MASS MEDIA, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S WHITE STUDENT

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In this article the effects of either mutual reinforcement, or incongruity, between the mass media and the social networks of political information are analyzed. The political information exposure of South Africa's white university students serve as the basis for research. The article illuminates, in terms of political socialization theory, the differential exposure of the English and Afrikaans students. The findings clarify the role of the mass media in relation to other sources of political information in a rapidly changing society. It emphasizes the dependence on the mass media for political information. Yet it also shows how social networks, which are more diverse for the English than for the Afrikaans students, moderate the political socialization role of the mass media.

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The political impact of the mass media is only too rarely considered in conjunction with mediating social networks. Social networks either facilitate or counter the mass media's political contents. Such networks of social forces can also provide political stimuli which make the individual much less reliant on the mass media for access to political information. Without a network[1] of political information sources, the political influence of the mass media (which may also be under the direct or hegemonic control of the state[2]) can go virtually unchallenged.

This article hopes to illustrate the important effects of either mutual reinforcement, or incongruity, between the media and social networking in the case of South Africa's white student youth. It assesses the relative importance of the mass media in affecting political consciousness. While many of the definitive answers cannot be provided within the scope of the current article, it does give pointers to the role of the media in relation to other sources of political information and socialization in a rapidly changing society. "Political socialization" in this article refers to the life-long, interactive process of political learning (see Booysen, 1987: 12-15). "Resocialization" is defined as the

learning of new orientations which substitute or supplement the old.

The analysis focuses on the access to, and the use of, political information among the white student youth at major South African universities. It hopes to illuminate, in terms of political socialization theory, the differential exposure to the mass media of two culturally divergent components of the white youth. The one distinct cultural formation is mainly, but not exclusively, Afrikaans, and generally complies with Nationalist rule. The other can be termed deviant liberal. It still operates within a mainstream, white-dominated frame of reference and is mostly, but not exclusively, English.

The crucial question is how the mass media rate in relation to other sources of political information[3]. Indications are that the mass media as political information sources are much more important for the Afrikaans than for the English youth. Alternative sources of information appear to feature more strongly in the latter case. The extensive reliance of white Afrikaans students on selected mass media has been illustrated in an earlier Communicare article (see Booysen, 1989). The current article draws subcultural comparisons and interprets the findings in the context of political socialization networking. An additional focus is the impact of a rapidly changing political environment on the relative dependence on the mass media vis-a- vis the other sources of political information.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT AND APPLICATIONS TO SOUTH AFRICA

While political information does not necessarily lead to attitudinal change, it is logical that such change is impossible without new information (see Alper and Leidy, 1970:556-558).

Foremost among the sources of political information are direct experience, interpersonal communication and exposure through the mass media. There is an important and on-going debate on the importance of especially the mass media in shaping political orientations. It is, however, beyond dispute that, as long as there is a reliance on the media's supply of information, its potential for affecting orientations will be vast. In a modern or fast-changing world, the mass media often have the edge in the political supply process[4].

An exploration of the relative and culturally differential use of the mass media can better be understood when a number of related theoretical issues are considered. First, the issue of whether mass media political socialization is primarily of a selective or a creative nature should be examined. Recent research stresses the need for a synthesis of the two approaches. Second, the changing role of the mass media vis-a-vis other "agents"[5] of political socialization makes the role of all political socialization agents a contingent one. Agents which do not comply with changing needs for information, become obsolete. Third, depending on the strength and relative accessibility of other sources of political information, individuals will have a relative immunity, or susceptibility, to the readily available mass media political information[6]. Restricted direct exposure to political events will strengthen the political socialization role of the media. Fourth, even if there is no direct acquisition of facts or information from the mass media, continuous exposure is likely to establish the parameters within which specific issues will be addressed. The rest of this section deals with these themes, and is linked to the specific South African context.

This article's view of the mass media is that they constitute neither the so-called

"dependent" or the "independent" variable. Instead, it is argued that there is a complex linkage between the media as the creators of public interest and orientations, and media exposure as the function of pre-existing attitudes (also see Chaffee *et al.*, 1970:647-659; Owen and Cammarano, 1987)[7] and social contingencies. Similarly, Rubin and Rubin (1985; also see Rubin, 1978) stress that interpersonal and mediated communication are interrelated, and should not be considered to be functional alternatives. McCombs and Shaw (1972), as well as Chaffee *et al.* (1970) illustrate the importance of the mass media as agenda-setting agents which often stimulate direct learning. Dawson et al. (1977) and Klapper (1960) argue that the mass media merely constitute a secondary agent, reinforcing existing attitudes through selective exposure.[8] In contrast, more recent investigations support the view of the mass media, and especially television, as a probable dominant source of political information for the young (also see Hollander, 1971; Domineck, 1972; Rubin 1976). The effects of mass media exposure are seen as, for instance, politicization (Johnson, 1973: 448), greater political interest (Lane, 1965: chapter 19), or as stimulating the discussion of news events with parents or peers. Anticipated conversations about news may also lead people to seek out news programs (see Atkin and Gantz, 1978: 186; Atkin, 1972: 188-199). In most of these arguments, there is a recognition, albeit sometimes implicit, of the social contingency of the mass media's political socialization role.

This also pertains to the emphasis on the important agenda-setting function of the mass media. Research has shown that, for instance, television news programs are important in shaping the public's agenda of national issues (see Weaver *et al.*, 1981: 46; McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver *et al.*, 1975). They caution that social settings constitute crucial intervening variables (Weaver *et al.*, 1981: 46-47). It is noted that the agenda-setting function is contingent upon either a media or a political orientation of the individual involved (Weaver and McCombs, 1980). The researchers also acknowledge that "the social, economic and political contexts combine to create an overall environmental, community-specific context capable of affecting the agenda-setting process" (Weaver *et al.*, 1981: 47). The focus of this article is on both the crucial role of these contexts in mediating mass media effects, and on the mass media as an integral part of the social and political contexts.

Most theorists hardly ever link their findings to the change, over time, of the relative importance of sources of political information. Atkin (1981: 300) points to the earlier disregard of the mass media as potentially a primary source of political socialization. Other authors (e.g. Hollander, 1971) dub the mass media as the "new parent", in recognition of the media's dominance over primary group sources of political learning. Many researchers have found that the mass media in modern society are the most important source of political information (Conway *et al.*, 1981; Alper and Leidy, 1970; Chaffee *et al.*, 1970)[9].

Kubota and Ward (1970) and Kuroda (1965) appropriately locate the origins of these divergent observations in changing social circumstances. Certain agents, such as parents, typically provide political information from a time frame relevant to political experiences from their optimal periods of political learning (see Meadow, 1982). If, however, the needs of a younger generation change, the information from the "traditional" agents may become obsolete.

In such circumstances, the young turn to sources which can supply either new information, or more relevant interpretations of existing information. This function can usually be better fulfilled by the mass media than by, for instance, the parents.[10]

Most of the research also fails to distinguish between direct learning — which can entail either the acquisition of factual information, or suggested interpretations — and an indirect process of political learning through continuous exposure. Such exposure sets down the parameters within which the controllers of the information source want the issue to be interpreted. This article proposes that this is a major form of mass media political socialization in South Africa, equally affecting the English and the Afrikaans youth. Mainstream political consensus is promoted in this way.[11]

Simultaneously, an evaluation of the provision of political information and frames for interpretation should be located in the context of the minimal alternative exposure to political information of the white, and especially the Afrikaner, youth in South Africa. This reality, combined with the probable obsolescence of the more traditional sources, grants the mass media an inordinate role (also see Atkin, 1977) in political socialization.

These issues can also not be reliably considered without regard to the "terrain" of political information. Part of the legacy of apartheid rule is white political knowledge or experience which is often restricted to white-dominated mainstream politics. It can be expected that the traditional information sources for the white youth would be quite adequate (at least at the time of the study) for dealing with the familiar "white" politics. For the ascending (in terms of white frames of reference) resistance politics, parents' and peers' old interpretations may seem sufficiently antiquated to be replaced by the mass media sources. In the South African situation, however, even more qualifications apply. One is that parents and children may often have the same sources of information. Another is that many (if not most) of the mass media in the period of study were not providing information which differed substantially from information supplied by the traditional agents.

Apart from possible selective exposure, the credibility and perceived reliability of the mass media are a mediating factor in establishing mass media influence. Credible sources are most persuasive (see Schramm, 1980: 299-300). An important question is whether these young people uncritically consume the political contents of the mass media. It can be argued, on the one hand, that they may not recognize the fallibility of their sources (probably because of the general homogenity between agents). Alternatively, a lack of credibility and reliability may give rise to a "barrier" or "resistance" proposition (also see Alper & Leidy, 1970: 557). The social networking of their political information supply, and the broader availability of alternative influences, may ensure "protection". The much more indirect casting of an overall interpretive framework may, however, still circumvent the "barriers". The so-called "sleeper effect" also specifies that, over time, the political information becomes separated from the source which lacks credibility. The information may therefore be retained, despite its source.[12]

The scope of the current article only allows for a broad assessment of the differential effect of the printed and the electronic mass media. The differences do, however, provide essential back-

ground to the interpretation of research findings. In this regard Chaffee *et al.* (1977: 253) distinguish between two media subcultures in postindustrial society. The first, and presumably the larger, relies heavily on the electronic media for contact with the greater world. The political orientation of its adherents is that of "a passive consumer of all sorts of communication content, including whatever public affairs information happens to present itself ..." The second culture supplements the electronic media with those of print, "... which are far more laden with public information content" (Chaffee *et al.*, 1977: 253-254).

Research has shown that the print news media are more important than the electronic media in conveying political knowledge (Chaffee *et al.*, 1977: 232). Exposure to the print media also correlates more strongly with political activity and conversation than does the electronic media. Gammarone and Atkin (1986: 77) point out that the print news media tend to feature greater complexity and substantive intricacy, while the electronic media are characterized by a simplified style which facilitates comprehension. The electronic media also require a minimum audience effort. Atkin *et al.* (1976: 236) conclude: "The amount of political reading in newspapers is the strongest correlate of both political interest and political knowledge, while extent of political listening on the radio is the weakest ..." Predominant exposure to the electronic media may both reflect and reinforce non-involvement and a culture of political silence.

RESEARCH METHOD AND MEASURES

The article, therefore, addresses the issues of the counterbalancing of sources of political information and the support provided by the social networks of information from parents, friends, acquaintances, and direct exposure through political involvement.

A 10 per cent random sample of all the full-time white undergraduate students was drawn from all the predominantly white universities which co-operated in this study — Witwatersrand, Pretoria, Rand Afrikaans, Potchefstroom, Natal (Pietermaritzburg and Durban), Orange Free State, Rhodes, Stellenbosch and Cape Town. Only the University of Port Elizabeth refused co-operation. Three waves of questionnaires were mailed to the students at two-weekly intervals in May and June 1989. The overall response rate was 47 per cent. Anonymity was assured. The number of usable questionnaires returned, was 3 972. The responses from the respective universities were: Wits 40%, Pretoria 43%, RAU 45%, Potchefstroom 43%, Natal 47%, Free State 50%, Rhodes 51%, Stellenbosch 51% and Cape Town 51%. The study was undertaken with the sponsorship of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa).

The questionnaires consisted mostly of structured questions, and were available both in English and Afrikaans. Questions dealt with the students' demographic and socio-economic background, and, on the substantive level, with issues such as political identification, political participation and discourse activities, mass media exposure to politics, credibility attributed to the mass media, racial prejudice, support for various sectors of the state, acceptability of alternative political regimes and dispensations, and South African political issues. This article covers only a small part of the overall project.[13]

Media usage was measured by the reported frequency of reading, watching, or listening to the politics or public

affairs content in the newspapers, and on television or radio. In specific questions, students were asked whether they believe what they read or watch in newspapers and on television, and whether they believe that the newspapers and television report all relevant political information. In measuring political conversation, students were asked how often they discuss politics with their parents, close friends (with whom they either agree or disagree politically), black fellow-students, and black people outside the university. Direct political exposure was measured through student involvement in seven political activities, ranging from trying to influence other people's political views to participation in political organizations or parties. This question was such that regular student political activities were encapsulated, both mainstream and protest.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROFILE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S WHITE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Political culture in South Africa has become closely associated with differential socio-economic privileges. The socio-economic characteristics of these white students indicate the extent of their privilege.

The occupations and educational qualifications of these students' parents are two indicators of their position in South Africa's social structure. The fathers of both the English and the Afrikaans subsamples were largely professional: 37% of the English and 34% of the Afrikaans students' fathers, and 25% and 21%, respectively, of their mothers, were professional. While large percentages of their fathers were self-employed, in business or in management positions, the mothers were also heavily concentrated in clerical and administrative positions. (The mothers of 27% of the English and 37% of the Afrikaans students were not employed outside the home.) Approximately one third of the parents of the Afrikaans students and 17% of the English students were employed in the public sector.

The parents uniformly had very high to relatively high educational qualifications. By far the largest proportion of both the English and the Afrikaans students' parents had some form of tertiary education. This included 35 per cent of the fathers of both the language groups, and just under 20% of the mothers who had university qualifications. Very few of the parents did not matriculate.

The political affiliations of these students demonstrate the overriding power of the National (NP) and Democratic (DP) Parties in white South African politics. These two mainstream parties cater to the conservative to liberal, capitalist segments of white South Africa. While DP and reformist NP identification may create some empathy with the cause of the dispossessed and disadvantaged, their point of reference remains the white person. In terms of divisions within the white power bloc, however, there are vast affiliation differences between the students from the Afrikaans and the English campuses.[14]

The NP was supported by 42,6% of the students, the DP by 38,1, the extreme right-wing parties by 13,2 and the United Democratic Front (UDF) by 2,8 (the research was conducted before the unbanning of political parties and organisations). The party identification of the English students was much more homogenous than that of their Afrikaans counterparts. DP support on the various English campuses ranged from 62% (Rhodes) to 75% (Cape Town). Afrikaans campus NP support ranged from 53% (Stellenbosch) to 66% (Free State). White UCT students were the most left-

wing of these white students. Still, only 8% of the students declared a political affiliation to the left of the DP, followed by 7% at Wits and 5% at Natal. Among the Afrikaans campuses DP was about as left as the students would go. Here Stellenbosch led with 33% DP support, followed by RAU and Pretoria with 16% each. Afrikaans campus UDF support was negligible — a high of 1% at Stellenbosch and RAU, and down to 0,3% at Pretoria.

Stellenbosch was the only Afrikaans campus where the DP was stronger than the combined extreme right-wing (mostly the Conservative Party, but including some support for the Herstigte Nasionale Party and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging). Potchefstroom and Pretoria were the CP strongholds — in both cases supported by approximately 30% of the students. RAU, with 22% extreme right-wing affiliation, was the second "most liberal" of the Afrikaans universities. Stellenbosch extreme right-wing support was only 7%.

EXPOSURE TO POLITICS THROUGH POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE MASS MEDIA

The fundamental question regarding political exposure is whether it sustains existing political attitudes or facilitates change. Congruence between, for instance, the attitudes of parents and friends, and political exposure will largely ensure the continuation of pro-Nationalist, trusting, legitimating sentiments among the largest section of the Afrikaans student youth. For the vast majority of the English students it will denote a reinforcement of pro-DP viewpoints, cynicism towards, and low legitimacy of, the government.

Exposure through political participation

Political participation provides measures of both involvement in politics and probable exposure through participation. Generally the extent of political involvement in a society is linked to the magnitude of political and social change. In stable Western democracies, for instance, low levels of political involvement are prevalent among the youth. In other societies, students and other young people are often in the forefront of political mobilization and change. The crucial distinguishing factor is the students' interest in the changing relations of political and economic power in society.[15]

Both Afrikaans and English students reported minimal political involvement (see table 1). Concerning most political activities the Afrikaans and English students were almost identical in the extent of their non-involvement. For instance, about 75 per cent of both groups stated that they seldom or never try to influence other people's political views; and 80 per cent of the English and 75 per cent of the Afrikaans students said that they are never asked for advice on political issues.

In contrast with other forms of political exposure (such as the discourse of mass media usage — see below), the Afrikaans students often reported higher levels of political involvement than their English counterparts. Such is the case regarding the attendance of political meetings, and participation in the activities of political parties. Nevertheless, political participation remained low for both groups. Of the Afrikaans students, 35,9 and 47,5 per cent, respectively, reported that they seldom or never take part in the activities of political parties. The respective percentages for the English students were 25,2 and 67,3.

Yet it is significant that about 27 per cent of Afrikaans students do sometimes present their views to politicians or public officials. It contrasts with the

TABLE 1
LEVELS OF POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Type of Political Activities		Frequency of Involvement							
		Regularly		Fairly Regularly		Seldomly		Never	
		English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans
Try to influence other people's political views	n	(75)	(127)	(297)	(408)	(618)	(835)	(520)	(780)
	%	5,0	5,9	19,7	19,0	40,9	38,8	34,4	36,3
Are asked for advice on political issues	n	(48)	(99)	(248)	(426)	(680)	(987)	(534)	(632)
	%	3,2	4,6	16,4	19,9	45,0	46,0	35,4	29,5
Take part in any party-political activities	n	(30)	(105)	(83)	(248)	(379)	(767)	(1013)	(1015)
	%	2,0	4,9	5,5	11,6	25,2	35,9	67,3	47,5
Participate in any other organisation (excluding political parties) involved in politics	n	(122)	(125)	(150)	(250)	(329)	(633)	(909)	(1139)
	%	8,1	5,8	9,9	11,6	21,8	29,5	60,2	53,1
Write letters to newspapers on any community or political issue	n	(10)	(8)	(28)	(36)	(183)	(297)	(1286)	(1809)
	%	0,7	0,4	1,9	1,7	12,1	13,8	85,3	84,1
Present political views to politicians	n	(7)	(27)	(29)	(117)	(186)	(432)	(1284)	(1572)
	%	0,5	1,3	1,9	5,4	12,4	20,1	85,3	73,2
Attend meetings at which political issues are discussed or promoted	n	(128)	(199)	(266)	(417)	(543)	(779)	(574)	(755)
	%	8,5	9,3	17,6	19,4	35,9	36,2	38,0	35,1

73 per cent of Afrikaans students and 85 per cent of the English students who never take part in such activities. This could mean that Afrikaans students have more trust in their ability to influence politicians and public officials.

In the context of political organization support, the English students may have almost unanimous support for the Democratic Party, but it is a fairly passive form of party support. The English students also only had a minimally higher involvement in the activities of political organizations other than political parties. It cannot be argued, therefore, that they have a less conventional approach to political involvement and that they substitute other forms of political participation for political party involvement.

Exposure through discourse activities

Political discourse activities signify the salience of politics to the persons involved. An analysis of the discourse partners of the students indicates some of the possibilities for exposure to new political information. If these partners are diverse and from backgrounds differing from those of the students, political resocialization will be much more likely than in homogenous circumstances. In ideologically closed networks of political socialization, counter-exposure through discourse activities is one of the few processes through which attitudinal change may be induced.

Judging from the very low levels of political discourse activities, these students are mostly highly unpoliticised (see table 2). Only very small percentages of English or Afrikaans students engage in political conversation on a daily basis.

Regarding the detail, the students rarely discuss political issues with their fathers or their mothers. While quite a large percentage lived with their parents,[16] few regularly talked to their parents about political affairs. Almost twice as many English as Afrikaans students lived at their parents' homes, but the level of political conversation is strikingly similar. Around 40 per cent of the English students maintained that political issues are "hardly ever or never" discussed with either of their parents. The same applied to the Afrikaans students' fathers, while 51 per cent of them hardly ever or never talked politics to their mothers.

Whereas the lack of proximity may limit political conversation with many of the parents, friends and fellow-students are generally available for political conversations. Political discourse with friends proved to be more frequent than with parents, but about half of the students talk politics to friends only "once every one to two weeks" or "hardly ever or never". Approximately 20 per cent of the English students talk politics to their close friends at least once a day; the corresponding percentage for the Afrikaans students is about 15 per cent. The largest clusters talk politics to their close friends two or three times a week (about 30 per cent) or once every one to two weeks (just over 30 per cent).

These conversations overwhelmingly take place within a politically homogenous context, however. Political conversations with friends or acquaintances with whom they disagree politically, are extremely rare. Over 70 per cent of both the English and the Afrikaans students engage in political conversations with politically divergent partners only once every one to two weeks, or hardly ever or never.

It can be assumed that more radically opposing political views are more likely

TABLE 2
POLITICAL DISCOURSE ACTIVITIES

PARTNERS IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS		NUMBER OF TIMES POLITICAL ISSUES ARE DISCUSSED									
		2 or more times a day		Once a day		2 or 3 times a week		Once every 1 or 2 weeks		Hardly ever or never	
		English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans
Father	n %	(25) 1,7	(51) 2,5	(85) 6,2	(91) 4,5	(255) 18,5	(245) 14,7	(478) 34,7	(753) 37,6	(534) 38,8	(811) 40,5
Mother	n %	(21) 1,5	(28) 1,4	(69) 4,8	(74) 3,6	(222) 15,5	(219) 10,6	(504) 35,1	(694) 33,5	(618) 43,1	(1057) 51,0
Close friends	n %	(105) 7,2	(111) 5,3	(212) 14,5	(206) 9,8	(475) 32,5	(611) 29,1	(458) 31,3	(768) 36,6	(213) 14,6	(404) 19,2
Friends or acquaintances sharing the student's political views	n %	(76) 5,1	(90) 4,2	(165) 11,2	(191) 9,0	(411) 27,8	(542) 25,5	(529) 35,8	(825) 38,8	(297) 20,1	(476) 22,4
Friends or acquaintances whom the student disagrees with politically	n %	(15) 1,0	(51) 2,4	(71) 4,8	(132) 6,2	(262) 17,7	(432) 20,3	(547) 37,0	(766) 35,9	(585) 39,5	(751) 35,2
Black fellow students	n %	(16) 1,1	(14) 0,7	(39) 2,7	(23) 1,1	(135) 9,2	(80) 3,8	(370) 25,2	(249) 11,8	(906) 61,8	(1746) 82,7
Black people outside the university	n %	(5) 0,3	(12) 0,6	(14) 1,0	(11) 0,5	(53) 3,6	(55) 2,6	(254) 17,4	(272) 12,8	(1137) 77,7	(1769) 83,5

to come from black conversation partners than from white ones. Most of these students reported a staggering absence of political contact outside their white circle of friends and acquaintances.

The single exception to the dearth of political discourse "across the racial boundaries", was the English students' more extensive contact with black fellow students. About 40 per cent of English students have political conversations with black fellow students at least once every two weeks (the corresponding percentage for Afrikaans students is about 17 per cent). Conversely, this suggests that 83 per cent of the Afrikaans and 62 per cent of the English students "hardly ever or never" discuss politics with black students.

Both English and Afrikaans students lack exposure through political conversations with black people outside the university. Almost 80 per cent of them placed this option in the category of "hardly ever or never". Negligible percentages of the students reported these political discourse activities as being more frequent than "once every one to two weeks".

Not surprisingly, the students with the highest levels of political discourse activities with black students are those who identify with the UDF (see table 3). In contrast, well over 80 per cent of students from the NP and the extreme right-wing, 60 to 75 per cent of DP students, as opposed to "only" about 20 to 40 per cent of UDF supporting white students, reported that they "hardly ever or never" discuss politics with black South Africans (both fellow-students and people from outside the university).

To a lesser extent this data also shows that regular political interaction with black South Africans is not an absolute prerequisite for fairly left-wing political attitudes. As indicated in table 3, a fair number of students with minimal contact with black South Africans (e.g. about once every one to two weeks) have DP or UDF political identifications. However, this applies only to a small minority. For the vast majority there is a correspondence between the nature of exposure and political identification.

Mass media access to politics

The South African mass media, specifically the newspapers and radio and television broadcasting, constitute a cardinal part of the political exposure of white students. In the absence of widespread participation and political discourse activities, it can be expected that the mass media would acquire an increased role in exposing these students to political events[17], ideas, and practical interpretations. If exposure is selective, the mass media is partisan, and if the effect of the media is not being countered by high levels of political involvement or discourse, mass media political socialization will merely reflect the beliefs of the rest of the socialization network.

Both the degree and diversity of exposure to political reportage are important in political socialization. An overview of the differential exposure of English and Afrikaans students can be obtained from table 4. Geographical factors and lack of access in certain regions, however, limit direct comparisons. The data in table 5 focuses on selected, directly comparable universities from the Western Cape and the Pretoria-Witwatersrand region.

In comparing exposure to the nationally available weekly press, significant differences emerge between the Afrikaans and English campuses in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand region and the Western

TABLE 3
DISCOURSE BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS	PARTNERS IN DISCUSSIONS		NUMBER OF TIMES POLITICAL ISSUES ARE DISCUSSED: 2 OR MORE TIMES A DAY	ONCE A DAY	2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK	ONCE EVERY 1 OR 2 WEEKS	HARDLY EVER OR NEVER	
Extreme right-wing	Black fellow students	n	(3)	(3)	(12)	(39)	(504)	
		%	0,6	0,6	2,1	7,0	89,8	= 100%
	Other	n	(3)	(3)	(10)	(58)	(504)	
		%	0,6	0,6	1,8	10,3	86,6	= 100%
NP	Black fellow students	n	(7)	(12)	(63)	(213)	(442)	
		%	0,4	0,7	3,6	12,3	83,0	= 100%
	Other	n	(5)	(6)	(39)	(210)	(479)	
		%	0,3	0,3	2,2	12,1	85,1	= 100%
DP	Black fellow students	n	(12)	(36)	(139)	(404)	(930)	
		%	0,8	2,4	9,1	26,6	61,1	= 100%
	Other	n	(6)	(12)	(64)	(291)	(1149)	
		%	0,4	0,8	4,2	19,1	75,5	= 100%
UDF	Black fellow students	n	(11)	(13)	(31)	(37)	(24)	
		%	9,6	11,4	26,4	31,9	20,8	= 100%
	Other	n	(8)	(7)	(18)	(44)	(64)	
		%	4,2	6,4	16,4	35,0	38,0	= 100%
Other	Black fellow students	n	(2)	(3)	(11)	(18)	(85)	
		%	1,5	2,6	9,3	15,3	71,4	= 100%
	Other	n	(0)	(3)	(60)	(17)	(96)	
		%	0	2,7	3,5	13,9	79,9	

Cape. In estimating the potential for political resocialization, exposure to the alternative press (in this study represented by the Weekly Mail, New Nation or South, and Vrye Weekblad) is useful. These weekly newspapers take varying political positions, but operate in the range of liberal to radical.

Important differences between the English and Afrikaans campuses surfaced (see table 5). While approximately 20 per cent of both Wits and UCT students read the Weekly Mail at least once a week, the percentages for the Afrikaans campuses were much lower — RAU and Stellenbosch both 7 per cent and Pretoria 4 per cent. The percentages of Afrikaans students from Stellenbosch, RAU and Pretoria who read the Afrikaans alternative newspaper Vrye Weekblad, at least once a week were, respectively, 10, 9 and 7. About 5 per cent of Wits and UCT students also read this Afrikaans newspaper on a weekly basis. The somewhat more radical and black orientated New Nation and South were read weekly by 7 per cent of UCT students, 3 per cent of Wits, 2 per cent of RAU, and 1 per cent each of Stellenbosch and Tukkies students.

On all of these campuses the widest weekly readership was focused on the Sunday/weekend newspapers, viz. The Sunday Star or Weekend Argus, The Sunday Times and Rapport. The Sunday Star and Weekend Argus tend to be politically somewhat to the left of the Sunday Times, while Rapport takes a strongly pro-Nationalist reformist stand in its reports. The students from the English campuses had a fairly regular, weekly exposure to the English newspapers. The Afrikaans/English division was the smallest in the case of the Sunday Times. The vast potential influence of this newspaper's political content can be gathered from the fact that 60 per cent of Wits, 46 per cent of UCT, 40 per cent of RAU, 31 per cent of Stellenbosch and 29 per cent of Pretoria students read the Sunday Times' political reports. The Sunday Star or The Weekend Argus was read by similarly large percentages of Wits and UCT students (51 and 50 per cent, respectively), but only by 21 per cent from Pretoria, 16 from RAU and 7 from Pretoria. While only regularly read by a minimal number of students from the English campuses, Rapport had a wide weekly readership among students from the Afrikaans campuses: 55 per cent from RAU, 47 per cent from Pretoria, and 35 per cent from Stellenbosch.

Regarding regular readership (defined in this section as at least two or three times a week) of the Afrikaans daily morning newspapers, Die Burger in the Western Cape and Beeld in the Transvaal, Stellenbosch students (at 61 per cent) constituted the widest readership. Beeld was read by many more Pretoria students (40 per cent) than RAU students (34 per cent). RAU students, however, proportionately had a slightly higher readership of the English afternoon daily The Star (28 per cent), than their Stellenbosch counterparts had of the equivalent The Argus (25 per cent). However, the Afrikaans students lagged far behind the Wits and UCT students in reading politics in these newspapers — 72 per cent of Wits students regularly read The Star, and 63 per cent of UCT students regularly read The Argus.

In comparing the reading patterns of the Afrikaans universities, a considerable similarity between RAU and Stellenbosch emerged. This is the case with the reading of the weekly alternative press, as well as most of the mainstream Sunday press. Daily readership of the English press was also similar; but the mainstream establishment Afrikaans press was read much

TABLE 4
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF AFRIKAANS AND ENGLISH STUDENTS

	ONE/MORE TIMES A DAY				2/3 TIMES A WEEK				ONCE A WEEK				2-3 TIMES A MONTH				HARDLY EVER/NEVER			
	English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
NEWSPAPERS																				
Beeld/Die Burger/Die Oosterlig	1,5	(19)	26,2	(543)	1,9	(24)	20,5	(424)	2,2	(27)	12,9	(267)	3,7	(46)	15,3	(316)	90,7	(1133)	25,1	(519)
Business Day/Cape Times/The Herald/Daily Dispatch/Natal Mercury/Daily News	20,6	(288)	3,1	(60)	23,1	(323)	4,5	(87)	12,4	(174)	4,6	(89)	15,4	(216)	9,9	(190)	28,5	(399)	77,8	(1496)
Die Transvaler/ Volksblad	0,2	(3)	7,7	(152)	0,7	(8)	10,3	(203)	1,3	(16)	10,7	(210)	1,6	(19)	18,2	(358)	96,2	1177)	53,1	(1043)
The Star/The Argus/ Natal Witness	31,4	(436)	5,1	(99)	25,8	(358)	6,6	(127)	9,7	(135)	6,7	(129)	11,8	(163)	12,8	(247)	21,3	(295)	68,9	(1332)
Weekly Mail	1,0	(13)	0,4	(7)	1,9	(25)	0,6	(12)	14,9	(192)	3,9	(73)	20,0	(258)	6,1	(115)	62,1	(801)	89,1	(1686)
Rapport	0,1	(1)	1,3	(26)	0,1	(1)	1,6	(32)	2,8	(34)	46,7	(962)	3,8	(47)	27,3	(561)	93,2	(140)	23,2	(477)
Sunday Times	1,9	(26)	0,6	(12)	2,3	(32)	1,0	(20)	48,8	(648)	22,6	(443)	24,0	(337)	19,3	(379)	23,0	(323)	56,4	(1106)
Sunday Star/Weekend Post/Weekend Argus/ Sunday Tribune	2,3	(32)	0,4	(7)	2,8	(38)	0,5	(10)	43,5	(594)	7,8	(149)	20,5	(279)	7,5	(143)	30,9	(421)	83,8	(1603)
New nation/South	0,2	(2)	0,1	(1)	0,4	(5)	0,2	(4)	3,1	(39)	0,6	(4)	8,1	(101)	1,9	(36)	88,1	(1093)	97,2	(1837)
Die Afrikaner/Die Patriot	0,1	(1)	0,6	(11)	0,0	(0)	0,9	(17)	0,2	(2)	2,9	(56)	1,1	(14)	12,2	(233)	98,6	(1211)	83,5	(1599)
Vrye Weekblad	0,2	(3)	0,8	(15)	0,4	(5)	1,0	(19)	3,1	(38)	6,5	(125)	4,7	(58)	9,1	(176)	91,6	(1135)	82,6	(1591)

TABLE 4 (CONTINUED)
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF AFRIKAANS AND ENGLISH STUDENTS

	ONE/MORE TIMES A DAY				2/3 TIMES A WEEK				ONCE A WEEK				2-3 TIMES A MONTH				HARDLY EVER/NEVER			
	English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans		English		Afrikaans	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
TELEVISION																				
News (SABC)	25,6	(375)	42,5	(898)	38,0	(557)	32,5	(686)	12,0	(176)	11,7	(248)	12,5	(183)	9,4	(198)	12,0	(176)	3,9	(83)
Netwerk/Network (SABC)	16,3	(235)	33,0	(691)	32,7	(470)	34,0	(711)	19,3	(278)	15,1	(317)	15,6	(224)	12,3	(258)	16,1	(232)	5,5	(116)
RADIO																				
News (SABC)	12,2	(154)	30,3	(610)	10,0	(127)	18,8	(379)	5,4	(58)	9,9	(200)	9,1	(115)	10,8	(218)	63,3	(802)	30,1	(605)
News 702	21,1	(267)	11,1	(210)	8,1	(103)	8,3	(157)	4,3	(54)	5,1	(97)	8,2	(104)	7,2	(137)	58,4	(740)	68,3	(1296)
News (Radio 5 SABC)	39,6	(554)	31,3	(631)	20,1	(281)	17,1	(344)	8,6	(120)	8,8	(177)	8,1	(114)	8,0	(161)	23,6	(330)	34,8	(701)
SABC news Commentary	2,2	(27)	8,4	(159)	4,8	(59)	8,8	(167)	4,5	(55)	8,8	(168)	7,2	(88)	10,8	(205)	81,2	(989)	63,2	(1200)
Monitor	0,0	(0)	7,4	(142)	0,2	(2)	6,9	(132)	0,4	(5)	6,2	(120)	1,3	(15)	10,4	(199)	98,2	(1174)	69,1	(1329)
Radio Today	6,6	(82)	1,1	(21)	4,8	(59)	0,7	(14)	4,0	(49)	1,0	(19)	6,3	(78)	2,5	(46)	78,4	(972)	94,7	(1772)
Capital Radio	8,0	(102)	0,2	(4)	6,1	(77)	0,2	(4)	2,4	(31)	0,4	(8)	6.9	(87)	1,6	(29)	76,6	(973)	97,6	(1821)
BBC	2,4	(30)	0,6	(11)	3,4	(42)	0,4	(8)	3,1	(39)	0,6	(11)	9,3	(115)	2,0	(38)	81,8	(1013)	96,4	(1805)

TABLE 5
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF FIVE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

	ONE/MORE TIMES A DAY					FREQUENCY 2/3 TIMES A WEEK					ONCE A WEEK				
	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS
NEWSPAPERS															
Beeld/Die Burger	1,0 (4)	16,7 (58)	19,3 (139)	36,7 (313)	1,6 (7)	0,7 (3)	17,6 (61)	21,1 (152)	24,5 (209)	1,4 (6)	1,0 (4)	14,1 (49)	13,6 (98)	14,6 (125)	1,9 (8)
Business Day/Cape Times	6,5 (28)	2,4 (8)	1,6 (11)	9,1 (73)	26,3 (127)	6,7 (29)	3,3 (11)	1,5 (10)	15,0 (120)	33,3 (161)	10,2 (44)	3,6 (12)	1,8 (12)	11,8 (94)	14,7 (71)
The Star/The Argus	43,3 (208)	12,6 (43)	3,4 (23)	10,2 (81)	31,9 (151)	28,3 (136)	14,9 (51)	5,1 (35)	14,7 (117)	30,7 (145)	8,5 (41)	13,2 (45)	4,7 (32)	12,1 (96)	11,2 (53)
Weekly Mail	1,2 (5)	0,6 (2)	0,3 (2)	0,5 (4)	0,5 (2)	1,6 (7)	1,2 (4)	0,4 (3)	0,7 (5)	3,0 (13)	16,1 (69)	5,7 (19)	3,6 (24)	6,0 (46)	17,3 (76)
New Nation South	0,2 (1)	0,0 (0)	0,0 (0)	0,1 (1)	0,2 (1)	0,2 (1)	0,3 (1)	0,5 (3)	0,1 (1)	1,2 (5)	2,4 (10)	1,2 (4)	0,3 (2)	0,8 (6)	5,2 (22)
Vrye Weekblad	0,2 (1)	0,9 (3)	0,7 (5)	0,8 (6)	0,2 (1)	0,0 (0)	0,9 (3)	1,0 (7)	1,4 (11)	0,7 (3)	4,6 (19)	6,8 (23)	5,5 (37)	7,8 (61)	3,8 (16)
Rapport	0,0 (0)	1,2 (4)	1,1 (8)	1,2 (10)	0,0 (0)	0,0 (0)	2,3 (8)	1,8 (13)	0,9 (7)	0,0 (0)	3,7 (15)	51,4 (178)	44,4 (319)	32,8 (267)	2,2 (9)
Sunday Times	1,7 (8)	0,9 (3)	1,1 (8)	1,1 (9)	1,3 (6)	3,2 (15)	1,8 (6)	1,3 (9)	0,9 (7)	2,4 (11)	55,0 (254)	37,0 (126)	27,0 (189)	29,2 (233)	41,9 (195)
Sunday Star/ Weekend Argus	2,7 (12)	1,5 (5)	0,1 (1)	0,5 (4)	2,7 (12)	2,9 (13)	0,9 (3)	0,4 (3)	0,9 (7)	4,0 (18)	44,9 (203)	13,1 (44)	6,4 (43)	19,5 (151)	42,5 (191)

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF FIVE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

	2-3 TIMES A MONTH					HARDLY EVER OR NEVER				
	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS
NEWSPAPERS										
Beeld/Die Burger	0,7 (3)	15,.0 (52)	19,9 (143)	11,0 (94)	5,2 (22)	96,6 (399)	36,6 (127)	26,0 (187)	13,2 (113)	89,9 (383)
Business Day/Cape Times	19,4 (84)	10,2 (34)	8,0 (54)	15,9 (127)	12,4 (60)	57,3 (248)	80,5 (269)	87,1 (586)	48,2 (385)	13,3 (64)
The Star/The Argus	10,6 (51)	13,5 (46)	9,8 (67)	18,3 (145)	11,4 (54)	9,2 (44)	45,9 (157)	77,0 (525)	44,7 (355)	14,8 (170)
Weekly Mail	20,1 (86)	9,7 (32)	6,6 (44)	7,6 (58)	22,3 (98)	61,0 (261)	82,8 (274)	89,1 (596)	85,2 (652)	57,0 (251)
New Nation South	7,0 (4)	3,0 (10)	1,8 (12)	2,8 (21)	10,7 (45)	89,9 (373)	95,4 (314)	97,4 (649)	96,2 (727)	82,6 (347)
Vrye Weekblad	4,1 (17)	13,7 (46)	8,1 (55)	10,3 (80)	5,2 (22)	91,1 (379)	77,7 (261)	84,6 (571)	79,7 (621)	90,0 (378)
Rapport	3,4 (14)	18,8 (65)	25,9 (186)	27,2 (221)	4,4 (18)	92,9 (381)	26,3 (91)	26,8 (193)	37,9 (308)	93,4 (384)
Sunday Times	21,0 (97)	17,9 (61)	19,6 (137)	22,2 (177)	23,9 (111)	19,0 (88)	42,5 (145)	50,9 (356)	46,7 (373)	30,5 (142)
Sunday Star/ Weekend Argus	19,7 (89)	11,6 (39)	5,3 (36)	12,9 (100)	22,5 (101)	29,9 (135)	72,9 (245)	87,7 (591)	66,2 (513)	28,3 (127)

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF FIVE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

	ONE/MORE TIMES A DAY					FREQUENCY 2/3 TIMES A WEEK					ONCE A WEEK				
	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS
TELEVISION															
News (SABC)	30,4 (147)	43,7 (156)	43,4 (321)	34,6 (295)	22,2 (109)	35,6 (172)	34,5 (123)	32,9 (243)	32,3 (275)	37,9 (186)	13,7 (66)	10,4 (37)	10,1 (75)	14,4 (123)	11,2 (55)
Network/Netwerk (SABC)	19,3 (92)	33,2 (118)	31,5 (228)	27,6 (234)	15,9 (78)	32,8 (156)	38,6 (137)	36,7 (265)	30,4 (258)	30,1 (148)	19,4 (94)	13,0 (46)	13,1 (95)	18,0 (153)	19,1 (94)
RADIO															
News (SABC)	12,1 (51)	27,1 (91)	25,9 (181)	24,5 (197)	12,9 (57)	8,5 (36)	12,2 (41)	17,2 (120)	18,4 (148)	12,2 (54)	5,9 (25)	9,8 (33)	8,0 (56)	9,8 (79)	5,0 (22)
News (Radio 5 (SABC)	37,2 (167)	33,3 (115)	29,2 (207)	38,0 (314)	42,1 (205)	19,2 (86)	17,7 (61)	20,9 (148)	17,2 (142)	20,7 (101)	9,1 (41)	10,1 (35)	8,5 (60)	8,7 (72)	7,8 (38)
News (702) PWV area	46,4 (211)	23,1 (78)	23,3 (161)	—	—	16,0 (73)	11,9 (40)	15,0 (104)	—	—	6,6	8,0	7,5	—	—

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE OF FIVE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

	2-3 TIMES A MONTH					HARDLY EVER OR NEVER				
	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS	WITS	RAU	TUKS	MATIES	IKEYS
TELEVISION										
News (SABC)	11,0 (53)	6,2 (22)	9,7 (72)	11,7 (100)	13,0 (64)	9,3 (45)	5,3 (19)	3,8 (28)	6,9 (59)	15,7 (77)
Network/Netwerk (SABC)	14,5 (69)	9,6 (34)	13,4 (97)	13,8 (117)	15,5 (76)	13,7 (65)	5,6 (20)	5,3 (38)	10,1 (86)	19,3 (95)
RADIO										
News (SABC)	9,2 (39)	11,3 (38)	11,3 (79)	9,3 (75)	10,4 (46)	64,3 (272)	39,6 (133)	37,5 (262)	37,9 (305)	59,4 (262)
News (Radio 5 (SABC)	8,2 (37)	8,1 (28(	9,4 (67)	6,9 (57)	8,0 (39)	26,3 (118)	30,7 (106)	32,9 (227)	29,3 (242)	21,4 (104)
News (702) PWV area	9,9 (45)	10,1 (34)	8,4 (58)	—	—	21,1 (96)	46,9 (158)	45,8 (317)	—	—

more widely by the Cape students. In comparing Wits and Cape Town, it was noticeable that the Cape Town students almost consistently had a higher exposure to the printed media than the Wits students.

While the Afrikaans students had a more diverse newspaper reading experience than the English (the Afrikaans students read both English and Afrikaans newspapers on quite a regular basis), this diversity was neutralised by the often parochial and conservative substance of political reports and analyses in the Afrikaans daily press. These Afrikaans newspapers are strongly pro-government and mostly very selective in their political reports. The English daily press discussed in this section has more comprehensive political reportage, but is also characterised by mainstream, white-orientated approaches to political news. Considering the other political socialization trends among the Afrikaans students, it is unlikely that the diversity in newspaper reading arises from a search for different political information. English is the more universal language of communication, and the English afternoon press in Johannesburg and Cape Town offer information on more topics than the Afrikaans morning press.

Credibility and reliability of mass media news sources

English and Afrikaans students largely concurred on the credibility and reliability of media news coverage (see table 6). Approximately 35 per cent of both English and Afrikaans students agree/strongly agree that the newspapers which they read regularly have credibility; the same percentages believe that these newspapers do not have credibility; the other 30 per cent of both language groups were uncertain.

Cynicism on the reliability of the newspapers in reporting all relevant political information was high, especially among the English students. Only 14 per cent of them agreed/agreed strongly that all relevant political information was reported in these newspapers. The comparable percentage, still low, for the Afrikaans students was 24. A total of 66 per cent of the English students and 50 per cent of the Afrikaans students disagreed/strongly disagreed with the notion that the newspapers report all relevant political information.

With regard to radio broadcasts, students from all five of these campuses were more regularly exposed to news broadcasts on Radio 5 than to those on the English or Afrikaans services of the SABC. The news broadcasts on this station are, however, presented in the context of music and entertainment. Political exposure is therefore probably a side-effect of music and entertainment and not a conscious political decision. The difference between Afrikaans and English student exposure to Radio 5 news was small. Whereas the percentage of English students who listened to the English or Afrikaans service news of the SABC regularly[18] was in the early twenties, around 40 per cent of the Afrikaans students were in this category. In addition, in the Transvaal region about 62 per cent of Wits students regularly listened to the news on Radio 702 — as opposed to 35 per cent of RAU and 38 per cent of Pretoria students.

Regarding student exposure to the political content of the SABC television news broadcasts, a uniformly high exposure was shown. Very large percentages of both English and Afrikaans students watched these broadcasts either at least once a day, or at least twice a week. However, these percentages were significantly higher for the Afrikaans than for the English students.

TABLE 6
CREDIBILITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MASS MEDIA

	AGREE STRONGLY				AGREE				UNCERTAIN				DISAGREE				DISAGREE STRONGLY			
	ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
CREDIBILITY																				
I believe what I need in the newspapers	1,7	(25)	2,3	(49)	33,8	(508)	33,5	(719)	27,4	(411)	27,8	(597)	30,6	(459)	30,6	(657)	6,5	(98)	5,8	(125)
I believe what I hear and see on SABC television	0,7	(10)	7,2	(156)	13,0	(195)	42,7	(920)	23,1	(347)	19,6	(423)	40,5	(609)	22,4	(483)	22,8	(483)	7,9	(171)
RELIABILITY																				
The newspapers I read regularly report all relevant political nformation	1,1	(17)	2,3	(49)	12,7	(191)	21,4	(459)	19,9	(299)	26,8	(574)	43,6	(656)	38,5	(826)	22,7	(342)	11,0	(236)
SABC television reports all relevant political information	0,1	(2)	3,3	(71)	3,9	(58)	25,	(553)	11,4	(171)	22,7	(488)	34,8	(523)	32,2	(694)	49,9	(751)	16,1	(346)

Some regional patterns also emerged. Since late 1989 (and subsequent to this research) the Nationalist government has started condoning the provision of more direct reportage on resistance organisations on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) television service.[19]

Larger percentages of students in the Transvaal than in the Western Cape watched SABC-TV news broadcasts on a regular basis - - 78 per cent of RAU, 76 per cent of Pretoria, and 66 per cent of Wits. In the Western Cape 60 per cent of Cape Town and 66 per cent of Stellenbosch students were in this category.

It is significant that English student exposure to SABC-TV news was not much lower than that of the Afrikaans students. Judging from their widespread DP identification it was, however, clear that SABC politics has had a limited direct effect on their political consciousness. A crucial restraining factor is that the English students have a relative diversity of mass media exposure. The effect of SABC political broadcasts could therefore be countered. In addition, and in contrast with the Afrikaans students, English students' newspaper exposure was higher than their television exposure. For the Afrikaans students, SABC television was the single greatest source of political information. It is important, too, that the political messages which they get from the Afrikaans newspapers will mostly be confirmed by the contents of SABC reportage.

The widespread television exposure should be interpreted in the context of cynicism about the credibility and adequacy of reportage. A staggering 84,7 per cent of the English students (see table 6) disagreed/disagreed strongly with the notion that SABC television reports all relevant political information. The corresponding percentage for the Afrikaans students was much lower — 48,3 per cent. The Afrikaans students also had much more faith in what they saw and heard in television broadcasts. Only 30,3 per cent stated that they do not believe the SABC television broadcasts — in comparison with the 63,3 per cent among their English counterparts.

The fascinating reality, therefore, is that approximately the same percentages of English students regularly watched SABC television news programmes and doubted the credibility and adequacy of what they were watching. This should be seen in the context of the SABC's monopoly over visual news broadcasts, the wide usage of television as entertainment, and its general availability. In this context, the news broadcasts therefore do not have the monopoly over the supply of political information, yet could have a profound impact.

CONCLUSION

These students, therefore, are predominantly passively exposed (through extensive mass media use, combined with little direct involvement or discourse) to the forces of political socialization. In the arenas of political discourse and political participation they lack involvement and lack significant exposure to obvious forces of resocialization. For the Afrikaans students, political socialization from parents and friends tends to reinforce Nationalist orientations. Furthermore, these forces are politically congruent with the Afrikaans students' predominant mass media exposure. Through network reinforcement the media gain in socialization significance.

For the English, there is more diversity of exposure. There is a fairly strong

culture of political criticism, upheld by friends and family. Exposure to the politics of resistance is somewhat more substantial than in the case of the white Afrikaans youth. The white English students' mass media exposure is more critical of the political status quo, yet without the potential for fundamental counter-exposure. The English students have a stronger culture of newspaper reading than their Afrikaans counterparts, which means that they have a more diverse media exposure to the mass media. An important feature of their socialization exposure is the high "consumption" of state propaganda through television. While there are differences of degree between the political exposure of the white English and the Afrikaans students, the network barriers erected by mild counter-political exposure seem to have ensured that the socialization impact of television state propaganda was tempered.

The perceptions of a lack of credibility and reliability of political information sources do not deter these young white students from continuing exposure to such sources. One important reason is the rapidly changing nature of society and the consequent need for exposure to sources which give or purport to give relevant information. The "immeasurable" at this stage is the probable indirect effect of the state (through its control of television broadcasting) in imposing the parameters of political debate, or the frameworks within which political issues are addressed. Critical network barriers counter regular and extensive exposure to South African television politics, but the politics of both the networks and the students themselves are probably penetrated by the diffusion of television broadcasts.

NOTES

1. In this regard, see the analysis of Huckfeldt & Spraque (1987: 1197-1216).

2. Mass media are hardly ever independent agents of political socialisation. For instance, they are often controlled by the state, or by business interests with close links to the state. Both of these possibilities are important with regard to the South Africa mass media. See Booysen (1989) for a case study of the dominant position of the South African state in the political socialisation of Afrikaans students. This dominance is primarily a function of Nationalist hegemony over the major agents of political socialisation, combined with direct state control over those media on which these particular students rely for their political information.

3. It is important that South Africa's white youth are overwhelmingly from an advantaged class position which more or less guarantees access to television. This does not hold for all segments of the population. (Also see the analysis of Pratt & Manheim, 1988: 78-79).

4. In gratifications theory it is also argued that people specifically turn to the media for the gratification of four clusters of needs. See Greenberg (1974) and Murray and Kippax (1979). The need for information and knowledge about the world is one of the four.

5. The use of the term "agent" in this article does not denote acceptance of a passive notion of political socialization. The operation of political socialization agents does not guarantee an impact on political consciousness.

6. Various authors argue the case for exposure to political information, especially on television, as a inadvertent byproduct of consumerist absorption of mass media content (see Chaffee *et al.*, 1977:253-254).

7. See Stephens (1983: 598-599) for an

overview over the dependent/independent variable debate.

8. Klapper (1960) provided the basis for much of the earlier research ont he indirect and reinformcement role of the media.

9. It is a widely acknowledged phenomenon that young people rely on the mass media for political information (see Chaffee *et al.*, 1977; Conway *et al.*, 1975). The crucial role of the mass media in political resocialisation in the so-called "periods of critical learning" during adulthood is stressed by Meadow (1980).

10. Domineck (1972 : 49) says that when there is a discontinuity in the socializing functions of traditional institutions, the influence of the mass media may be magnified.

11. Also see Iyengar (1987) on the importance of "framing" political issues in television news (in attributing causal effects to social and political phenomena and events).

12. This "sleeper effect" was demonstrated in the research by Hovland *et al.* (1949 . 71; 182-200). (Also see Jeffres, 1986 : 247-287).

13. For an overview over the most important project findings, see Booysen and Gigiano (Idasa Research Report), 1990.

14. The study was done in mid-1989 — before the unbanning of the major left-wing political organizations. This would not have had a major impact on the affiliation findings, except that UDF support could probably largely be substituted by African National Congress (ANC) support.

15. On these two tendencies, see S. Verba and N. Nie, 1972, **Participation in America**, New York: Harper and Row, pp. 138-139; W.J. Hanna, 1975, **University students and African politics**, New York: Africana Publishing Company, p.5; P.G. Altbach, 1970, "Student movements in historical perspective: The Asian case", **Youth and Society, Vol. 1**; N.B. Ryder, 1965, "The cohort as concept in the study of social change", **American Sociological Review, Vol. 30** : 843-861.

16. The following is a breakdown of where the students live:

Place of residence	Total %	English %	Afrikaans %	
University residence	33,4	23,3	41,1	
Parents' home		28,8	39,7	21,1
Private		37,8	37,0	38,5

17. Political events are one of the major forces of political resocialisation. Far-reaching events, experienced as traumatic, often change the political consciousness of those involved. For theory and specific case studies, see R.E. Dawson, K. Prewitt and K.S. Dawson, 1977, **Political socialisation**, Boston: Little Brown, pp. 86-88; Kubota and Ward, **op. cit.**, pp. 140-175; T.F. Pettigrew, 1969, "Racially separate or together? **Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 25**, pp. 53-54.

18. "Regular" is based on a combination of the first two frequency categories, to refer to a frequency of at least twice a week.

19. This "leniency", however, does not imply that the state is not still imposing its own political agendas. See for instance D. Pinnock, "Tuning in to the future", **South,** 23-29 May 1990.

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