CHAPTER FIVE

MONITORING INSTRUCTIONS:

Monitoring Television News, Radio News, Newspapers & Direct Access Programming

A key element for the success of media monitoring is the effective training of monitors and other staff. Training must stress the importance of accuracy and impartiality in monitoring, analysis and presentation of findings. (See Appendices 5A-B for a sample media monitoring pledge form and code of conduct.) Central to the training and ongoing monitoring operations is developing easy to use forms that capture essential data in ways that match the methodologies to be employed by the project. Equally critical is providing clear instructions about the proper use of forms. This chapter will address using monitoring forms for different media, distinguishing between monitoring headlines versus story content, and monitoring differing types of programs. The forms presented in the text and more complete sets of forms appearing in Appendix 6 are not intended to be conclusive. There are many ways to design forms, and they must always be adapted to the specific circumstances of a country. This chapter presents approaches distilled from comparative experience.

Training must stress the importance of accuracy and impartiality in monitoring, analysis and presentation of findings.

TELEVISION NEWS

Illustration #1 (on page 37) provides a sample first page of a television monitoring form. An ample supply of these and other forms should be available to monitors wherever they are reviewing the news.

A typical television or radio newscast will open with a short presentation of the headlines. This gives a preview of the top stories and an opportunity to see which relevant political subjects will be presented. On television, this introductory segment likely will be accompanied by film, photographs and perhaps short sound bites from political actors. Monitors should note on forms: the headlines in order of appearance and word-for-word; the subject of the headline stories; their impressions of how political subjects (political parties, candidates, top government officials, etc.) are portrayed; the length of time of each headline; the type of graphic or picture presented with the headline, if any; and the order in which the stories are presented in the headline segment. This should be covered on the first page of a television or radio monitoring form. Separate pages also should be available for recording data about each story as it is broadcast in full. It is likely that a monitor will have to watch a news program several times on tape to gather all the information necessary for analysis.

Headline Segment Monitoring Instructions

Monitoring of television news programs begins with a headline segment. The first page of the television monitoring form is used to record information about this segment. The page captures both general and specific information. (See Illustration #1 on page 37 and Appendix 6.)

General Information

The Monitor Identification Number. It is recommended that monitors be assigned numbers and use them on forms rather than their names. This can help protect them from possible intimidation by government authorities or other interests who might be angered by the results.

Broadcast Outlet Being Monitored. For example, State Television Channel 2.

Program Title. For example, 6:00 p.m. nightly news program.

Date and Time. The monitor should record the date of the program, the time the program begins and the time it ends. From this information, the monitor can identify the specific program being monitored, and might later decide to report on the total amount of politically relevant information compared to total time of a news program. Significant differences between stations or differences over time might be of interest.

Specific News Coverage Information

Headline Story Information. A series of numbered lines are available to list the headlines of stories announced at the start of the show, in the order in which they appear. This should be a word-for-word transcript of the headline, which will make it easier to go back to the tape and confirm monitoring results at a later time. On this form it is worthwhile to list headlines of all stories, not just those considered relevant to election coverage. This allows monitors to make some judgment later about the order of politically relevant stories compared to all news for the day. For instance, if one party is consistently featured as the lead story of the day, but stories about all others are consistently reported last—perhaps after weather and sports— there may be a trend worthy of comment and analysis.

Monitors would then record the topic of the headlines (e.g., economic news, local fire or natural disaster, political coverage, government event). Next, the length of time would be entered and then the type of graphic or photo that accompanied the headline, if any (e.g., still picture of a political candidate or government official, a political party logo or symbol, graphic of a fire, etc.). Then, each monitor would record whether the impression of the subject was positive, negative or neutral.

News Program Item Summary Instructions

Illustration #2 presents a sample of page two of a television news monitoring form. On this page monitors can record information about the full stories reported on the newscast identified on page one, as well as stories reported but not listed in headlines. Each story will require a separate form and can be completed as follows.

General Information for Story Identification

Monitor Number. This data is entered again to ensure that forms are not misplaced or confused.

Outlet and Program Being Monitored. The outlet is entered again (e.g., "State Television Channel 2"). The program name is entered again (e.g., "Evening news"). Program date and time are entered again. These entries will help those collating and analyzing the data to keep the right forms together.

Story Number and Title. If the story ("item") was mentioned in the headline segment of the program, then monitors can enter the headline number from page one of the form. They should also enter a few words to indicate the title of the item.

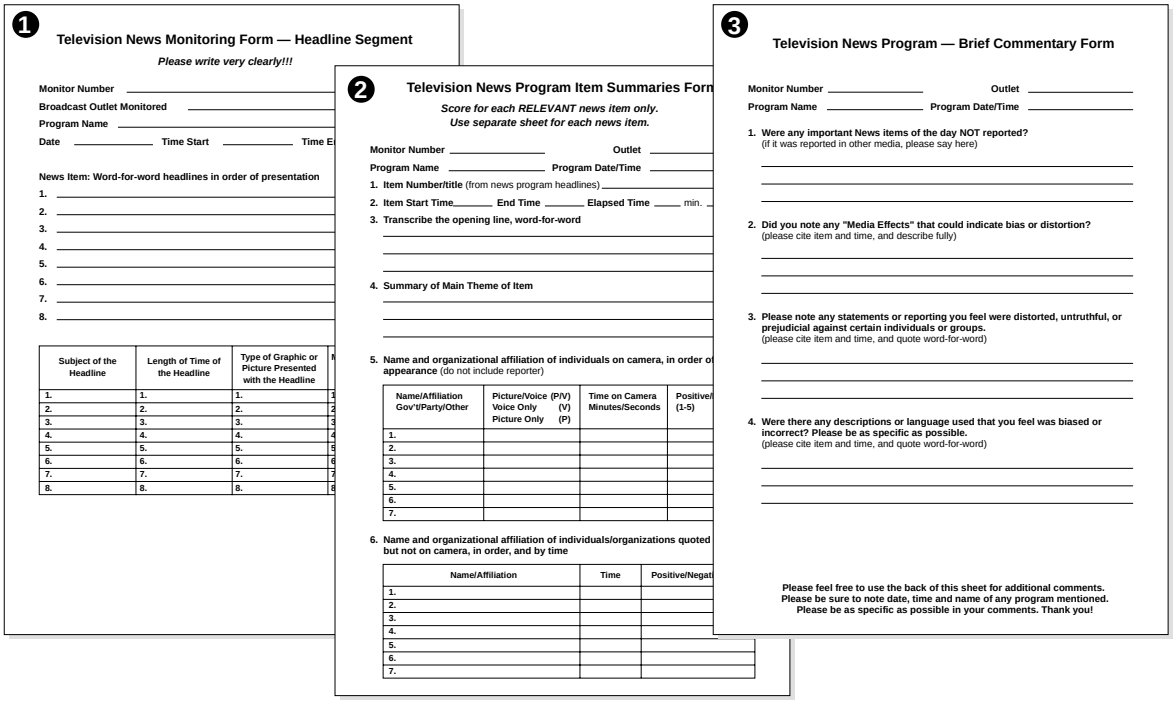
Specific Information about Story Subjects

Story Length. Enter the time that this story started and the time that this story ended, as well as the total elapsed time of this story. A stopwatch or the time counter on the video recorder can be used to make these time measurements.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Sample Television News Monitoring Forms

Illustration #1: Television News Monitoring Form—Headline Segment; Illustration #2: Television News Program Item Summaries Form; Illustration #3: Television News Program—Brief Commentary Form. (Please see Appendix 6 for these and other sample forms used for summarizing daily monitoring findings, as well as weekly tally sheets.)



1 **Television News Monitoring Form — Headline Segment**

Please write very clearly!!!

Monitor Number _____
Broadcast Outlet Monitored _____
Program Name _____
Date _____ Time Start _____ Time E

News Item: Word-for-word headlines in order of presentation
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Subject of the Headline	Length of Time of the Headline	Type of Graphic or Picture Presented with the Headline	M
1.	1.	1.	1
2.	2.	2.	2
3.	3.	3.	3
4.	4.	4.	4
5.	5.	5.	5
6.	6.	6.	6
7.	7.	7.	7
8.	8.	8.	8

2 **Television News Program Item Summaries Form**

Score for each RELEVANT news item only.
Use separate sheet for each news item.

Monitor Number _____ Outlet _____
Program Name _____ Program Date/Time _____
1. Item Number/title (from news program headlines) _____
2. Item Start Time_____ End Time _____ Elapsed Time ____ min.
3. Transcribe the opening line, word-for-word
4. Summary of Main Theme of Item
5. Name and organizational affiliation of individuals on camera, in order of appearance (do not include reporter)

Name/Affiliation Gov't/Party/Other	Picture/Voice (P/V) Voice Only (V) Picture Only (P)	Time on Camera Minutes/Seconds	Positive/ (1-5)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

6. Name and organizational affiliation of individuals/organizations quoted but not on camera, in order, and by time

Name/Affiliation	Time	Positive/Negati
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

3 **Television News Program — Brief Commentary Form**

Monitor Number _____ Outlet _____
Program Name _____ Program Date/Time _____

1. Were any important News items of the day NOT reported?
(if it was reported in other media, please say here)
2. Did you note any "Media Effects" that could indicate bias or distortion?
(please cite item and time, and describe fully)
3. Please note any statements or reporting you feel were distorted, untruthful, or prejudicial against certain individuals or groups.
(please cite item and time, and quote word-for-word)
4. Were there any descriptions or language used that you feel was biased or incorrect? Please be as specific as possible.
(please cite item and time, and quote word-for-word)

Please feel free to use the back of this sheet for additional comments.
Please be sure to note date, time and name of any program mentioned.
Please be as specific as possible in your comments. Thank you!

Story Identification

Monitors should enter a word-for-word transcription of the opening line of the story to help with future identification.

Story Summary. Monitors should enter a brief summary of the main theme of the story.

A series of lines can be used to enter the basic data necessary for an analysis of this story. Each line could have a column for:

- The name of each of the political subjects mentioned in the story;
- An indication as to whether the subject appeared on camera with his or her picture, voice only or both picture and voice;
- The time that the subject appeared on camera can be recorded in a different column;
- Finally, the monitor should make a judgment about whether or not the subject was portrayed in an overall positive or negative manner using a numerical scale (e.g., 1 for very positive, 2 for somewhat positive, 3 for neutral, 4 for somewhat negative and 5 for very negative). (See page 31, Country Note: Slovakia—Five-point Scale, for an explanation of a five-point scale.

A separate space can be devoted to recording information about subjects quoted or cited in the story, but not on camera.

- Record the name of the subject, the time devoted to that subject and a score for positive and negative.
- Record subjects only mentioned or quoted; this could be recorded without an indication of time, if they were mentioned only in passing. These remarks can also be rated on the positive and negative scale and will reveal trends on this outlet as to how subjects are sometimes portrayed even when not given a measurable amount of time.

It is important to record all of these data even though it may not all be included in the reports. Over time, monitors may notice certain trends of a particular station, for example, to summarize political subjects' remarks rather than allowing them to use their own voice. Several instances may not be significant, but if this is noted as a pattern, it can be reported in later press conferences and written reports. Otherwise, it may be easier to present data by combining the time of the entire story into a total time dedicated to a given subject.

News Program Brief Commentary Instructions
Illustration #3 and Appendix 6 present a sample third page television monitoring form. For each story, monitors should re-enter all the identifying data from pages 1 and 2, to ensure that forms will not get mixed up or lost. On this page, monitors should record information that does not necessarily lend itself to quantifiable measurement. For example, the monitor should be asked:

- Were there important news items not reported that day;
- Did the media outlet attempt to provide balanced information (i.e, if a story presented controversial information about a political subject, was that subject allowed to respond to the story or were his or her political opponents allowed to tell the story);
- Did the reporter or announcer attempt to insinuate his or her own opinions into the story;
- Were unusual or misleading camera angles employed to attempt to portray someone positively or negatively;
- Did the images used appear to accurately reflect the subject of the story;
- Were other graphics, music or effects used to change the tone of how the subject was portrayed;
- Were lies or misrepresentations included in the story, or was derogatory language used by a journalist;
- Was there an interview in which the candidate was not allowed to answer completely on the air;
- Did it appear that film footage had been edited in an unfair way; and
- Did the film footage or sound appear to be contemporaneous with the events reported in the story.

It is impossible to predict the various ways that an outlet might attempt to manipulate a story, but a monitor should describe whatever practices he or she thinks noteworthy. As the project progresses over time, trends will become apparent and contribute to the overall analysis of the project. (In addition to the media monitoring forms discussed in the text, see Appendix 6 for summary forms for daily top stories and weekly tally sheets for television, radio and print media.)

RADIO NEWS

Monitoring radio news programming can be done using the same basic methods used for television, except for visual data. (See Appendix 6 for sample radio monitoring forms.)

Radio is the principal means by which the population of many countries receives information about political contestants and other electoral subjects. Radio plays a key role in this respect in countries where television and print media are also important. Where radio is concentrated on one or two state-controlled broadcasters, monitoring is simplified and all the more important. Where there are private radio stations, pluralism may exist, and it may also be necessary to organize monitoring in places beyond the country's principal city. Training monitors, managing multiple monitoring operations

COUNTRY NOTE

Kenya—Kenya Human Rights Commission and Article 19 Monitoring Radio News

In the months before Kenya's December 1997 elections, the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), in partnership with Article 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression (London), monitored the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) television news, KBC radio's National Service (broadcast in Kiswahili) and KBC radio's English Service. In addition, the KBC's Central, Western and Eastern stations were monitored. The privately run Kenya Television Network and several national print media were reviewed for comparison purposes.

The project found numerous problems with KBC's coverage of political subjects, including among other things: highly disproportionate coverage of the President and his political party (KANU) over other political subjects; constant presentation of presidential events first in the news; significant omissions of issues of political importance that could have reflected negatively on the government; and coverage of political events in ways that differed from private news sources. For example, the project's report on October's news coverage found that KBC radio devoted 57 percent of news time to presidential events and activities and 26 percent to KANU, while only eight percent focused on the political opposition and nine percent focused on general local and national news. It also found that 100 percent of KANU's events were covered positively, while 80 of the opposition coverage was negative.

and consolidating reports in a timely way will present special challenges in such situations.

NEWSPAPERS

Reading a newspaper requires a more active role than watching television or listening to the radio. When someone is viewing or listening to broadcast news, they have little choice about what they hear and see. This is not so with newspapers, where readers more actively decide what to read. Nevertheless, some generalizations can be made. For example, a headline on the front page likely will reach a much wider audience and have more of an effect than a detailed discussion of issues on page five. A photograph will attract attention and leave an impression even if the reader skips the detailed written explanation in the story. Lead stories on page one might reach voters who may not even read the paper. For instance, when riding the bus, a passenger might see a headline or a photograph that changes their view of a political subject. Many people look at the front page, but might not follow a story onto an inside page or might read the lead paragraph and move on to another story. Headlines, photographs, story placement, lead paragraphs and the parts of stories on page one, therefore, are more significant for many people than the part of the story that carries over to an inside page.

Such detailed considerations complicate monitoring. Newspaper monitoring requires the collection of much more data than are collected from broadcast media, and this can lead to a time-consuming process for data analysts.

Keeping separate data for front-page news, photographs and headlines and the same for inside pages makes sense and adds little burden to the monitors. However, it is possible to end up with an enormous amount of data that can be difficult to analyze and present. Presenting findings in a clear and concise manner is therefore very important in newspaper monitoring.

Story Topic

A media monitoring project can be simplified in a credible way by deciding that the main political subject of a story is revealed by the headline and the

lead paragraph. Once the main subject has been identified, consider the story size attributable to that subject. All political subjects mentioned can be recorded with an assessment as to whether they are portrayed positively or negatively, but, if some are mentioned only peripherally, a project may decide against reporting the amount of space dedicated to such subjects in that story.

Story Size

Headlines can be categorized by political subject and measured (in square centimeters with a ruler); photographs and story size can be treated in the same way. Front page data can be recorded separately.

It also is possible to report space as combined totals of story, headline and photograph area in square centimeters. Although headlines might convey less substantive information in larger print than the stories themselves, the overall impression they give the reader (whether one perusing the paper or reading it carefully) can mean that they deserve relatively greater weight. The same is true for photographs, which may convey no substantive information, but leave a strong impression.

If monitors measure and record data on these factors separately, but combine them to show total space for each political subject, then additional data will be available for anyone who asks, or this data can be reported at a later time if it seems merited.

Illustration #4 presents page one of a sample form for newspaper monitoring. (See page 41 and Appendix 6 for print media monitoring forms.) In this example, all relevant front page data is recorded. The analysis can be treated as suggested above.

Illustration #5 presents a sample of a proposed second page of a newspaper monitoring form. This page records information from inside pages of the newspaper. It is otherwise identical to page one.

Illustrations #6 and #7 are samples of an alternative means of measuring the amount of coverage relevant political subjects receive in a newspaper. In this method, all the subjects mentioned in the newspaper (or on the front page or on inside pages) are listed, and the number of times they are mentioned is recorded.

Illustration #8 is a sample of a proposed additional page for newspaper monitors on which other con-

HELPFUL INFORMATION

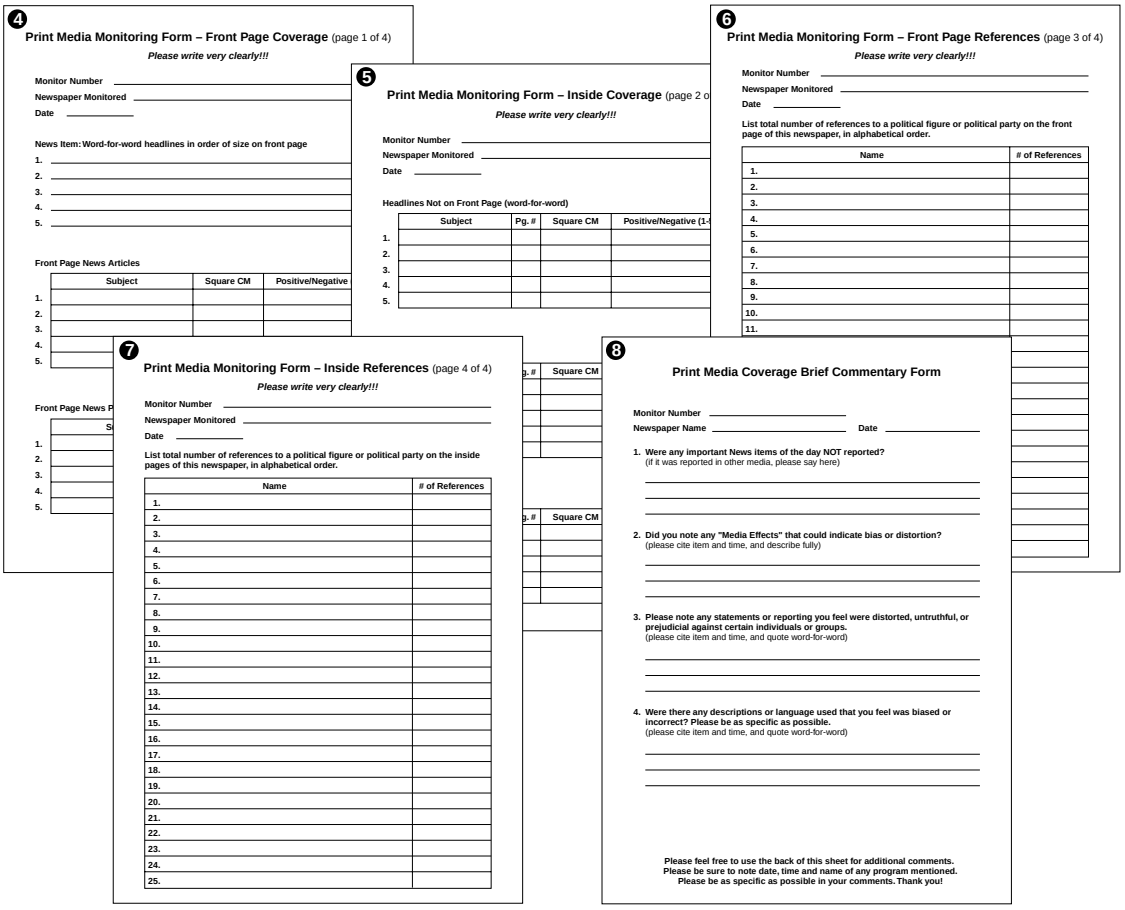
Newspapers - various factors that can be monitored:

- Stories appearing on the front page could be monitored separately, since they are arguably more important and reach more readers. If one party is always covered on page one and other parties only on page ten, this trend should be reported.
- Total space devoted to political subjects (parties, condidates, etc.) can differ on page one or in the entire paper, leading to the need to monitor inside stories separately, even if they are continuations of stories which began on page one.
- Headline size can be measured separately to reveal tendencies to focus the readers' attention on one political subject more than another. Headlines on the front page could be measured separately from headlines on inside pages.
- Photographs can be measured separately to reveal similar attempts to attract reader attention. Photographs on the front page could be measured separately from photographs on inside pages.
- One story might cover a wide range of issues and political subjects, even though some of the subjects might be mentioned only at the end of a story, very briefly or deep inside the newspaper – making it difficult to decide how to assess the space devoted to each subject.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Sample Print Media News Monitoring Forms

Illustration #4: Print Media Monitoring Form—Front Page Coverage; Illustration #5: Print Media Monitoring Form—Inside Coverage; Illustration #6: Print Media Monitoring Form—Front Page References; Illustration #7: Print Media Monitoring Form—Inside References; Illustration #8: Print Media Coverage Brief Commentary Form. (Please see Appendix 6 for these and other sample forms used for summarizing daily monitoring findings, as well as weekly tally sheets.)



❹ **Print Media Monitoring Form – Front Page Coverage** (page 1 of 4)

Please write very clearly!!!

Monitor Number _____
Newspaper Monitored _____
Date _____

News Item: Word-for-word headlines in order of size on front page

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Front Page News Articles

	Subject	Square CM	Positive/Negative
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

❺ **Print Media Monitoring Form – Inside Coverage** (page 2 o

Please write very clearly!!!

Monitor Number _____
Newspaper Monitored _____
Date _____

Headlines Not on Front Page (word-for-word)

	Subject	Pg. #	Square CM	Positive/Negative (1-
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

❻ **Print Media Monitoring Form – Front Page References** (page 3 of 4)

Please write very clearly!!!

Monitor Number _____
Newspaper Monitored _____
Date _____

List total number of references to a political figure or political party on the front page of this newspaper, in alphabetical order.

Name	# of References
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	

❼ **Print Media Monitoring Form – Inside References** (page 4 of 4)

Please write very clearly!!!

Monitor Number _____
Newspaper Monitored _____
Date _____

List total number of references to a political figure or political party on the inside pages of this newspaper, in alphabetical order.

Name	# of References
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	
21.	
22.	
23.	
24.	
25.	

❽ **Print Media Coverage Brief Commentary Form**

Monitor Number _____
Newspaper Name _____ Date _____

1. Were any important News items of the day NOT reported?
(if it was reported in other media, please say here)

2. Did you note any "Media Effects" that could indicate bias or distortion?
(please cite item and time, and describe fully)

3. Please note any statements or reporting you feel were distorted, untruthful, or prejudicial against certain individuals or groups.
(please cite item and time, and quote word-for-word)

4. Were there any descriptions or language used that you feel was biased or incorrect? Please be as specific as possible.
(please cite item and time, and quote word-for-word)

Please feel free to use the back of this sheet for additional comments.
Please be sure to note date, time and name of any program mentioned.
Please be as specific as possible in your comments. Thank you!

tent-based factors can be recorded. A monitor might list major stories not reported by this paper, the use of biased or manipulative wording by reporters, the use of especially inflammatory or unflattering language, photographs or cartoons and other factors that come to a monitor's attention. Other possible ways to monitor newspapers would be to:

- Count the number of words instead of measuring space because not all newspapers use the same font or print. Space may be a better measure because larger print may convey a greater impact even in fewer words.
- Measure the number of column inches given to each political subject instead of the area of the story.

DIRECT ACCESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAMMING

There are several ways that candidates and/or parties can present their views directly to the voters, without the editorial influence of media outlets. Monitoring such broadcasts therefore requires a different approach than monitoring news coverage. The most common of these are free party and candidate access that is legally mandated to provide an opportunity for political competitors to reach the electorate with their campaign messages. A second common means of such direct access is paid political advertisements. In both instances, the political competitors themselves should be allowed to develop their own messages freely. The law may provide for such messages only during the official election campaign period.

The monitoring project should examine the contextual aspects for these messages to determine and report on whether they are developed and presented free of government censorship or undue burdens and whether they are free of political discrimination by those who own or control media outlets.

It should not be the role of the monitors in such cases to judge the content, or the accuracy or balance of each message or political advertisement. Rather, in this case monitors should focus on the behavior of the media outlets, not the parties. The fact that parties are given time or can buy time to present their messages directly may be viewed as a positive sign that broadcasters are attempting to get information to voters and that the electoral competitors are provided an opportunity to express their views to the public. Monitors may, however, examine these messages to determine whether or not they incite hatred or violence, as well as whether they comply with a code of campaign conduct. (See Appendices 7A-B for a sample voluntary media code and mandatory procedures.)

Free Broadcasts

In the case of free, legally mandated broadcasts, a monitoring project might focus on factors such as:

- Whether the criteria for qualifying for access is objective and fairly applied;
- Whether the amount of time parties are allowed in order to present their views is adequate for voters to be informed about the political choice to be made on election day;
- Whether the messages or political advertisements are aired at times that are easily accessible to voters;
- Whether they appear in random or rotating order;
- Whether the parties or candidates are allowed to present their materials unedited or without review by government or broadcast officials; and
- Whether parties and candidates are given equal opportunity to use government-controlled facilities to produce their messages where alternative facilities are not readily available.

Once these contextual factors are analyzed and reported on, monitoring should focus on whether legally mandated free broadcast requirements are implemented properly. In addition, events such as technical difficulties with broadcasts, electrical power outages and other matters should be tracked to see if they present a pattern of political discrimination.

Once contextual factors are analyzed and reported on, monitoring should focus on whether legally mandated free broadcast requirements are implemented properly.

Paid Political Advertisements

Many countries ban paid political advertisements, but this is not always the case. When monitoring such ads, a media monitoring project should consider all of the same factors discussed above for free political messages.

In these situations, monitors can measure the time used by each party or candidate and the placement of the ads to determine fairness. These data can be presented in a similar way as the data from news

programming, but there is little need for content analysis since the political competitors are presenting their own messages. Monitoring content can be important, however, in instances where parties and candidates have agreed to a code of conduct. The messages also can be monitored to determine whether they incite hatred or violence.

Additional factors to consider when monitoring paid political advertising:

- Does the station offer the same fee structure to all political contestants or are favored parties given discounts? Do stations give equal access to all parties to purchase ads?
- Does the use of paid political advertisements unfairly disadvantage candidates or parties with far fewer financial resources than others? How big is this disparity and its impact? (E.g., can parties with differing interests afford to purchase political ads?)

Answers to the above questions can be gathered by interviewing parties, candidates, station owners and government authorities and can be presented in the project's reports.

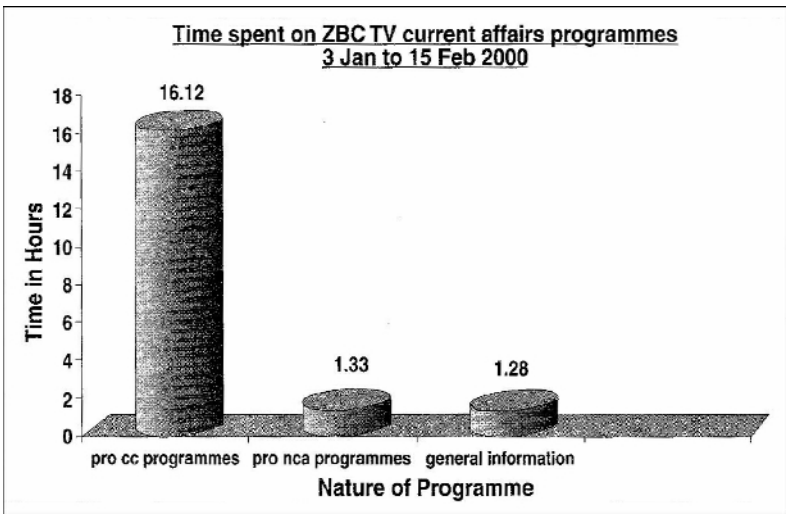
Public Affairs Programming

Television and radio stations might air regular political discussion shows; special programs devoted to election coverage; coverage of debates; so-called "town meetings;" broadcasts from party conventions or rallies; round table discussions; moderated interview shows; or call-in commentary shows. If research indicates these are important sources of information for voters, they should be monitored.

The goal of monitoring public affairs programs is to determine whether all parties or candidates are given equal opportunities and if they are treated fairly by moderators.

COUNTRY NOTE

Zimbabwe—MMPZ Monitoring Public Affairs



In the run-up to the 2000 constitutional referendum, Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) monitored media coverage related to the referendum, with a particular focus on current affairs programming. During this project, MMPZ found that both television and radio stations confused current affairs programming with direct access or political advertising by broadcasting documentary-like programs on the referendum that were blatantly promoting either the government-endorsed "yes vote" or the opposition-supported "no vote." Furthermore, the state-owned ZBC TV heavily favored programs supporting the government position and provided almost no unbiased information on the complex question of the proposed constitutional changes. During the six week monitoring period prior to the referendum, ZBC TV broadcast 16.12 hours of current affairs programming that favored the government position, ("pro-CC" programs), 1.33 hours that favored the opposition position ("pro-NCA" programs) and only 1.28 hours that gave general unbiased information about the referendum.

The goal of monitoring public affairs programs is to determine whether all parties or candidates are given equal opportunities and if they are treated fairly by moderators. In shows where candidates are allowed to personally appear, the main considerations should be:

- Whether all relevant political subjects are given equal opportunity to appear on the program and to speak on their own behalf during the show;
- Whether moderators, producers, directors or commentators treat parties or candidates with equal fairness; and
- Whether presentations on camera (camera angles, etc.) were similar for all of the political subjects.

Time allotted to different subjects also should be monitored and reported in the same manner as done with broadcast news programs. Additionally, fairness can be monitored and reported by describing specific instances of bias, distortion or other content-based factors.

There may be no pretense that such programs offer news, and it may be clear that they present commentary, debate or an opportunity for competing interests to offer their opinions directly. In these situations, an opportunity for different subjects to present views is more important than the accuracy or balance of the information presented.

The demeanor and political views of the moderator or host should be noted by monitors. The aggressiveness of questions and to whom they are directed and the overall fairness with which guests are treated also are important considerations. Monitors should look for moderator bias, equitable and sufficient time to parties and candidates, the time given to prepare for the program, camera angles, lighting and positioning of participants. All of these factors can be summarized in the textual analysis presented in media monitoring reports. Public affairs programs also may be monitored for incidence of inciting hatred and violence, as well as compliance with existing campaign codes of conduct.

Civic Education Programming

Knowing when, where and how to register to vote, knowing how to verify the accuracy of the voter registry and knowing when, where and how to vote are central to democratic elections in every country. Helping voters to understand the importance of voting also is critical to genuine elections. This is particularly true when electoral laws and procedures have changed.

Certain segments of the population may traditionally have been excluded or denied equal access to the political process, and special efforts through the media may be needed to encourage their full political participation. These could be minority groups that are under-represented in government or groups that speak a different language than is common on

COUNTRY NOTE

Cambodia—COMFREL
Monitoring Civic Education Programming

During the 2002 Commune Council elections, the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL) ran an extensive media monitoring program. As part of this effort, COMFREL monitored the broadcast of civic and voter education on state and privately owned television and radio stations. Monitors recorded the total duration of civic and voter education programming produced by the National Election Commission and civic groups, including COMFREL. The monitors carefully noted any violations of the election law. COMFREL's emphasis on voter education—both as a monitoring body and a source of voter information—came from its concern that voters be able to receive fair, unbiased information, counteracting some of the impact of biased media operating in a non-independent media environment.

television and radio or in newspapers. They could be women in a society dominated by male political leaders, or they could be youth and first-time voters who have been marginalized in post-conflict or other societies.

Whatever the reason, in many countries it is important that there be some attempt to explain to all voters the basic information necessary to cast their vote. Therefore, monitoring the amount and content of voter and civic education programming in the media is important. It may also be significant to note the source of such messages to determine whether civil society organizations are afforded an opportunity to encourage citizen participation in the election process.

Methods need to be devised to assess the adequacy of voter information messages both in terms of the time devoted to them by the mass media, the languages in which such programs are delivered, the times and stations on which they are broadcast and the accuracy of the information presented.

Monitoring such programming is different from monitoring news coverage. Methods need to be devised to assess the adequacy of voter information messages both in terms of the time devoted to them by the mass media, the languages in which such programs are delivered, the times and stations on which they are broadcast and the accuracy of the information presented. Monitoring these messages or programs for political bias also is necessary.

Monitors could view these programs and compare their content with the actual facts about how, when and where to register and to vote. Monitors also should determine whether these messages are presented in a way that improperly discriminates against certain population groups or that favors certain political interests over others. All these data can be compiled into a report analyzing the adequacy of such programs.

Entertainment and Sports Programming

Entertainment and sports programs can be used to influence viewers in an election. Government officials or candidates may appear on morning talk shows, at football games, in guest appearances on game shows or even on popular drama or comedy shows. Popular entertainment figures may deliver politically relevant messages in subtle or overt ways. These can be important considerations for monitoring, but comprehensive monitoring of all programming requires a great deal of human resources and money. Furthermore, these data might be more difficult to interpret. Still, monitors and others should be encouraged to watch for and report on such effects during their normal viewing of television and radio programming. Research into the use of such extra-news programming for political purposes is important and might require comment from a monitoring organization even if full monitoring is impossible.

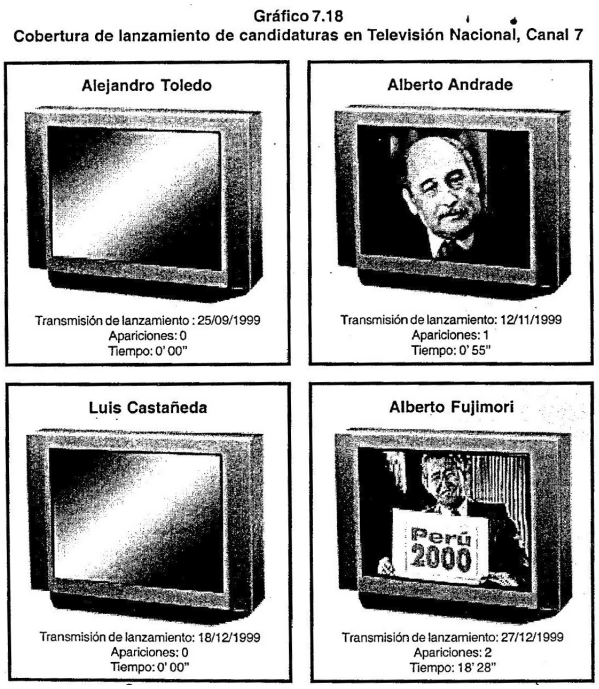


FIGURE 5-1: COVERAGE ON STATE-CONTROLLED TELEVISION OF THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN "LAUNCH" OF THE FOUR LEADING CANDIDATES, SHOWING FUJIMORI WITH 18 MINUTES, 28 SECONDS, ANDRADE WITH 1 MINUTE, 55 SECONDS AND BOTH TOLEDO AND CASTAÑEDA WITH ZERO COVERAGE.

Monitoring Media Complaint Mechanisms

The monitoring project's analysis of the legal framework surrounding media conduct will address the issue of whether there are effective complaint mechanisms to which political competitors, citizens or journalists may turn for redress of violations of political rights by the media, inappropriate governmental interference or failure to protect press freedoms. Where such mechanisms exist (by law or through voluntary media associations), media monitors should report on the functioning of the media complaint mechanisms. This contextual issue can be an important indicator of media conduct. (See Appendices 7A-B for examples of a voluntary media code and mandatory procedures.)