly internal political factions and conflicts that had been increasing over the previous years. The message of the Council was therefore, 'reconciliation and national unity'. The Council also promised to hand over power back to civilians when it was necessary to do so (Tau, 2001: 4). This message implied that the LNBS staff members, just like all civil servants, should avoid politics. As Tau (2001: 4) commented, the military never elaborated on what exactly accounted for politics and how it had to be avoided. What then resulted was a complete lack of comment on the news and political communication through the national radio (Kasoma, 1992: 93).

Nonetheless, the national radio continued to develop. In 1988 LNBS broadcasts were finally extended to 24 hours a day, coinciding with a small-scale evaluation of the broadcast programmes conducted in eight of the total ten districts (Kasoma, 1992: 60). Kasoma states that the results of this study, which was the first of its kind following the 1979 feasibility study, were not made public. At the same time LNBS, in conjunction with a South African Electronic Media Network (M-Net), began a television broadcast service named Lesotho Television / M-Net Lesotho (Tau, 2001). This was based on state funding in accordance with the 1979 feasibility study findings and recommendations that Lesotho's economic growth rate could not sustain commercial television services (IBA Final Report 1979: 1 Section 6). Although it is not stated in the literature, the beginning of the LNBS television broadcasts service could have necessitated adoption of 'Radio Lesotho' as a name for the long begun radio section of LNBS in order to differentiate it from the television service. A year later in 1989, the military government had a plan to split Radio Lesotho into two stations; 'Radio I' and 'Radio II'. Radio I would be "for 24 hours programmes of music, commercials and tips to listeners", and Radio II "for 13 hours a day programmes of developmental nature on

¹⁴ The military regime also formed a Council of Ministers, whose members were predominantly appointed civilians, to serve under the Military Council, both chaired by Major General as head of the government and later as head of the state.

agriculture and health as well as news from Government ministries” (Kasoma, 1992: 61). However, the plan was never implemented but was later revisited in the emerging democracy in the 1990s.

Irrespective of these developments in the broadcast media services no attempt was ever made to formulate a media policy for the country since none existed throughout the BNP and the military regimes. These regimes, as Kasoma states, “had not paid close attention to media policies” (Kasoma, 1992: 34). Therefore, the government broadcast media activities were governed at the discretion of individual administrative officers on what s/he perceived to be the government policy on the media. In 1986, however, the new Minister of Information and Broadcasting¹⁵ Mr. Vincent Malebo made a policy statement over the national radio in which he emphasised that the government controlled media were set to disseminate correct and constructive information to promote “peace, reconciliation, justice and developmental activities” (Mwanza, 1986: 8). As reflected in some parts of the statement, the media were perceived to be ideally objective collectors and disseminators of information for the government, with some permission for some independent organisations to disseminate their own information to the public. Even with the emerging democracy following the military rule, the media continued to be perceived as objective disseminators of authoritative information, as will be seen below.

In the campaign to make its policy on the state media publicly known, the military government did not state clearly how the state apparatuses other than the government would access the state broadcast media. The acts of forcing rulers to make announcements of their dismissal from office over the national radio during coups were largely ignored in the government media policy. As a result, the radio became the significant means of staging and announcing coups predominantly in the 1990s. For instance, according to Greg Mills (1992: 66)¹⁶ General Lekhanya was deposed from power in a bloodless Palace Coup in 1991, during which he was marched “at gunpoint to the radio station to announce his resignation”. More coups and attempted coups were staged in a similar manner in 1994 and 1998 (Khali, 1999: 8).

¹⁵ Departments of Information and Broadcasting re-united in 1974 (Mwanza, 1986: 2).

¹⁶ At the time of his publication Greg Mills was a lecturer in the Department of Political Studies, University of Western Cape. His several writings including MA dissertation are on the politics of Lesotho (Benjamin & Gregory, 1992: viii).

The national election, by which the civilian rule was returned, was held and won the BCP in every constituency in 1993. The BCP's stunning victory according to a local political analyst Khabele Matlosa (1999) partly owed to the then Lesotho's electoral model, which gave all the parliament seats to the winning party when the party had secured only won "75% of [the] votes cast" (Matlosa, 1999: 24). The BCP government led by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle suffered numerous mutinies involving the army, police and national security forces; its own lack of experience; deposition and internal party factions that led to a split in the party to form the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in 1997. The BCP then became the official opposition and the Prime Minister Mokhehle led the LCD, which won a landslide victory in the 1998¹⁷.

One-party State 'Democracy' (1993 – 1998)

From the beginning of democratic dispensation in 1993, Lesotho became poised toward socio-economic pluralism. The new BCP government, which had won all parliamentary seats in the national elections, began to discuss a policy of local government as a means to enhance democracy. However, democracy was once again in short supply as was the case following the independence in the late 1960s, and if anything elicited yet another bloody dispute over elections results in 1998 (Matlosa, 1999: 25). Both BCP government and parliament were exclusively party members only, thus satisfied one party state criterion (Sandbrook, 2000: 3). The government, nonetheless, listed a number of state enterprises it intended to privatise and during the same year passed a Privatisation Act of 1993. In the following year, the Ministry of Communications, then Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (IBMIN), in conjunction with the UNICEF, commissioned MISER Consulting (Pty) Ltd to conduct a countrywide media survey that would help to draw patterns of radio listenership, newspaper readership and television viewership in Lesotho. This was the second self-evaluative study, following the 1988 self-administered study throughout the country (Kasoma, 1992: 60). Undertaken in 1994 and completed in 1995 the MISER survey revealed diverse categories of Radio Lesotho programmes as follows:

67% of the total listenership population listen to news programmes, followed by the education programmes with 49%, children's programmes with 45%, cultural

¹⁷ Institute for Security Studies (2003). 'Lesotho - History and Politics'.
<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Lesotho/Politics.html>. Accessed on 12 June, 2003)

programmes with 42%, sports programmes with 41%, women's programmes with 38% and music programmes with 38% (MISER, 1995: 43)

However, the MISER report concludes that the “media operations in general have not been effective enough in enabling the public to participate effectively in the implementation of national educational, cultural and socio-economic development policies” (MISER, 1995: 62). In response to this observation the ministry, IBMIN, made pledges to improve the transmitter network and the training of broadcast media personnel. As a result, a two-year Diploma in Mass Communication programme, which was sponsored by the government through IBMIN, was launched in late 1996, and produced the first graduates in 1998 (Matobo, 1998: 28). A year later a process of relocating the FM transmitter of the LNBS from the Lancer's Gap transmission station to a new site at Berea Plateau began, in an effort to improve both radio and television coverage across the country (Lejakane, 1997: 118; Sixth National Development Plan, 1996/97 – 1998/99: 245). At the same time in 1997, the first national media policy was drafted, following a stakeholders' consultative workshop hosted by IBMIN and the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES)¹⁸. It was the first significant attempt to establish an exclusively prescribed media policy separate from overall telecommunications policy.

Although this policy document has not been published, it made a number of provisions, which were implemented later on. The policy made a recommendation that a single independent regulatory institution for both telecommunications and broadcasting should be established for Lesotho. The regulation in this case should be on *local content* and *licensing broadcasters*. The policy made the following provisions:

Local content regulation

- Regulations specifying local content requirements are universal.
- They aim at promoting national culture.
- They seek to promote and build infrastructure, development and in the film and television industries.
- In the face of cheap production, regulation is regarded as the only way of achieving local content.

¹⁸ MILES is the Lesotho Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

Licensing broadcasters

- The criteria by which broadcasting licences are allocated should be publicly known.
- The criteria should take into account the public interest in promoting pluralism in views, programming and ownership.
- The regulator should be responsible for allocation of frequencies and other technical aspects of broadcasting.
- The regulator should have the right to revoke a licence. (Lesotho Media Policy, 1997: 29 – 30).

The overall recommendations of this media policy were; (i) liberalisation of broadcasting, (ii) establishment of independent regulation in the media and (iii) repeal of all anti-free press laws, including undefined ‘checks and balances’ used by the government to control media¹⁹. Around the same time the government also pledged to privatise its broadcast media (Lejakane, 1997: 126 – 27), and in this regard, radio studios were improved and restructured to accommodate a commercial radio channel.

End of Government Monopoly of the Airwaves (1998)

As has been indicated in Chapter One the 1998 liberalisation of the airwaves brought in five new radio stations and a television station between 1998 and 2000 (Foko, 2000: 13). According to Thato Foko, those stations were almost all managed locally and owned by a group of Lesotho nationals, Lesotho Catholic Bishops Conference, the Third World Evangelical Movement for Human Rights and Democracy (T.W.E.M – H.RD), the multimedia Communication and the National University of Lesotho (NUL). These radio stations are, in the order of the above mentioned categories of ownership as reflected on Table 2 in the appendix, the People’s Choice (PC) FM, the Catholic Radio (CR) FM, MoAfrika FM, Joy FM and Khotso FM. The television station is a privately owned Christian religious *Trinity Broadcasting Network* (Foko, 2000: 14).

Although it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify non-commercial radio stations from the above-mentioned list, partly because of similarity of services offered such as public announcements and funeral notices, Sets’abi (2001) nonetheless identifies CR FM and Khotso

¹⁹ One World News Service [http://www.oneworld.org/news/reports/jun97_lesotho.html]

FM as non-commercial stations. He states that the other “three are commercially owned” (Sets’abi, 2001: 39). They are all based in the capital Maseru; few of them are expanding their coverage across the lowlands in the north districts of the country (interview: Monyane, April 2003).

The new radio stations meant an increased choice of listening and a diversity of locally produced programmes. In addition, to the national radio and television, and the South Africa based services, both radio and television, which are also very familiar among audiences in Lesotho (De Beer, 1998). Alongside the local radio services and significant spill over signals of broadcast services from South Africa, are the international radio services such as the BBC, the Voice of America and Radio France, which – with the exception of BBC – target audiences in Maseru only (Interview: Monyane, April, 2003). However, these changes in broadcast media in Lesotho need to be put in perspective.

While it is true that state Radio Lesotho and Lesotho Television today operate alongside a rapidly growing number of privately owned television and radio stations, the former still has a footprint larger than all the local stations put together in the country. Radio Lesotho transmits on four frequencies, two on FM, one on MW and the other on SW, and it is therefore received throughout the country (Sets’abi, 2001: 39). In 2001, Catholic Radio (CR) FM was the only other (private) station heard further than 30 kilometres from the capital Maseru, but even then it could not be received in most places beyond 50 kilometres from the capital (Sets’abi, 2001: 39). In 2003, at least one more radio, MoAfrika FM took opportunity of the expanding FM transmitter network of the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS) by expanding its broadcasts to only two districts; *Berea* and *Leribe* in the north of Maseru (Interview: Monyane, April 2003).

MoAfrika FM is one of the only two local private stations that use the FM transmitter network of LNBS on rental charges indicated in the Appendix 2. The local private broadcasters do not opt for MW and SW transmitters of LNBS due to high charges. These transmitters cover a broader area and send out signals throughout the country from the Lancer’s Gap transmission station in Maseru. The only local station that uses them is the national Radio Lesotho (Interview: Monyane, April, 2003).

Private broadcasting in Lesotho has not yet challenged the dominance of the national Radio Lesotho, as the latter remains politically and economically the most significant station compared to the other five or six local stations²⁰. Politically, it is the only station that broadcasts daily reports on the proceedings of two houses of the Lesotho Parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly. Those reports are important as far as they provide, on daily basis, a 'window into' the parliament for the general public in order to make sense of the accountability of the politicians and lawmakers in Parliament. Parliament is aware of this significance of the radio and acknowledges that it should have a more pluralistic approach as the following quotation indicates:

On paper all political parties should have equal access to Radio Lesotho. It is, however, a common complaint of political parties other than the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) that they have limited access to the radio station. As a case in point in mid-November 2001 the Member of Parliament (MP) for Seapala, Noe Liao, who is a member of the main opposition party, the Lesotho People's Congress (LPC), criticised Radio Lesotho in Parliament for not broadcasting news and information deemed as unfavourable to the ruling party. Of particular note in Liao's case was the failure of the radio station to broadcast LPC notice for a public meeting held on November 4, 2001. This allegation was nonetheless denied by the Minister for Labour and Employment, Sello Machakela, who argued that all political parties were free to use all types of government-controlled media. He added that there were no restrictions aimed at political parties (Sets'abi, 2001: 39).

Due to its presumed largest audience reach, Radio Lesotho is perceived to be attracting more sales of advertisements than any other local station. It therefore stands a better chance than the other stations do in a country where generating revenue is a key economic problem facing the media (Ralefu, 1999: 56). Whether the radio is making full use of advantages it has or not is still to be established as the annual budget for the state broadcast media does not include any income generated by sales of advertisements or rental facilities to date (Interview: Moqasa, April, 2003).

Conclusion

As has been discussed above, the national Radio Lesotho has evolved as a single local radio station in the country, and mouthpiece of the government without a clearly prescribed media

²⁰ As one more station, the Harvet Radio FM, was launched in 2003, Khotso FM run by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) Institute of Extra Mural Studies (IEMS) still showed no indication of coming back to air after it was taken off air in 2002 due to still unpaid outstanding rental charges on LNBS FM transmitter (Interview: Monyane, April, 2003).

policy. Under successive post-colonial governments, the radio developed significantly as the governments gradually incorporated socio-economic matters into the radio programming and expanded its transmitter network service to cater for more audiences across the country and into South Africa. To date, the radio remains part of the government Department of Broadcasting, a mouthpiece of the government, which served as initially an emerging radio service, then a propaganda tool under the dictatorial regime (1970 – 1986), and an instrument for nation-building under the military regime (1986 – 1993). The radio eventually became a state monopolised public radio under the emerging multi-party democracy (1993 – 2003). Nonetheless, it has become a fully-fledged radio, catering for educational, informative and entertainment needs of geographically and socially diverse audiences in Lesotho.

Despite the fact that Lesotho's first civilian government at independence, which later became dictatorial, and eventually the military government duly became conscious of how significant radio was and reacted to radio broadcasting accordingly, development of the national media policy, in writing or a document form, had been completely neglected up until the return of civilian rule in the country in 1993²¹. Therefore, the national Radio Lesotho has enjoyed monopolistic status in an authoritarian tradition. For instance, the radio followed the dictates of the civilian and military dictators who were poised to political dominance and nation-building respectively (Tau, 2001). Even with the new democracy, the government policy on media had always been inferred from both attitudes and practices of the government towards the media, differing from individual government minister or official to another since there had been no significant improvement in this regard until the time of liberalisation of the airwaves in 1998. Radio Lesotho broadcasts were intended for audiences not only inside Lesotho but also outside the country as the government "recognized the need to extend radio coverage into areas of South Africa where Basotho miners are employed" (Mwanza, 1986: 4). Other South Africa-based targets for commercial broadcasting in Lesotho were towns alongside the border. They include Ladybrand, Ficksburg, Clocolan, Tweesprint, Fouriesburg, Hobhouse, Boesmans and Matatiele (IBA Final Report 1979: 7 Section 5).

²¹ Media Institute of Southern Africa: <http://www.misanet.org/>

CHAPTER 5

RADIO LESOTHO IN THE NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter examines in detail the new regulatory framework and its policy provisions for the national Radio Lesotho. It aims to establish the extent to which the independent regulatory authority ensures pluralism in the national radio programming. It discusses the autonomy of the regulatory authority, LTA, in terms of how it has been established and the powers with which it is endowed. The chapter also outlines the rules and regulations that enforce compliance of the radio. In conclusion, it incorporates a discussion on how the radio has been re-arranged in order to fit within the changing broadcasting environment.

Media Laws on Broadcasting

In democratic societies, media laws govern both ownership and operation of the media in general. They are predominantly concerned with freedom as a right, and seek to balance the freedom of the media with other rights of individual persons or the society as a whole. As Francis Kasoma (1992: 37) states, “media ... laws are either statutes enacted by the state or precepts recognized by common or customary law whose aim is four-fold”, notably to protect:

- 1) Journalists against abuse of authority by the state
- 2) The state against misuse of privileges and rights by journalists
- 3) The public against misuse of privileges and rights by journalists
- 4) The journalists against unfair accusations and actions by the public

Lesotho’s media laws, like other laws of the country, include ‘Proclamations’ made by colonial powers before independence. The country did not repeal those Proclamations at the time of its independence in 1966. Therefore, the Proclamations have continued to be part of Lesotho’s legal system (simplified Lesotho Constitution, 1998: 2).

The first law in relation to broadcasting was enacted when radio was introduced in the then British Protectorate Territory, the Basutoland, in 1927 (Mwanza, 1986: 13). The British High Commissioner responsible for the territory passed a Proclamation, 1927 (No. 5 of 1927) to prevent, according to Mwanza, an anticipated abuse of radio. The High Commissioner “made a provision for any person to broadcast over radio but upon limitations as may be put by the

Postmaster General” (Mwanza, 1986: 13). Not only did the Proclamation place the Postmaster General as the arbitrary government regulatory agent but it also empowered the Postmaster General “to establish and operate radio transmitting and receiving stations at such points within Lesotho [Basutoland] as may appear to him to be necessary and may at his discretion, on behalf of the government, take over and operate any radio licensed under this law” (Kasoma, 1992: 46). This Proclamation was incorporated into the revised edition of *The Laws of Basutoland 1960*, which colonial government left in operation when it vacated the office for the first independent Lesotho government in 1966 (*The Laws of Basutoland 1960*: 2415 – 2440).

The second law, but the first to be enacted by the independent Lesotho Government, was the Lesotho Telecommunications Act, 1979 (No. 12 of 1979). With regard to broadcasting this Act only prohibited “transmission of false message, call or radio communication which interferes with or abstracts radio [broadcasting] communication” (Mwanza, 1986: 14). The Act was repealed by the new Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000), under which the Independent Regulatory Institution, Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) was set up.

When civilian rule was restored in Lesotho in April 1993, the country had drafted a new constitution, which came into operation as the democratically elected government assumed office (*Simplified Lesotho Constitution*, 1998: 2). This constitution, in its Section 14 (the only section of the constitution that has relevance to media), guarantees freedom of expression. It states that:

- (1) Every person is entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions, receive and communicate ideas and information without interference, and freedom from interference with correspondence.
- (2) However, laws may be passed which protect reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons, or which prevent disclosure of information received in confidence. Laws may also be passed to maintain authority and independence of the courts, or to regulate technical aspects of communications facilities (such as telephones, television or radio). If we feel that we have been unfairly treated by the press or other medium of communication, we have the right to reply using the same medium. (*Simplified Lesotho Constitution*, 1998: 15)

With the new Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000) the government aimed to:

Provide for the restructuring and the development of telecommunications; establish an autonomous and independent regulatory authority, license the providers of telecommunication services having regard to fairness, transparency, universal service, accountability to the general public, and for related matters (LTA Act, 2000).

The Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000) was amended in May 30, 2001 in order to incorporate broadcasting, by defining radio as an example of a ‘telecommunications system’. The amendment has meant that the broadcasting (i.e. radio or television) in Lesotho, along with telecommunications services, is regulated by the LTA²².

Establishment of LTA and its Regulatory Status

The introduction of the independent regulation in broadcasting could be considered as a much delayed response to the proposals put forward to the government as early as the late 1970s. The first proposal was made in 1979 by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) of the United Kingdom, as part of the recommendations contained in the report of the aforementioned (in the previous chapter four) Feasibility Study for Television and VHF Radio Broadcasting Service in Lesotho. The IBA recommended that

The Authority should consist[s] of a group of lay members drawn from all parts of society in Lesotho. The Chairman would be nominated by the government. This authority should ensure that television and radio services comply with the points laid down in a broadcasting Charter drawn up by government. In this connection, we strongly recommend a similar system to that presently operating in the United Kingdom. Without question it is globally recognised as the best system in operation today providing an independent television and radio service (IBA Final Report, 1979: 12, Section Two)

A similar proposal was made 17 years later in 1997, by a task force formed by local media practitioners under the auspices of the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES)²³. As has been indicated in Chapter Four, the task force drafted the media policy, which called for liberalisation of the airwaves, down-scaling of the government control on the media, establishment of private radio and television stations, as well as an independent authority to

²² http://www.lta.org.ls/General_Info/About.htm. Accessed in September 26, 2003.

²³ MILES is the local Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

take regulatory responsibility over broadcasting as a whole (Lesotho Media Policy, 1997: 10). Although the Ministry of Communications accepted the policy draft with most of its provisions implemented by the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000) “MILES had expressed concern over certain clauses including media ownership and [the] government-owned electronic media which appeared to have contradicted the principles and practice of freedom of expression” (Reddy, 2003)²⁴.

The 1997 Lesotho Media Policy needed to be improved before it could be translated into a new media law, which Lesotho hoped to set up. According to the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Communications, Mr Ts’eliso ‘Mokela, the policy could not be implemented fully (i.e. published and translated into media law) because it was found to be lacking in current broadcasting trends (interview: ‘Mokela, April, 2003). In this regard, Mr. ‘Mokela mentioned almost all other communication policy documents such as the published Lesotho Telecommunications Policy of 1999 and the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000), which he said do not bode well with the current trends in information-communications technology and services. He said the laws and other policy documents (published and unpublished) were under review and might be merged into one Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy that would enable efficient independent regulation for telecommunications, broadcastings and the Internet-based communications as well as postal services.

The task of drafting the national media policy was revisited in 2002, when a new media policy draft²⁵ was made. The new policy draft made provisions somewhat similar to that of the 1997 Media Policy, with a few exceptions that basically undermine independent regulation and the expression of the government-run media as the public media. The exceptions include an expression of the regulatory role as a responsibility of the Ministry of Communications. It stated that the Ministry should carry out the following as its responsibility:

²⁴ Reddy, Trasha. ‘African Media Debates: Lesotho Media Report.’ [<http://journ.ru.ac.za/amd/lesotho.htm>]. Accessed in July 22, 2003.

²⁵ Three copies of the first draft of the new media policy were obtained from different sources. All efforts made to obtain the final draft, which had not been widely distributed, were not successful. The copies do not have dates and details about who actually participated in the drafting of the policy. However, they (the copies) were acknowledged by some sectional Heads in the Ministry of Communications; Mr. Thabiso Makintane (Director of Information Department) and Mr. Maphathe Koloti (then acting Director Broadcasting) as well as the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES) office as the first draft of the policy.

- Defining the scope of regulation for media houses.
- Formulating implementation and review of policies.
- Creating enabling legislation and institutions.
- Defining social obligations for operators.
- Ascertaining participation of public and private media in the delivery of social obligations.
- Prescribing the degree of local content to promote cultural norms and values. (Lesotho Media Policy 2002: 10)

In addition, the 2002 policy draft outlines the role of the public media, which it clearly names as the government-controlled media, as follows:

- To serve as a mouthpiece of the government to the public in providing information, education and entertainment.
- To serve as a public forum to convey views and concerns on national issues.
- To pioneer and encourage the implementation of social obligations as specified by the appropriate.
- To assist other media houses with infrastructure, human and other resources in enhancing their operations.
- To provide free and equal time / column for all registered political parties in preparation for elections. (Lesotho Media Policy 2002: 12).

The Regulatory Authority is founded on the Lesotho Telecommunications Policy published in February 1999. The policy, however, does not stipulate the regulator's autonomy in terms of its relation to the government. As a result, the Lesotho Telecommunications Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000), does not express independence of the regulatory Authority, LTA, from the government, though it stipulates that LTA is capable of suing and being sued (LTA Act 2000, clause 4). Instead, the Act provides for the Minister of Communications to be a key role player in appointing the five members of the governing board of LTA. In addition, the Minister also holds exclusive powers to determine allowance and travelling expenses incurred by the members in performance of their duties. The Minister determines conditions on which the Chief Executive of LTA is appointed.

The powers the minister holds to appoint and determine conditions of appointment constitute some influence on the functions of LTA. To this extent, the independence of the LTA is arguably untenable, as the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES) National Director Mr. Malefatsane Nkhale noted that the Minister's powers over the authority enables political patronage to come into play (Interview: Nkhahle, April 2003). Therefore appointment of the Chief Executive of LTA remains a contested issue.

The Lesotho Telecommunications Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000) also provides the independent regulator with some executive power to run its own affairs. This has been described as one of the characteristics of autonomy, which the independent regulator should have. Therefore, LTA has administrative responsibility to:

1. Appoint, promote, remove and discipline its staff-members
2. Grant, amend and remove licences
3. Assign frequencies; manage the use of the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbital locations
4. Investigate possible violations and otherwise enforce the provisions of this act (LTA Act 2000).

With regard to regulatory responsibility, LTA has prescribed conditions under which a broadcasting licence is to be granted and has set out its own broadcasting rules. Such conditions as prescribed in the Broadcasting Licence of the national Radio Lesotho include some restrictions on programming, social obligations, free services, public complaints and investigations thereof, and revocations of the licence among many others (Radio Lesotho Broadcasting Licence, 2002 – 2012). The programming format of the national radio can be changed only by not more than fifteen per cent without permission and amendment of the format by the regulatory authority. Another restriction on programming concerns intellectual property and copyright in which the radio is prohibited from broadcasting any third-party material without the written consent or permission from the owner of such material. In complying with this rule the radio is to make the consent or permission available for inspection by any regulatory agent assigned by LTA.

Regulation of Broadcasting

The Broadcasting Rules, 2002 issued by LTA comprise a long list of rules and sub-rules under *Part III: Code of Practice*, whose aim is to protect the public who may be harmed by harmful broadcasts, to enforce fairness, accuracy and impartiality in news and information

programmes and to ensure that political parties have equal access to a broadcast services (LTA Broadcasting Rules, 2002: 229 – 232). Measured in terms of the contemporary community standards, harmful broadcasts would be containing gratuitous use of offensive language, sexual material as well as the incitement and glorification of violence, crime and disorder. They would also include broadcasts that “incite or perpetuate hatred against or gratuitously vilifies any person or section of community on account of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, marital status, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, religion or culture” (Broadcasting Rules, 2002: 229).

With respect to fairness, accuracy and impartiality in the news and information programmes, the Rules provide that there should be no intentional or negligent departure from the facts, either through distortion, exaggeration, misinterpretation, material omissions, summarising and or editing. Broadcasters should avoid errors by (but not limited to) indicating clearly the supposition, rumours and allegations when those underpin reports in their broadcasts. Errors included in the broadcasts should be corrected and the corrections must be broadcast as soon as possible with the same prominence and timing as the errors were broadcast. Plurality of views must be ensured in news and information programmes on controversial issues. Wide range of views and opinions should be “reported either within a single programme or in a series of programmes which are as adjacent as reasonably possible” (Broadcasting Rules, 2002: 230).

The Rules also make reference to ‘comment’ and ‘privacy’ among other things. Comment is referred to as an expression of opinion and it is to be based only on facts. It should be clearly indicated as such by both the broadcasters and the people invited on air by the broadcasters. Issues of privacy include sources of information given in confidentiality and victims of sexual offences whose identities should not be divulged in broadcasts without their written consent. Otherwise personal identities should be avoided unless in the case of news where credibility may need to be established by disclosing the source of the news or information used.

With reference to party-political broadcasting, which is to be in all aspects a free choice for all broadcasters in the country, the following sub-rules are listed under Rule 14:

- (1) A licensee shall not be required to broadcast a party-political advertisement but if it elects to do so, it shall afford all other political parties a similar opportunity.

- (2) In making party-political advertising time available to political parties, [the] licensee shall not discriminate against any political party or give preference to any political party or subject any political party to any prejudice.
- (3) A licensee shall not broadcast party-political advertisement unless it is submitted on behalf of [the] political party by its duly authorized representative.
- (4) A party-political advertisement shall be wholly under the editorial control of the political party, which places the advertisement (the list goes on). (LTA Broadcasting Rules, 2002: 232 –33)

In addition, the Broadcasting Rules 2002 extend the issues of plurality of the public participation in broadcasting, without discrimination against or in favour of any vested interest, to advertisements, sponsorship and complaints. The broadcasters are to advise members of the public that they have the right to refer their complaints about the broadcasters to the regulatory Authority, LTA. In compliance, each licensed broadcaster is to “provide the Authority with procedures designed to address complaints from the public about the licensee” (Radio Lesotho Broadcasting Licence, 2002)²⁶. Finally, the Rules include possible fines and penalties that would be determined and imposed by the regulatory Authority, LTA, where compliance has not been advanced.

However, it should be mentioned here that neither the Radio Broadcasting Licences nor the Rules make any distinction between the government-run and private media in terms of social obligations. Therefore, social obligations of the national Radio Lesotho are not in any way different from those of the private radios, which are also licensed by LTA. Its Broadcasting Licence is word-by-word similar to those of the private broadcasters. The issue of universal public access to the media is not linked to the social obligations of the government-run broadcasters, which are to some extent perceived to be fulfilling the public service under the new independent regulation.

Re-arranging the National Radio

At the time of liberalisation of the airwaves in 1998, the Ministry of Communications (then the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) had already made plans to expand the coverage of the national Radio Lesotho through (i) improving FM transmission, (ii) Splitting the Radio into commercial and public channels and (iii) decentralising the Radio broadcast service. The

²⁶ Unless it is revoked earlier, Radio Lesotho Broadcasting Licence, 2002 (No. 4 of 2002) lasts for ten years running from September 1, 2002 to august 31, 2012.

first step that the Ministry took in this regard was the aforementioned process of re-locating the FM transmitter from the Lancer's Gap transmission station to a new site at the Berea Plateau, where the FM transmission is to be beamed throughout the country. This process, which began in 1997, has been completed. As a result, the new Berea Plateau transmission station is now in operation (Interview: 'Mokela, April 2003).

The improvement of the FM transmission had now been extended to the building of FM transmitter network, the process that entails location of other connecting transmitters in other parts of the country. According to the Chief Engineer Mr Motlatsi Monyane in the Department of Broadcasting, the construction work to set up five *1KW FM* transmitters in five different transmission sites was already underway in April 2003. At least one *1KW FM* transmitter had been set up at Chafo in the Leribe District in early 2003 (Interview: Monyane, April 2003). Other transmitter locations for *1KW FM* transmitters and relatively less powerful transmitters, all of which would enable FM transmission throughout the country are tabulated below.

Table 1 *Radio Lesotho FM Transmitter Locations*

Transmitter Location	Transmitter Power	Frequency (MHZ)	Geographic coordinates
BEREA PLATEU	1 x 1 KW FM 1 x 1 KW FM	93.3 STEREO 99.8 STEREO	29° 20' 10.51"27° 33' 04.85 "
CHAFO - LERIBE	1 x 1 KW FM	96 STEREO	28° 48' 49.29"88° 08' 04.88E
LIKHOELE - MAFETENG	1 x 1 KW FM	97.2 STEREO	29° 51' 37.29"87° 16' 12.43E
HA-LIBE - MOHALE'S HOEK	1 x 1 KW FM	90.0	30° 08' 34.18"87° 26' 43.63E
S/STUD HILL - QUTHING	1 x 1 KW FM	102.4	30° 25' 03.14"87° 42' 21.21E
THABA - NTS'O -SEMONKONG	1 x 250 W FM 1 x 100 W FM	98.9	29° 55' 57.74"88° 08' 08.65E
POPA MT.RANGE -MOKHOTLONG	1 x 250 W FM	103.6	29° 15' 54.43"88° 58' 25.55E
'MATS'OANA - THABA-TSEKA	1 x 1 KW FM	96.8	29° 31' 24.44"88° 29' 34.89E

Source: Radio Lesotho website, <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/radio/Radiolesotho>

The FM transmission had never been more significant than both MW and SW transmissions before the liberalisation initiatives for pluralistic media in the late 1990s. It had been confined to only two *1KW FM* transmitters, which were initially located at the Lancer's Gap station and later on re-located to Berea Plateau. The national Radio Lesotho reached many audiences across the country mainly through both MW and SW transmitters, which however are of the relatively poor reception quality compared to FM transmitter. Therefore improvement of the

FM transmission aimed at better quality reception of the national Radio across the country. In addition, none of the new private radio stations use either MW or SW transmitters because they are expensive (interview: Monyane, April 2003). FM transmission is also intended to cater for Television broadcasting and other private radio stations on subsidised monthly charges for private broadcasters as indicated in the appendix 2 on transmitter charges. The subsidised charges are in accordance with the Ministry of Communications' policy of assisting private broadcasters with infrastructure and other resources (Lesotho Media Policy, 2002: 12). So, the envisaged FM transmitter network would enable competitive broadcasting in that the private broadcasters would reach more or less the same audiences reached by the national Radio Lesotho. This arrangement would at least be one aspect of pluralistic broadcasting, the plurality of broadcasters, if it becomes successful.

When the airwaves were liberalised in 1998, the process of splitting the Radio into two channels, the public channel and the commercial radio was underway. It incorporated renovation of the studios, training for the expected appointment of the commercial radio staff and invited public participation into formulation of a name for the commercial radio. Some participants in the training sessions were drawn from the national Radio and Television sections to train with, or otherwise assist in the training of those who were looking forward for possible appointment in the commercial radio. *Highlands Radio* was the name that was finally adopted for the commercial radio, and allocation of frequency 99.8 MHz was made for it. The commercial Radio was eventually put on air with trial broadcasts for about a week shortly before the 1998 civil strife²⁷.

If it were launched, the commercial station, *Highlands Radio*, would be in competition with other commercially driven private stations for purposes of generating revenue (Sixth National Development Plan 1996 / 1997 – 1998 / 1999). The commercial radio project failed and the reasons for the failure have not been disclosed beyond allegations that the project was called off through an exercise of uncontested political power by the government. However, according to the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Communications Mr. Ts'eliso 'Mokela, the government could no longer include commercial radio in its priorities during the reconstruction process following the civil strife.

²⁷ A number of short-term training courses (some of which I attended on the basis that I had just joined the Television Newsroom as a new member) were exclusively recruitment courses for the commercial radio.

With regard to decentralisation of the national radio service, construction of three regional studios was planned. The studios would be set up in three districts, namely Maseru's Hoek, Leribe and Makhhotlong. With these studios, the Ministry of Communications (then the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) aimed to enable local public participation in the programmes of the radio. This plan too fell out of the government priorities following the 1998 civil strife that resulted into heavy economic loss through arson and looting (Interview: 'Mokela, April, 2003).

Although the Ministry of Communications could not carry out all its plans on broadcasting due to some financial constraints brought about by the 1998 civil strife, at least it purchased an Outside Broadcasting (OB) Van for the national radio. According to the Director of Broadcasting Department Mr. Lebohang Moqasa, the OB Van has been used for production of some public participatory programmes, which would otherwise be carried out at the planned regional studios. In addition to the coverage of sporting activities and national celebrations and similar events, the OB Van is used to facilitate production of weekly public participatory programmes in the villages across the country (Interview: Moqasa, April 2003). Some of these public participatory programmes are given below in the discussion of the programme policy of the national Radio Lesotho.

Radio Programme Policy

The programme policy of the national Radio Lesotho is to enable and promote, as a priority an effective government communication with the public. As expressed in various policy documents produced by the Ministry of Communications, this policy recognises the need to allow different, or opposing public voices, beliefs, opinions and politics to come forth through the radio in order to keep the government informed. According to the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Communications Mr. Ts'eliso 'Mokela, the policy is also in accordance with the public expectations on the national radio in the dispensation of democratic rule (interview: 'Mokela, April 2003).

The news and information programmes in particular need to be mentioned here with respect to the programme policy. This is because they are exclusively produced by the Radio and other government departments and they significantly incorporate integration of the government messages with public responses and views including dissent voices. These programmes also offer an opportunity to the public to raise issues of national concern and

social problems on air. The radio runs four current affairs programmes besides news bulletins, the first two of which are daily and the others are weekly²⁸. These programmes are *Sepobing*, *Ho Tloha Tele*, *Mooa Khottla* and *Sekhutlong sa Basebetsi* (interview: Moqasa, April 2003). The radio produces only two of those, *Seboping* (daily) and *Mooa Khotla* (weekly) programmes. The other daily programme is produced by the Lesotho News Agency (LENA) while the Ministry of Labour respectively the other weekly programme. Though these programmes are different in scope and content, they are similarly effective means through which the government is kept informed about the public concerns. As a result, the government respond and communicate other messages to the public through the same programmes, in which the government communication is a priority (interview: Moqasa, April 2003).

Sepobing is produced in the Current Affairs sub-section of the radio and it is presented from 5:30 am to 7:00 as an edition of detailed news reports every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the programme is presented as a phone-in show from 5:30 am to 8: 00 am. *Mooa Khotla* is produced from the general programmes section of the radio. It is just a broadcast of a community-based consultative gathering (organised by the radio) in which members the public present their grievances before delegates from different government departments. The actualities of this event are rarely broadcast live using the OB Van. Otherwise they are recorded with the use of the Van and the record is put on air without being edited. The purpose of these programmes is to promote accountability of the government departments to the public by enabling the voice of the later to be as loud as possible (interview: Moqasa, April 2003). The same could be said about the other two programmes mentioned above. They are all produced with an effort to engage the public into communication with the government, as was the case in July and August 2003, when the Ministers and the government officials engaged the public in a series of live debates on the national radio and television. As a result of this public engagement, the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES) commended the government as follows.

The Government of Lesotho must be commended for its current initiative of empowering the Nation through the interactive dialogue aired on Lesotho TV and Radio Lesotho involving Ministers and government officials on the one hand, and members of the public on the other. The current initiative, which involves a live studio audience and television and radio audience being able to participate telephonically in live panel debates is an excellent vehicle for ensuring that the

²⁸ The actual broadcasts in the radio programming were not included in the study

people have access to information and that their right to information and their right to freedom of expression is guaranteed. Above all, it serves to reinforce the right of every citizen living in a democracy to hold to account, those to whom the nation has delegated the responsibility to manage its affairs. It is also an attestation of the government's commitment to transparency and good governance²⁹.

Radio Commercials

The national Radio Lesotho had once again been called off competition with the private radio stations for advertisements. According to the Senior Commercials Officer Mr. Maphate Koloti, commercial competition with the independent radio stations for advertisements would undermine the policy of promoting plurality of broadcasters, which has been recognised in terms of assistance extended to private stations from the national radio (Interview: Koloti, April 2003). In compliance with this policy, Radio Lesotho curtailed income-generating activities such organising annual Beauty Contest programme at district and national level as well as other fundraising programmes that were of interest to private stations (interview: Moqasa, April, 2003).

Secondly, the national radio raised rates on the sale of advertisement slots to be higher than the charges made by the private stations as a way of encouraging advertisers to buy slots from these private stations. In addition, the commercials section of the national radio also excluded production costs of local advertisements it produced only if the local advertisers buy slots from Radio Lesotho and allows the National Radio to transfer the advertisements to the private stations if it wishes to do so (interview: Koloti, April 2003).

Notwithstanding the above stated arrangement to enable private broadcasting to survive, the high rates that Radio Lesotho charges for advertisement slots, in comparison with the size of audiences the radio reaches, are of little difference. Therefore, the rates are almost insignificant to shape up the pattern of radio commercials in the way suggested above. In fact, some people still perceive Radio Lesotho to be monopolising radio advertising in the country (interview: Nkhahle, April 2003). Below are the tables of advertising rates on the National Radio Lesotho and the People's Choice FM, which is a commercial radio station.

²⁹ A press release issued by MILES on 6th August 2003.

[<http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/articles/2003/Govt%20commended%20by%20MILES.htm>]. Accessed in August 7, 2003.

Radio Lesotho Advertising Rate

CHANNEL	TIMES	MON-FRI	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		M	M	M
C1	05H00-06H00	140.00	124.00	116.00
C2	06H00-08H30	200.00	178.00	178.00
C3	08H30-12H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C4	12H00-14H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C5	14H00-16H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C6	16H00-18H30	184.00	148.00	140.00

Source: Radio Lesotho Web page [<http://www.Lesotho.gov.ls/radio/Radiolesotho>]

PCFM Advertising Rates

Time	Mon - Frid	Saturdays	Sundays
05h00 - 06h00	R 137.00	R 125.00	R 119.00
06h00 - 08h30	R 192.00	R 168.00	R 168.00
08h30 - 12h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
12h00 - 14h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
14h00 - 16h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
16h00 - 18h30	R 182.00	R 148.00	R 140.00
18h30 - 21h30	R 182.00	R 148.00	R 140.00
21h30 - 24h00	R 124.00	R 119.00	R 98.00

Source: People's Choice FM website [<http://www.pcfm.co.ls/>]

Conclusion

Although the independent regulatory body, the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA), has been set up to allocate frequencies, grant licences and supervise use of the licences and licensed services among other things, it is not so much concerned with media pluralism. At the time of the introduction of the independent regulation in 2000, the national Radio Lesotho was already adapting to political pluralism as it struggled to keep to the practice of allowing diverse public (including dissent) voices, beliefs and politics since the return of democratic national elections in 1993. Therefore, the Broadcasting Rules and Conditions under a broadcasting licence is granted (which have been made public) recognise no

difference between private and public stations, hence the broadcasters have more or less the same social obligations as stipulated by LTA in these Rules and regulations endorsed in their licences. On the contrary the national radio is attempting to assume a public service mandate, notwithstanding the fact that it is still known as the mouth organ

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter 1, I stated that independent regulation in the broadcasting sector in Lesotho was introduced against partial and contradictory commitment of the government to the idea of media pluralism. I indicated one aspect of such commitment as a failure to express the political autonomy of the regulator in terms of freedom, particularly from the government as the key political authority of the state. I stated as a contradiction the statutory independent body to regulate government-run media without any stated editorial freedom. I outlined the research objective and the research design and methodology. I concluded the chapter with a structural outline of the study.

Chapter 2 presented the conceptual framework on which this study has been constructed. In this chapter I defined liberalisation as the key theoretical concept underpinning the study and as a socially inclusive (i.e. political, economic and cultural) process through which structures of the media are reformed into media pluralism. The chapter linked the concept to normative media theory, which informs liberalisation policy for the broadcast media. It incorporated a review of the literature that informed the study. Drawing from McQuail (2000), I outlined media policy paradigm shifts. Those are the *emerging media policy*, shifting media from authoritarian state control to classical liberty; *public service* phase that advocates both freedom of media from government control, monopoly ownership and demands as well as accountability of the media; and a currently developing phase as a result of three main trends of internalisation, digitalisation and convergence in which telecommunications take a centre stage for key events McQuail, (2000: 208 – 209). The first two paradigms did not occur in Lesotho due to authoritarian colonial and post-colonial powers.

Chapter 3 focused on the methodological approach adopted in the study. It specified how I practically undertook the research enquiry drawing from Martin Terre` Blanche and Kevin Durrheim (1999). I discussed the research design and methodology and presented the reasons for adopting a qualitative methodology for the study. I stated two methods of generating data, namely the review of documents (or *focused synthesis*) and interviewing. I explained both key strengths and weaknesses of each. These incorporated the actual problems that were encountered during the fieldwork for this study. I concluded the chapter with a definition of

conceptual content analysis as a method of data analysis and I explained how I used the method to analyse the data.

Chapter 4 reviewed broadcasting in the politics of Lesotho. It traced the development of broadcast radio as it was sometimes put under strict control of the government as the key political authority of the state. The chapter then concluded that under successive post-colonial governments, the radio developed significantly as the governments gradually incorporated socio-economic matters into the radio programming and expanded its transmitter network service to cater for more audiences across the country and into South Africa. The recognised political and social-economic significance of the broadcast radio encouraged the governments to keep their control over the national radio to date. The chapter also concluded that the national Radio Lesotho had enjoyed monopolistic status in an authoritarian tradition. However, no attempt was made to formulate a media policy. Even with the new democracy, the government policy on media had always been inferred from both attitudes and practices of the government towards the media, differing from individual government minister or official to another since there had been no significant improvement in this regard until the time of liberalisation of the airwaves in 1998.

Chapter 5 related how the independent regulatory body, the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) has been set up to allocate frequencies, grant broadcasting licences and formulate a regulatory framework to supervise the use of the licences. The chapter began with a review of media laws in Lesotho, which include the constitution. It stated that the freedom of media is only implied in the freedom of expression stipulated in the constitution. Furthermore, the chapter stated that the process of establishing the regulatory authority, LTA, was procedurally monopolised by the government. Therefore, the authority has not been procedurally mandated by the public, notwithstanding the fact that it is a statutory independent body. However, the regulatory framework that the authority uses, calls for all licensed broadcasters to be pluralistic in their approach as expressed in the Broadcasting Rules.

In conclusion therefore, liberalisation initiatives in the broadcasting sector in Lesotho had been partial and contradictory. Partial in that the government had been significantly reluctant to commit itself fully to the process of liberalising the country's broadcasting sector. As the opening of the airwaves for private broadcasting in 1998 became fundamental to the

liberalisation process, the government counter-balanced it with its upholding of the national broadcasting service. As a result, the basic fact that the government is the operator of broadcasting through monopolistic means, which are not legally stated, has not changed. These means include exclusively government operation of the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS), which includes the national Radio and Television sections as well as the Transmitter network used by some private broadcasters on rental basis.

The noted reluctance of the government is also evident in the way the independent regulation in broadcasting was introduced. While the independent regulatory body, the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) came into being and started regulating telecommunications in 2000 as a statutory body; the regulation of broadcasting was brought under the LTA's responsibility in the following year (2001). However, this move was contradictory because it did not result into the end of the government operation of the public stations, which were not exempted from independent regulation.

However, the LTA issued the Broadcasting Rules, which (through complying with them) make all broadcasters to be to some extent pluralistic in their approach. However, those rules do not incorporate specific safeguards against political influence, particularly from the government. They have therefore led to an increased government responsibility on the news and information media in the absence of stated editorial freedom of the public media from the government and also through subsidies to private broadcasters, which had not been made to be legally binding.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Unpublished

IBA Final Report (1979) Feasibility Study for Television & VHF Radio Broadcasting Services in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Lesotho Media Policy (1997). Ministry of Communications

Lesotho Media Policy (2002). Ministry of Communications

Published

Lesotho Review: a review of commerce, industry and tourism (1999). Pinetown: Wade Publications.

Lesotho Review: a review of commerce, industry and tourism (2000). Pinetown: Wade Publications.

Lesotho Review: a review of commerce, industry and tourism (2001). Maseru: Wade Publications.

Lesotho Review: a review of commerce, industry and tourism (2002). Maseru: Wade Publications.

Lesotho Review: a review of commerce, industry and tourism (2003). Maseru: Wade Publications.

Lesotho Telecommunications Policy (1999). Maseru: Ministry of Communications

Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act, 2000 (No. 5 of 2000). Maseru: Published by the Authority of His Majesty the King.

Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (Amended) Act, 2001 (No. 7 of 2001). Maseru: Published by the Authority of His Majesty the King.

Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (Broadcasting) Rules, 2002

LTA/Lesotho Television Broadcasting Licence, 2002.

LTA/Khotso FM Broadcasting Licence, 2002.

LTA/Radio Lesotho Broadcasting Licence, 2002.

LTA/Trinity Broadcasting Network Licence 2002.

Simplified Lesotho Constitution (1998). Maseru: Transformation Resource Centre (TRC).

The Laws of Basutoland, Vol. 4. Cape Town: AC Thompson.

Internet Based

Lesotho Government Website, <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/>

Lesotho Telecommunications Authority Website, <http://www.lta.org.ls/>

Radio Lesotho Website, <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/radio/Radiolesotho/>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Unpublishehed

Foko, T. (2000) *'Media Integration in Lesotho: A Comparative Analysis of the On-line Press and Print Press – a case study of Mopheme (The Survivor) Weekly Newspaper'*. MA Thesis. Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal.

Lejakane, L. (1997) *'The Role of News Agency in Development Communication: A Case of Lesotho'*. PhD Thesis. Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal.

Mwanza, C. (1986) *A Brief History of Mass Communication in Lesotho*. Institute of Southern African Studies collection. National University of Lesotho.

Skjerdal, T. (2001) *Responsible Watchdogs? Normative theories of press in post-apartheid South Africa: A discourse analysis of 102 newspaper articles 1996 – 99*. MA Thesis. Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal.

Tau, M. (2001) *The Paradox of Nation-Building and Commercially Driven Broadcasting: the case of Lesotho Television*. MA Thesis. Cultural and Media Studies, University of Natal.

Published

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001) *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Balikowa, D. (1994) 'Media Marketing: an essential part of free press for Africa'. In J. Corner, N. Garnham, P. Scannell, P. Schlesinger, C. Sparks & N. Wood (eds) *Media, Culture and Society*. London. Sage.

Barker, J. (2001) 'Is No Policy A Policy Goal'. In K. Tomaselli & H. Dunn (eds) *Media, Democracy and Renewal in Southern Africa: Critical Studies on African Media and Culture*. Colorado Springs. International Academic Publishers.

Barnard, S. (2002) *Studying the Radio*. London: Arnold.

Berger, A. (1998a) *Media Analysis Techniques*, second edition. London: Sage.

- Berger, A. (1998b) *Media Research Techniques*, second edition. London: Sage.
- Blumler, J. & Gurevitch, M. (1995) 'Politicians and the Press: An essay on role relationship'. In O. Boyd-Barrett & C. Newbold (eds) *Approaches to Media*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Bourgault, L. (1995) *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Carver, R. (2000) 'Broadcasting & Political Transition: Rwanda & Beyond'. In Fardon, R. & Furniss, G. (eds) *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Chanda, A. (1999) 'The Role of the Media in Promoting Democracy and Human Rights', *Southern African Human Rights Review*. Issue 4. October. 2 – 5.
- Curran, J. (1997) 'Liberal Theory of Press Freedom'. In J. Curran & J. Seaton. *Power without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, 5th Edition. New York: Routledge. 287 – 301.
- Curran, J. (ed) (2000) *Media Organisations in Society*. London: Arnold.
- De Beer, A. (ed) (1998) *Mass Media: Towards the Millennium*. Pretoria: J. L. Schaik.
- Dominick, J. (1999) *The Dynamics of Mass Communication*, sixth edition. Boston: Sage.
- Doyle, G. (2002a) *Understanding Media Economics*. London: Sage.
- Doyle, G. (2002b) *Media Ownership: The Economics & Politics of Convergence & Concentration in the UK & European Media*. London: Sage.
- Du Plooy, C. (2001) *Let's Talk about Interpersonal Communication*. Sandon: Heinemann.
- Fardon, R. & Furniss, G. (eds) (2000) *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Goldsmith Media Group (2000) 'Media Organisation in Society: Central Issues'. In J. Curran (ed) *Media Organisation in Society*. London. Arnold.
- Grossberg, L., Wartella, E. & Whitney, C. (1998) *MediaMaking: Mass Media in Popular Culture*. London: Sage.
- Gunther, R. & Mughan, A. (eds) (2000) *Democracy and Media: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, S. (1997) 'Identities, Democracy, Culture and Communication in Southern Africa'. *Critical Arts: Journal of Cultural studies*. Vol. 11. No. 1 & 2. 1 – 16.
- Hirsch, M. & Petersen, V. (1998) 'European Policy Initiatives'. In D. McQuail & K. Siune (eds). *Media Policy: Convergence, Concentration & Commerce*. London: Sage. 207 – 217.

- Hurard, F. (1999) 'Regulation of Broadcasting Sector: The Regulatory Authorities'. In Council of Europe. *Media and Democracy*. Strasburg Cedex. Council of Europe Publishing. 139 – 156.
- Kasoma, F. (1992) *Communication Policies in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland*. Tampere: University of Tampere.
- Khali, M. (1999) '1999 / 2000 Budget Under Microscope'. *Business Concerns: the Voice of Business*. Vol.1. No. 3. 8 – 11.
- Louw, E. (1984) 'The Libertarian Theory of the Press: How Appropriate on the South African Context'. *Communicatio*. Vol. 10. No. 1. 31 – 36.
- Majchrzak, A. (1984) *Methods of Policy Research*. London: Sage.
- Manyarara, J. (1998) 'Southern African Media: Current outlook and climate for press freedom'. In J. Duncan and M. Seleane (eds). *Media and Democracy in South Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC and FXI. 77 – 104.
- Mason, A. (2001) 'The Role of Civil Society in the Development of Democratic Media in Southern Africa: The Namibian Example'. In K. Tomaselli & H. Dunn (eds) *Media, Democracy and Renewal in Southern Africa: Critical Studies on African Media and Culture*. Colorado Springs. International Academic Publishers. 83 – 97.
- Matobo, N. (1998) 'Lesotho'. In B. Mwape & J. Minnie (eds) *So This is Democracy: State of Media in Southern Africa*. Windhoek: Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). 26 – 36.
- May, T. (1997) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, 2nd edition. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. London: Falmer.
- Mbennah, E., Hooyberg, V. & Mersham, G. (1998) 'Mass Media in Africa: From Distant Drums to Satellite'. In A. S. De Beer. *Mass Media: Towards the Millennium*. Pretoria: J. L. Schaik. 35 – 63.
- McQuail, D. (1994) 'Social Responsibility Theory'. *McQuail's Theory of Mass Communication*, 3rd Edition. London. Sage.
- McQuail, D. (2000) *McQuail's Theory of Mass Communication*, 4th Edition. London. Sage.
- Mills, G. (1992) 'Between Independence and Incorporation'. In L. Benjamin & L. Gregory (eds) *Southern Africa at Crossroads*. Rivonia: Justified Press. 63 – 73.
- MISER (1995) *Putting the Pieces Together*. Maseru: MISER.
- Mokatse, T. (1999) 'Challenges to Privatisation', *Business Concerns: The Voice of Business*. Vol. 1. No. 3. Spring. 3 – 6.

- Mosco, V. (1996) *Political Economy of Communication*. London: Sage.
- Mughan, A. & Gunther, R. (2000) 'The Media in Democratic and Nondemocratic Regimes: A Multilevel Perspective'. In R. Gunther & A. Mughan (eds) *Democracy and Media: A Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Munyuki, F. (1996) 'Mass Media in Africa: Constraints and Possible Solutions'. In M. Brunn Andersen (ed) *Media and Democracy*. Oslo: University of Oslo. 167 – 181.
- Mytton, G. (2000) 'From Saucepan to Dish: Radio and TV in Africa'. In R. Fardon & G. Furniss (eds) *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Opoku-mensah, A. (2000) 'The Future of Community Radio in Africa: The case of Southern Africa'. In R. Fardon & G. Furniss (eds) *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Ralefu, P. (1999) 'Lesotho'. In R. Galant, J. Minnie & Z. Wales *So This is Democracy: State of Media in Southern Africa*. Windhoek: Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).
- Rajapol, A. (2001) *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the reshaping of the public in India*.
- Rideout, V. & Mosco, V. (1997) 'Communication Policy in the United States'. In M. Baile & D. Winseck (eds) *Democratising Communication? Comparative Perspectives on Information and Power*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research*, second edition. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ronning, H. (1998) 'Democratisation Processes in Southern Africa and the Role of the Media'. In R. Waldahl (ed) *Perspectives on Media, Culture and Democracy in Zimbabwe*. Oslo: Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo. Report Series, no.33. 4 – 23.
- Sandbrook, R. (2000) *Closing the Circle: Democratization and Development in Africa*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Sets'abi, S. (2001). Lesotho. In G. Hopwood (ed) *So This is Democracy? State of Media in Southern Africa*. Windhoek: Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). 39 – 48.
- Straubhaar, J. & LaRose, R. (2002) *Media Now: Communications Media in the Information Age*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth / Thomson Learning.
- Strinati, D. (2000) *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Struwig, F. & Stead, G. (2001) *Planning, Designing and Reporting Research*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Teer-Tomaselli, R. & Villiers, C. (1998) 'Radio: Theatre of the Mind'. In A. S. De Beer. *Mass Media: Towards the Millennium*. Pretoria: J. L. Schaik. 147 – 175.

Teer-Tomaselli, R. (1994) 'Moving toward democracy: The SABC and the 1994 election'. In J. Corner, N. Garnham, P. Scannell, P. Schlesinger, C. Sparks & N. Wood (eds) *Media, Culture and Society*. London: Sage. 577 – 602.

Teer-Tomaselli, R. (2001) 'Who is the "Community" in Community Radio: A Case of Community Radio Stations in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal'. In K. Tomaselli & H. Dunn (eds) *Media, Democracy and Culture in Southern Africa: Critical Studies on African Media and Culture*. Colorado Springs: International Academic Publishers. 231- 251.

Tehrani, M. (1999) *Global Communication and World Politics: Domination, Development and Discourse*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Terre Blanche, M. & Durrheim, K. (eds) (1999) *Research in Practice in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Zaffiro, J. (2001) 'Mass Media and Democratization of Politics and Society: Lessons From Zimbabwe'. In K. Tomaselli & H. Dunn (eds) *Media, Democracy and Renewal in Southern Africa: Critical Studies on African Media and Culture*. Colorado Springs: International Academic Publishers. 99 – 121.

Articles on the Internet

Mungiu-Pippidi, A. (2000) State into Public: The Reform of State TV in East Central Europe. <http://www.osi.hu/ipf/> Accessed on 22 June 2003.

Lesotho - History and Politics. Institute for Security Studies
<http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Lesotho/Politics.html>. Accessed on 12 June, 2003)

Odendaal, A. (2000) Peacebuilding in Lesotho: Analysis of Political and Social Conflicts in Lesotho and the Role of the Centre for Conflict Resolution. http://www.ccrweb.uct.ac.za/staff_papers/odendaal_lesotho.html. Accessed on 2 March 2003.

Appendix 1

Table 1

Funds allocated for broadcasting and information services in the period 1984 – 1989

Purpose	Amount in Maloti (M)
Two 50KW MW two VHF/FM Transmitters (purchase + instal)	575, 000
News Studio Building	142, 000
Schools broadcasting	121, 000
Technical Assistance	108, 000
Training of staff	91, 000
Photographic and Public Address System Equipment	30, 000
Feasibility Study on Commercial Equipment and Television Broadcasting	10, 000
Total	1, 077, 000

Source: Mwanza, 1986.

Table 2

RADIO LESOTHO RATES AND CHANNELS EFFECTIVE FROM 1st MARCH 2000

CHANNEL	TIMES	MON-FRI	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		M	M	M
C1	05H00-06H00	140.00	124.00	116.00
C2	06H00-08H30	200.00	178.00	178.00
C3	08H30-12H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C4	12H00-14H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C5	14H00-16H00	158.00	140.00	140.00
C6	16H00-18H30	184.00	148.00	140.00
C7	18H30-21H30	184.00	148.00	140.00
C8	21H30-24H00	116.00	116.00	92.00

GENERAL INFORMATION ON RADIO LESOTHO COMMERCIALS

LANGUAGE MEDIUM: Sesotho and English

BASIC RATES: Rates quoted are for 30 seconds. Commercials of longer or shorter duration are pro rata to the 30 second rate.

PREFERRED TIME: Commercials at preferred rates (not available on packages) are subject to a 20% loading on the basic channel rate

SPONSORSHIPS:

Rates on application for programmes and special features e.g. News, Sports reports, Traffic Reports etc

MATERIAL REQUIRED:

19 Or 38 cm/sec reel 1/4" tape, CD or DAT.

CANCELLATION:

28 days written notice required

LIQUOR RESTRICTIONS:

None

Daily Package in Radio Lesotho Commercials

Table 3

CHANNEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
A.M	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE A LESS 4 %
05h00-06h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
06h00-08h30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
08h30-12h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12h00-14h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 4

CHANNEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
MIDDAY	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE B LESS 4 %
08h30 - 12h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12h00 - 14h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14h00 - 16h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 5

CHANNEL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
P.M	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 4 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 2 %	DAILY PACKAGE C LESS 2 %
14h00 - 16h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
16h00 - 18h30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18h30 - 21h30	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
21h30 - 24h00	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 6**Weekly Package in Radio Lesotho**

CHANNEL	MON/FRI	MON/SUN
A.M	5 G LESS 4 % M3148.00	7 H LESS 6 % M4170.00
05 h 00 - 06 h 00	1	1
06 h 00 - 08 h 30	1	1
08 h 30 - 12 h 00	1	1
12 h 00 - 14 h 00	1	1

Source: Radio Lesotho web page ([http: www.lesotho.gov.ls/radio/Radiolesotho](http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/radio/Radiolesotho))

People's Choice FM Advertising Rates

Time	Mon - Frid	Saturdays	Sundays
05h00 - 06h00	R 137.00	R 125.00	R 119.00
06h00 - 08h30	R 192.00	R 168.00	R 168.00
08h30 - 12h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
12h00 - 14h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
14h00 - 16h00	R 157.00	R 140.00	R 140.00
16h00 - 18h30	R 182.00	R 148.00	R 140.00
18h30 - 21h30	R 182.00	R 148.00	R 140.00
21h30 - 24h00	R 124.00	R 119.00	R 98.00

People's Choice Program Costs

Time	Cost	Time	Cost
15 min	M 500.00	40 min	M1, 334.00
20 min	M 667.00	45 min	M1, 500.00
25 min	M 834.00	50 min	M1, 667.00
30 min	M1, 000.00	55 min	M1, 834.00
35 min	M1, 167.00	1 hr	M2, 000.00

Terms of Payment

- Rates are quoted per 30 seconds commercials.
- Commercials longer than 30 seconds will be charged pro-rata to the rate.
- Accounts are strictly thirty days.
- Rates are subject to sales tax.

Appendix 2

LNBS MONTHLY TRANSMITTER CHARGES

The charges are as follows for transmitters:

1 watt = US\$1.00

However, the Ministry of Communications has decided to implement local unit or Currency instead of US Dollar to relieve Local Broadcasters.

These apply therefore that:

1 watt = M1.00

The broken-down services offered are:

- 1. Housing and Electricity**
- 2. Security**
- 3. Maintenance**

These services are independent and therefore a unit charge (M1.00) applies to each of them.

For a transmitter of power 100 watts, the charge will be as follows:

1. Housing and Electricity

$$\begin{aligned} 100 \times 1 \text{ watt} &= 100 \times \text{M1.00} \\ 100 \text{ watts} &\text{M100.00} \end{aligned}$$

2. Security

$$\begin{aligned} 100 \times 1 \text{ watt} &= 100 \times \text{M1.00} \\ 100 \text{ watts} &\text{M100.00} \end{aligned}$$

3. Maintenance

$$\begin{aligned} 100 \times 1 \text{ watt} &= 100 \times \text{M1.00} \\ 100 \text{ watts} &\text{M100.00} \end{aligned}$$

This implies that for a 100watts transmitter:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Charge per month} &= \text{M100.00} + \text{M100.00} + \text{M100.00} \\ &= \underline{\underline{\text{M300.00}}} \end{aligned}$$

EXAMPLES

1. For a 1 000 watts (1KW) transmitter:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total Charge per month} &= 10 \times \text{M}300.00 \\ &= \text{M}3\,000.00\end{aligned}$$

2. For a 2 000 watts (2KW) transmitter:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total Charge per month} &= 2 \times \text{M}3000.00 \\ &= \text{M}6\,000.00\end{aligned}$$

3. For a 3 000 watts (3KW) transmitter:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total Charge per month} &= 3 \times \text{M}3000.00 \\ &= \text{M}9\,000.00\end{aligned}$$

4. For a 4 000 watts (3KW) transmitter:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Total Charge per month} &= 4 \times \text{M}3000.00 \\ &= \text{M}12\,000.00\end{aligned}$$

ETC. !!!

Appendix 3

1. TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

A. Transcribed and Translated Interview with PS Communications, Science and Technology Mr. T. 'Mokela in April 8, 2003 at his office.

Interviewer

What is the government policy in liberalising the airwaves in 1998, following their plans to establish a commercial radio channel and pledges to transform state run broadcasting into Independent Broadcasting Corporation in 1997?

Mr. 'Mokela

The government policy is very clear in this regard. The government believes that its role is to regulate business, which should be privately held. The same holds truth for the area of broadcasting in which the public should be participating vigorously. This is the reason why you see many developing private radio stations in the country. However, it is necessary that there should be a public broadcaster remaining, which is, in our case, the Lesotho National Broadcasting Services (LNBS), because the government too has messages to pass on to the public. Therefore LNBS becomes necessary means to pass the messages on to the public. The bottom line is that, yes, the government agrees that anybody should have access to LNBS, and s/he is free to start her / his own radio broadcasting business, but at the same time LNBS will remain in place. Its purpose is not so much to make business but to ensure public communication through radio in which case the public at large should have equal access. Also important is the fact that all private radio stations in the country rely on LNBS transmitters network station at Lancer's Gap as assistance extended to them by the government, with monthly rental charge of M 2 000, 00. This is more or less free service to the stations, reflecting the government commitment to support privately held broadcasting services.

To answer the question you asked regarding the plans to establish commercial radio broadcasting, the 1998 political turmoil resulted in heavy loss of both private and state property through looting, burning and total destruction of the economic infrastructure. So the government made priorities in the subsequent reconstruction process and the issue of bread and butter came first, so many plans on developing government run services including broadcasting were dropped. However, we are getting back to those plans but our aim is to transform our own radio and television services into an independent corporation, free from the Minister's and my control and, governed by a board of directors, which will receive funding from the parliament. The idea is to get broadcasting free from our influence. Then our role as the Ministry will be in the making of a policy and law for the Lesotho Telecommunications Regulatory Authority to regulate entire broadcast media run privately without our involvement.

Interviewer

Does this mean that the state radio and television will then be fully-fledged public service broadcasting?

Mr. 'Mokela

Yes, we think so. We are expecting that broadcasting will be eventually removed from the government control. Many publications on media in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region will show that media in Lesotho is relatively free. We want to capitalise on the free media policy. Ours is to make sure there are media laws and policy, which will enable regulation of broadcasting. That's all. For we take broadcasting as a business and we need to be serious about it. We know that the government is incompetent in business for we privatised almost all state enterprises simply because the government could not improve those enterprises. In the same way we won't do any better in running broadcasting services. That's why we allow and encourage diverse public participation in broadcasting. There is nothing, which the government should fear in letting the public to participate fully in both state and private broadcasting. In fact different points of political view coming through free public participation in broadcasting will significantly help the government to necessarily hear what they are called to do by the public.

Interviewer

On the last issue of drafting the national media document, so far the 1997 Media Policy Draft and subsequent draft(s), how does the Ministry ensure inclusive stakeholders' participation in the process of drafting the document?

Mr. 'Mokela

You will remember that all stakeholders from the private sector as well as interested persons participated in the drafting of the document in 1997 on invitation from the Ministry. However, the document was later found to be lacking in current trends in broadcasting. So, it could not be implemented. The same thing could be said about the Lesotho Telecommunications Bill and Policy crafted almost at the same time the media policy was drafted for the first time. If you look at the Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) Act 2000 and the Lesotho Telecommunications Policy Document published in 1999, you will find them lacking. So are the Lesotho Telecommunications Regulatory Authority meant for regulating both telecommunications and broadcastings. The regulatory framework and policy documents (both published and unpublished) we have today do not bode well with the global trend on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). So they all need to be reviewed. We want to make a legislation that will include postal, radio, television and telecommunications services. The legislation we now need is the one that may be called 'ICT Legislation'. Perhaps LTA, as the regulator, will necessarily be renamed 'ICT Authority' for we want the authority to take regulatory responsibility on postal, radio, television and telecommunications services and any other information and communication services based on the Internet. At present, the authority cannot regulate all these because the current legislation does not give it right to do so. To sum up, we hope to review the existing policy documents and feed them into the envisaged 'ICT Policy', instead of having separate postal, telecommunications and broadcasting policies. We have started and some funds have been advanced to us in this regard from UNDP.

Interviewer

How to you confirm your intentions as the Ministry and Government to divest yourselves of operative powers in broadcasting as you mentioned earlier, and in respect of some literature that implicates lack of political will for the governments in the region to hand over the national broadcasters to the public?

Mr. 'Mokela

We certainly do not have any problem in this regard. Lesotho government is committed to get hands off the broadcasting. For instance I have been appointed into this office to ensure the government operated business, including broadcasting in this ministry, gets into private and public hands through transitional process, instead of remaining in the government hands. I want to repeat this government does not fear anything in handing over broadcasting to the public. We are fully committed. We don't want to operate radio or television. We want these to be operated by competent business people. Ours is to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded through regulatory policy and legislation, with regulatory functions performed by an independent public authority, which is free from the government influence. We are moving towards public and private operated broadcasting.

However, we cannot transform state radio and television overnight for we feel it is necessary to train enough personnel to run these services independent of the government. Once we have enough trained personnel and proper legislation, we will get these services removed from the government Ministry. We are intending to charge all radio and television programmes on state broadcasting which all government ministries and private organisations produce as the first preliminary step towards independent Broadcasting Corporation. It is only a mad person who can give a gun to madman to use it freely.

Interviewer

Thank you very much for the interview.

B. Transcribed Interview with the Media Institute of Lesotho (MILES) National Director Mr. M. Nkhahle in April 9, 2003 at his office.

Interviewer

Since inception in the early 1990s MILES has been campaigning for inclusive media that would be objective and responsive to the public interest in the country. How far does the unfolding liberalisation meet your organisation's campaign?

Mr. Nkhahle

Well, you would expect Lesotho things tend to happen on fairly small scale. I'd guess that we're not talking about a very large audience for those new radio stations. For one thing you'll notice that they are small radio stations with very limited coverage in most instances, so that the national broadcaster still really doesn't lose the listenership. So, until private institutions and people who want to establish radio stations can get access to some more substantial funding, or if government can itself allow the private operators to 'picky-bag' onto their infrastructure, so that we can then expect that PC FM can be heard in Butha-Buthe and MoAfrika FM can be heard in Quthing, and that is one way, I think that the government can assist in that process of liberalisation. At this time, honestly I must say, even within the Maseru environment, you'd find that there are certain areas where you can't pick up certain stations just because of their very small footprint. To the extent that there is that constraint, one would say that the process has not gone far enough yet. But one has to be liberal and say that the government is doing something in the sense that they are actually allowing those radio

stations. I think another thing that needs to happen is they've got to be a bit more strict when it comes to the band wave because as the radio that cover a very broad band, so you can move from 103 all the way to 106 you still have the same station, that tendency blocks out other radio stations. I don't know, may it has to do with the fact that there are not so many yet. So, they turn to be liberal in terms of assigning frequencies.

Interviewer

Does your organisation envisage an ideally liberalised broadcasting in Lesotho?

Mr. Nkhahle

Our vision, I think, does 'ducktail' into the programmes that MISA has set itself down for. As I said, we do have a vision limitation here of accepting that such things are on. Ideally, we would want especially community radio to flourish. But we're not yet saying that, it would be nice obviously to see the classification broadcasters into public, commercial, community and so on, that we have actually a broad representational broadcasting. I don't know how long we're going to see that, because one of the obvious problems is that, if your listenership is not very large and you're trying to do a commercial broadcasting, you'll find that [inaudible] at home. One can see some value in trying to go for community broadcasting, but then again it requires a lot sensitive [inaudible], you know people would want participate in community radios almost sole on monetary basis, we can't have enough funds to pay all those people. So, these things involve a lot of transformation in this particular subject. My own view is that in the, perhaps, media to longer terms; we might see the emergence of one particularly successful commercial undertaking [inaudible] community on it. Another thing, we would like to see here in Lesotho broadcast media, is transformation of Radio Lesotho into 'public broadcaster', you see what I'm saying, as opposed to what it is now really just a government mouth organ. We'd like it to actually be transformed into a 'public broadcaster' with a very independent board that is elected by liberal process, where we don't have a situation where the Minister appoints members of the board. What basically will happen there again is that, it will still be run as an entity, as just the government mouth organ. So, that's not something we'd like to see. I'll give our programme for this year so that you can see things that we've covered in this.

Interviewer

On the issue of transforming Radio Lesotho, how is the government committed to this task as you, and perhaps the public, see them in the unfolding liberalisation of the broadcast media, which started quite some time ago?

Mr. Nkhahle

Honestly these are issues that, you know, being new in this office I have to really take up with [inaudible]. But one can see that the government is not necessarily committed to that. In 1993 when we held these democratic elections, I think, one of the plans of the government policy then was to turn the stations into a corporation, where the Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS) would have been an independent corporation [inaudible]. In these years that thing has not happen. We've actually moved away from it to now talking of a parastatal, because there we'd still have the Minister appointing the members of the board. And obviously, when we have that sort of situation, then political patronage will come into play. Then again you'd find that much as the expectation has been that there would be this changing policy, for all the

intensive process you'd still find that Radio Lesotho is still the government mouth organ even though it's been turned into a corporation. But now we've to move on to say, as a 'public broadcaster', there has to be an independent and vigorous process of keeping the government as far away from daily interference in programming as possible. There we'll make sure that this station will be run by a board that consists of people who are obliged, who have [inaudible] liberal process of selection, who may not necessarily be seen to be partisan in their [inaudible]. But that requires a lot of political will because governments don't like to let go of what they see as very important propaganda tool, which is the national radio. But I think the climate is improving now where we, you know like I said in the medium term, we can actually see a change in the policy. What one also would like, you know, is perhaps to hope, you know, with changes that you sort of see, you know, from minister to a new minister, and so on, that we might actually have people coming in who think differently from the way the government traditionally do.

Interviewer

Is public service broadcasting as an ideal service affordable, in terms of the small and unstable Lesotho economy?

Mr. Nkhahle

Yes, there's, yeah there's no reason why it should be. I mean, for instance, if you look at, you know, I think, basically Lesotho makes a lot of revenue from advertising. They are able to attract a lot of advertising because their coverage is countrywide. So, in terms of the advertisers reaching their potential market Radio Lesotho is very strong. And with the revenue that they get obviously we can quite well afford to have public radio station. You might expect that if the government were really serious about this process that they could [inaudible], you know, give the funds back to the radio to meet its daily operations, but I still believe that there is substantial revenue that accrues from [inaudible] to Radio Lesotho. There is no reason why they should not move towards total self-sufficiency. And, you see it is good for them to be totally sub-sufficient because if they are not, then, eh, you know, 'he who pays piper [inaudible] calls the tune'. So, the government may wish to start interfering because they'd say, 'but we are you our money', or sort of. My belief is that, these guys would have [inaudible] to run good quality public broadcasting.

Interviewer

Lastly, how do the public interpret the restructuring process of liberalisation, beginning in 1998 in respect of broadcasting, that has so far led to the formation of LTA as an independent regulatory authority?

Mr. Nkhahle

Obviously my own views are not really supported by any [inaudible] investigated evidence, but I get the feeling. Basically it's sort of feeling that you get from listening to radio phone ins. I mean, a few weeks ago, I think, LTA people were in 'Seboping' for phone in programmes. You can see there's, you know, my perception is that there were very positive response to, eh, the existence of this regulatory authority. Eh, not least for the fact that people perceive the change from a monopolistic arrangement where you have, eh, the major operators also being, you know, the regulator, eh, you know, I think now people will get the feeling that [inaudible]. Now you see, eh, this thing manifest itself in the explosion of liberate, you know eh, the phone, phone

operators, so on and so forth. Eh, people are being given an opportunity to participate in that sector of, you know, eh. So, LTA, I think, is seen in very positive terms, I think, people rather like the idea of, eh, the business of the regulatory authority that stands aside from the rough and tumble of the business environment in which the communications companies work. You have again a perception, I think, eh sometimes like people, eh when they are beginning to appreciate what the role of the LTA is, sometimes, you know, when I was listening myself I found that people would mainly be complaining about other object. For instance, they were complaining about LTC, MTC, [inaudible]. They were complaining about this and that, they were complaining about tariffs. And you get the feeling that people want LTA to intervene even more than they do already, because you know when you raise tariffs you have to make sure that you get approval from the regulatory authority, and so on and so forth. So, my feeling was that, eh, people felt that LTA could do even more than what they are already doing.

[...]

However, LTA has much potential to confuse, or at least to fade out of the people's understanding of its independence from government. In so called public authorities, now emerging, you find that the government minister is playing a key role in appointing members of those authorities. For instance, the Police Complaints Authority, which is the body meant to do justice and receive the public complaints unjust and bad treatment by police. When you look at the provisions of the legislation that establishes it, the Minister has been given such broad shifts of power to employ people who are going to constitute the authority. Then you begin to think, eh, may we could have done better really, you know, we must try to keep the Minister's role as far from the operations of the authority. Appointing people, you're appointing your friends, you know people at you and become cynical, and say, 'ah, nxa, this guys, you know, are playful about these things'. So, I think LTA still has that potential. You find that people are not very sure how the members of the board are appointed, re-appointed or dismissed, suddenly people' would say, 'ah, nxa, is just one of the catch cows to create opportunities for people who support the ruling party'. So, if we can deal with these issues, I think we're putting well in this.

Interviewer

Is an independent regulator in any, any case necessary for pluralistic broadcast media?

Mr. Nkhahle

Yes, you still need a little bit of regulation because, for instance, take allocation of frequencies. If you want to establish a radio station somebody has to allocate you a frequency, so at least [inaudible], because you're already allocated this and this, etc. So, you still need to regulate. You need to ensure that there're certain minimum standards in terms of programme content, you know. There're certain minimum standards that you would expect the broadcast to comply with. Take things like local content in programming. Local content, eh, say cultural issues. You got to put down some minimum standards for local content, and say 'no, no, etc, so much percentage of your programme should be local content. That also provide, you see, an opportunity for independent producers to producers programmes that they can sell to the broadcasters. Whereas if these guys take this of the shelf programmes, 'tseo ba li nkang', because, you know, you'd find when you in broadcasting you get all sort of

tapes from all over the place. You can run your radio stations cheaply, if you just use those. ... So, if you don't regulate could find those people are just playing this American Music and nothing local content whereas we also have cultural latest to ensure our own culture is promoted through broadcasting. So, you need a regulator, who will be able to not only set those standards and regulations and guidelines but who also monitor. For instance, there is a question of language over the radio. People could use language that is not seen as being suitable for family listening. You need a monitor, you to be able to put in a monitoring system that ensures that people comply with that. If somebody 'a roahakana', you'd be able to say 'no, no, no, etc. we're going to take you for cleaners for that sort of language you're using. So, we still need a regulatory authority in this regard....

Interviewer

Is LTA doing a good job on that?

Mr. Nkhahle

Your question, I don't know, you see, because you find LTA, now, we, I don't think at this time, eh, it is possible to assess very well whether they are doing it, because I think they tend to be, eh, concentrating more on the telecommunications part. It just seems like they allocate frequencies to, you know, to the radio stations and then just let them go on. I don't think that they have done enough, I mean, in terms of actually setting up that framework for regulating broadcasters, eh. But again, these guys, eh, they are here and we'd be knocking at their doors and trying to find out how, you know, what makes them take the things that they have done, the things that they intend to do, so on and so forth. So, then one might get a better idea of [inaudible]. After all, we do have a programme for establishing a community radio station on a pilot basis, and we're hoping that will be significant input from our side.

Interviewer

Thank you very much for time and the interview, MILES National Director.

Interview with the Director of Lesotho National Broadcasting Services Mr. Dada L. Moqasa in April 10, 2003 at his office.

Interviewer

How has the ongoing liberalisation process in broadcasting that began in 1998, if at all, affected the national Radio Lesotho programme policy?

Dada

Well I think, eh to start with, the Lesotho National Broadcasting was started in the 1960s, I mean I think in 1965, to be precise, or 64. From that time to 1998, we were monopolising the airwaves. But then there was a concern not only from the public but also from our Ministry that we don't seem to providing service in a manner that would benefit the public because 'rona' we are public broadcaster. That means we were taking everything from youth programmes to everything we're supposed to be doing and that meant too much, we could not attend to some of our social obligations as the public broadcaster. Then, I think it; the 1998 liberalisation was a good move like I said it started from within. The first licences were issued from the same office, from the Ministry here. And, but after some, as you know now Lesotho Telecommunications Authority (LTA) has taken over. Our programming was affected in this manner that

those programmes that, we thought, were more towards making profit, eh, for example let's talk about beauty contest, these were the kind of programmes that would take more time to prepare as against the programmes that would directly benefit, eh, the rural communities, for example, the people in the Highlands as you know our terrain. So, it affected it in a way that it gave us more time and more space to work on the programmes that are more, eh, related to the public broadcasters, that is the kind of programmes that would directly benefit the public who are our employer here as a national radio station.

The difference is also that, to answer the questions that you haven't yet asked but I know you will ask now how are we doing social obligation part. We do not, eh, expect payment from the public when they are doing here are free of charge. I'll give an example of a programme named, 'Litsebisu tsa Mafu', which only means the announcements or the diary about the deceased. This is where a family would say "I have a deceased person, he will be buried next Saturday, now I want to inform the relatives in South Africa or elsewhere our airwaves can reach, these are free of charge whereas the same announcement if you take to either MoAfrika or PC FM, which are not public broadcasters you pay something like R 5. 00 for each one of them. These will include even the gathering that the Government wants to do or the Red Cross society has a programme with us here is free of charge. The Ministry of Education, Lesotho Distance Learning, the Ministry of Agriculture, they come here to do programmes, although they come from outside but mainly, these are the kind of programmes that we broadcast here free of charge for these ministries and the charity organisations like Red Cross, Blue Cross and also. There is a Ministry of Local Government now that the Government has interest in decentralising some of the services, and also, giving education to the public about local government, its activities, its benefits. These are the kind of programmes that we are providing here free of charge (i.e. without charging anything). These will also include even the adverts. People are advertising condoms, for example, we think it's in the interest of the community and the people to be aware of HIV. Such adverts or announcements are free of charge here. I think this is our obligation.

Another programme, this is the traditional music. We normally receive invitations from that the radio station should go there, eh, to record the music and other activities. Sometimes we go there on our own, but mostly they write to us, and the policy here is that we want to see the radio going there into the villages instead of us asking people to come here and record their music or activities, and these are free of charge. All the expenses are borne by the Government, of course we know it's the public who is paying but they are not supposed to be charged. There's another station that is doing the same thing here. But they charge people for that; they go you'll have to provide transport for them. You'll have to provide announcers or technicians with meals and everything. But we do that free of charge free. Even there is another programme, 'Tseba Lesotho' (Know about Lesotho), where our people go around the country, teaching other people their ethnic groupings, and all that. I don't if I have answered your question [interrupted].

Interviewer

In terms of people participating, that is, the programmes being run by people who would like to have their voices on the radio, more precisely people in the villages who would want to say, "we want this programme this way not that way", what does your policy say about that?

Dada

Eh, let me talk about two programmes here that are coming [inaudible]. At a programme, 'Ho Tloha Tele', this is just to say 'from all corners of Lesotho where our presenters and reporters, they actually go to these people and ask them about their news. What they want to talk about. Another programme is 'Mooa-Khotla', where people, where we'll take an Outside Broadcast (OB) Van and place our things there, everybody is talking about their problems and their activities. They talk about passports. "The service is not good at the Passport (Office)". They talk about, "the radio is not giving us enough programmes here and there". They talk about, eh, mm, all the problems that they get from the Government. The service is really, 'why this Ministry is not giving us good service'. 'Passports as an example, eh, postal services, they are not also giving us, eh, good service. Radio Lesotho itself and the Television, they are not giving us [inaudible]. We want to know why'. These are the people. This is the point where we'll ask the Heads of those ministries to be at same spot with these people to answer these questions and then to give the deadlines [inaudible] 'this service will be ready by this time, this service will be ready. Tele covers ten districts of Lesotho (i.e. all the districts in the country), this is the programme that I talked about, where we have also journalists or reporters in those areas, but we also have mobile, eh, reporters who go out of Maseru everyday to talk to people and people will tell them, "We had these activities. We are in immunisation. Now we need water here. The chiefs are doing well here". These are broadcasts. This is the kind of platform we're creating for the community to [inaudible], I think, have a word in the, eh, on the radio. That also means we are not, as reporters, saying, "these people have said this and this". These are the actual, people who are actually saying, "Prime Minister we are not happy about a, b, c, or the candidate for this constituency, we are not happy about this". And this is, I think, how we engage participation from the, that is apart from the music. Of course with their music, they hear themselves singing, we also do some interviews about these traditional things.

Interviewer

Briefly, perhaps in one sentence, what would you say the editorial policy for the radio is, in terms of the Government interference here and there or the radio being able to pursue its daily programming independently without interference?

Dada

I think one of the things that one can note is that, for a long time when this country was, for 25 or 26 years, was under one party, there was a lot of censorship. Most of us, the reporters somehow served in those regimes to an extent that we have what we called a self-censorship, ourselves. The government, I don't think at the moment, they are very strict on our editorials, but we find ourselves more self-censoring our work instead. But in some cases, for example, if you have a programme where people can really say this ministry is not performing to the standards, I think there is more, people are more free, they are more liberal. But we, the Government, if it's censoring, is to a very small extent where you'd not, I mean expecting the ethics of reporters or journalism, you wouldn't want, let me just say an example, a small example when we're going to elections last year. This programme that I talked about, 'Mooa-Khotla', these people are mainly talking about where the Government is failing or where the Government is progressing well. But mostly you'd find more complaints. And we're broadcasting this programme on Fridays, its broadcast on Fridays. And the following

day we're going for elections, and people were saying, "LCD", LCD is one the, is the ruling party, "LCD has not provided a, b, c". Eh, and the following day these people were going for elections. Now, I think there was a concern, "why are you, are, is our Radio station saying, "LCD is not doing this, LCD is not doing that", when LCD is going to compete in the elections tomorrow with other political parties". Then we had to stop that programme, eh, ourselves because we felt, 'no we are not doing, we're not being fair to LCD on Friday when tomorrow morning they are going to the elections'. So, we had to stop it [interrupted].

Interviewer

Was the decision to stop it really self-initiated that came from within not from the Government?

Dada

It came from within ourselves, we said, "No, No, No, gentlemen", because the PS (Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Communications) was saying, "Gentlemen, is this thing going well while, how do you see it". I think even with the people in the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, LCD, they would be complaining, but we stop it before they could complain because this was not going to be fair competition to the party that was going to elections the following, to be saying, "they haven't done this, they haven't done this, and they haven't done this. How can we elect them tomorrow?" That was not fair. So, the Government was not very much involved, but we decided to censor this, "this is not good material". Overall, their involvement in our editorials is minimal, yes.

Interviewer

Now that there many private Radio stations you really must some challenges to compete. How is the radio doing in this regard?

Dada

In terms of getting money for the station, it would not be fair to compete with those radio stations, because we have advantage over them. We have coverage, may be 90 percent coverage over, I mean, all over the country we may be covering 90 percent on FM, and now that there are Medium wave and Short wave, we may be covering 100 percent. If you take the free band waves, they are very limited. Therefore, eh, the competition would not be fair with them in terms of revenue. I think in 1998 there was a move to shave a second channel here which would be purely commercial. It would be called 'Highlands Radio'. That would be the kind of channel that would be generating money for our station in preparation or in anticipation of us having to be a parastatal. But the Government, I think, through the Ministry was saying, "this radio is now going to compete with the same stations that we initiated to be established, then it would not be a fair competition". Then the could not be established in order for us not to compete with these stations financially so that they can also have, eh, where they can have money. In some cases, like we said we don't charge on some things they and people are still happy, we are not competing in competitions that we think they make money for them. For example, we don't compete, we don't engage in beauty a contest, that's where they make money. We also do not, eh, when we have certain portions, though it's formally, some of these adverts we normally send them to these people. But in terms of competing for the market, that is the listeners, the competition is not very much, I wouldn't say it's a competition because we have different types of

programmes. Their programming is, take PC, Joy and MoAfrika FM and Roman Catholic Church radio. These other two are more inclined to attract youth listeners, young listeners. And the kind of music they have, they also, the language, they are using more Sesotho and English at the same time, more street language than we are doing here. We are trying to go back.