

Report
on a Study of the Views
of the Maltese on

**News Transmissions,
Party Political Broadcasts &
Parliamentary Debates**

(Part I - Commentary)

prepared for the

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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following discussions between the Malta Broadcasting Authority (MBA) and Malta University Services Ltd. (MUS), it was decided that an Audience Research Survey to cover a number of services and programmes that are of particular interest to, or fall directly under the responsibility of the Broadcasting Authority be carried out. This was confirmed by a letter to MUS dated 31 January 1990. The areas specifically to be studied were:

- (a) *The News Service*
- (b) *Party Political Broadcasts and*
- (c) *The Transmission of Parliamentary Debates.*

1.2 This study was considered necessary by the Malta Broadcasting Authority since to date the Broadcasting Authority has no information on the effectiveness of these transmissions, nor has it got any detailed and reliable statistical information on which current and future broadcasts ought to be planned. Feedback from the grass roots is essential for programme planners, and this study is intended to fill this important gap.

1.3 It was felt from the beginning that such a survey ought to cover not only TV viewers but must include also the present radio audience. It was furthermore decided that this study should seek to detect the popular mood in anticipation of the possible introduction of an additional TV channel, specifically intended to cover this group of broadcasts.

1.4 It is to be emphasised that this study covers the subjective perceptions of the Maltese of the way these programs are influencing them. Knowledge of these perceptions is essential for proper programme scheduling. As explained in the Technical Report, the scientific sample procedure adopted allows the application of these findings to the total Maltese population aged 16 and over.

1.5 In this report the data collected for this study is presented. It is divided into two parts: Part I is a running commentary on the quantitative data whilst Part II incorporates all the Tables. Part I is composed of five main chapters. After this Introduction, the second chapter summarises the specific Objectives of this Study. This is fol-

lowed by the three main chapters respectively covering the findings on what the Maltese think on News Bulletins, Political Broadcasts and Parliamentary Debates. Chapter VII, the Conclusion, seeks to tie up the various findings in summary form. Part I also includes two appendices: Appendix A is a Technical Report on the Methodology used for this study; Appendix B reproduces the actual questionnaire used in Maltese for interviews both in Malta and Gozo.

II OBJECTIVES

2.1 The overall objective for this study, as given to MUS in the brief by client, was to collect information on the following:

News Bulletins:

- (a) the extent of viewership of News on the various media;
- (b) the evaluation of viewers on content and presentation;
- (c) the existence of any biases in the presentation of news;

Party Political Broadcasts:

- (a) the extent of viewership;
- (b) type and frequency of viewership in terms of age, sex etc.;
- (c) viewers' preferences by type of broadcast;

Parliamentary Debates:

- (a) extent of viewership;
- (b) viewers' satisfaction with such transmissions;
- (c) viewers' preferences for transmission times and medium;

III INTERVIEWEE PROFILE

3.1 Table 1 gives the profile of the Survey conducted in Malta. The distribution obtained adequately covers both sexes, all the socio-economic categories and the three newspaper readership groups agreed with client prior to the survey, as explained in the Technical Report.

3.2 The question about newspaper readership was included so that an indirect indication of the political orientation of respondents could be obtained. Its interpretation requires care. The definitions of each group is to be found in section 2.2 (iv) of the Technical Report, Appendix A. Group 1 and Group 2 reflect a distinct orientation to the Nationalist Party and the Malta Labour Party respectively. Group 3 respondents indicated that they read more than one newspaper with political allegiance belonging to opposing parties and as such their individual party allegiance cannot be clearly interpreted from the data obtained through this one single question. This study also shows that a high percentage of Maltese do not read Newspapers regularly.

3.3 In all the Tables, the breakdown by socio-economic category is made in terms of the respondent's own occupation or profession. Whenever the respondent was found not to have a profession or occupation, because of age or because the respondent described herself as a housewife for example, the categorisation follows that of the Head of Household. Retired respondents were grouped on the basis of the trade or profession they exercised before retirement.

3.4 The survey was planned to include a bias in favour of the 16-17 year old since the correct proportion of interviewees from this category based on the demographic data would have provided too low a figure to allow for generalisations. The sample size for this category was accordingly increased, as explained in the Technical Report.

3.5 The figures given in the profile, subdivided by Age, Sex and Socio-economic categories are used in later tables to throw more specific light on the source of replies and opinions given in respect of the main issues studied by this survey. Despite the clear limitations of the categories obtained from the question on Newspaper readership, each of the following tables is cross-tabulated also against "Newspaper Readership" to enable the reader to relate the data present in every Table against this indirect indicator of political allegiance as well.

IV NEWS BROADCASTS

4.1 This chapter seeks to analyse the patterns of behaviour and the views of the Maltese about News Broadcasts. Both Radio and TV news bulletins are covered.

4.2 Tables 2 to 4 analyse the level of listenership of Xandir Malta News Bulletins on radio, Tables 5 and 6 cover TV audiences whilst Table 7 presents findings on the size of audiences that are attracted by the main evening RAI news edition.

4.3.0 *Radio News Audiences Levels*

4.3.1 Table 2 shows that 70% of all the Maltese indicated that they never listen to Xandir Malta News broadcast on Radio at 7.00 a.m. 9% follow this edition daily, whilst 6% do so once or twice a week. Another 9% and 6% respectively do so 2-3 times and 4-6 times per week.

4.3.2 The details given in Table 2 show that the number of Females who actually listen to this edition everyday is composed of double the number of females over males. The predominant age group of this audience is between 31 - 50. 41.7% of the audience for this edition comes from the C2 Socio-economic group whilst 43.8% derives from G3 (Newspaper Readership). It is interesting to note that from within G1 and G2 (Newspaper Readership) the percentages are very close, even if low, both in proportion to the group in which respondents belong (column percentages G1=8%, G2=11%) and in terms of absolute share of total audience (row percentages G1=16.7%, G2=18.8%). Full breakdowns are presented in the Table.

4.3.3 Table 3 in turn analyses data in respect of the Noon edition of Xandir Malta News Bulletin on Radio. 57% indicated that they never listen to this edition of news. 11% indicated that they follow it everyday whilst 9%, 11% and 12% respectively indicated that they listen to it 1 - 2 times a week, 2 - 3 times a week and 4 - 6 times a week. The detailed breakdowns presented in the table indicate that Females again constitute an even higher proportion of the regular audience than males when compared to the morning bulletin. The regular daily audience retains a high component (48.3%) from the 31-50 age group.

4.3.4 In Table 4, comparative figures for the 6.00 p.m. radio News edition are given. This edition is followed on a regular basis by fewer people: only 7% said they listen to it everyday. 9% listen to it once or twice a week, whilst 10% and 6% respectively listen to it 2 - 3 times and 4 - 6 times weekly. Again females listen to this news edition more than males and the daily audience is again heavily composed of 31-50 year old (46.2%).

4.4.0 Malta Television News Audiences Levels

4.4.1 The figures for the audience level for TVM's main news bulletin, transmitted at 8.00 p.m. are given in Table 5. 42% of the Maltese aged 16 and over follow this bulletin daily; 11% never watch the 8.00 p.m. news. 9% watch it 1 - 2 times a week, 17% 2 - 3 times a week whilst the remaining 21% do so 4 - 6 times a week. This effectively means that TVM's main News Bulletin has an average audience of not less than 80% of the total Maltese population aged 16 and over. Males constitute slightly more than females of TVM's regular daily audience. One notices that the higher the age, the more likely it becomes that a person is watching this edition of Xandir Malta's news. The least likely are the 16-17 year old, of whom only 25% watch it daily. 49% of all the AB Socio-economic Group do so. The level is high for all the socio-economic groups, although the proportion of viewers, broken down according to the socio-economic factor, decreases slightly for the DE (37%) in comparison to the other groups. In absolute numbers however, it must be noted that the DE socio-economic category has the second highest audience share (27.8%), following category C2 which has 32.6%. Full breakdowns are presented in the Table.

4.4.2 Table 6 presents data on the Final TVM News edition in Maltese. The audience level for this edition is low: only 3% watch it every day; 74% never watch it. 12% watch it 1 - 2 a week; 7% 2 - 3 times a week whilst 4% watch it between 4 - 6 times a week. There is very little difference between the sexes amongst regular viewers but interestingly enough there is a relatively larger number of viewers from the higher socio-economic groups and from the G3 category of Newspaper Readership. G3 in fact constitute as many as 60% of daily viewers. It must be noted however that although these last statistics indicate a clear enough pattern, they need to be interpreted with care in view of the small absolute numbers involved.

4.5.0 RAI News Audiences Levels

4.5.1 The level of audiences for the evening news available on any of the three RAI Television networks is analysed in Table 7. 12% indicated that they watch RAI news daily. This figure is higher by a rounded 1% to those who never watch TVM main news bulletin at 8.00 p.m. Given the fact that a person can watch both a RAI edition of news by following either RAI 3 or a part of RAI 2 news bulletins because they start earlier, and then switch to TVM, this figure cannot be interpreted to mean that there are 12% who follow only RAI news. But the 12% of Maltese who follow it daily, and the other 43% who also follow it irregularly, have a great influence on the evaluation of Xandir Malta's news bulletin, as subsequent chapters of this report will show. 13% indicated that they watch RAI 1 - 2 times a week; 15% do so between 2 - 3 times a week whilst 16% watch between 4 - 6 times a week. The full breakdowns are given in Table 7. There is no evident difference based on sex, but higher socio-economic groups are attracted more to RAI, as are G1 and G3 members. It is in fact very interesting to note that within G1 20% watch RAI News every-day, whilst within G2 only 10% do so every day.

4.6.0 Timing of TVM News Bulletin

4.6.1 Participants in this study were asked whether the time TVM news is currently put on air, i.e. 8.00 p.m., was appropriate or not. Tables 8 and 9 present details on what the Maltese think on this matter.

4.6.2 As can be seen from Table 8, 90% of all the Maltese consider 8.00 p.m. an appropriate time for the News Bulletin. 1% did not have any views on the matter whilst the remaining 9% said they would prefer a different time. Full breakdowns are given in Table 8.

4.6.3 Table 9 in turn gives details of alternative times suggested by the 9% who would prefer a different timing for the main news edition. Times ranging between 6.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m. were mentioned, but the highest number within this group focused on 8.30 p.m. This might suggest that a slight alteration of the time to say 8.15 p.m. might make the news simultaneously appealing to this group without affecting extensively the 90% who are happy with the current time. It might be significant that the largest number of those who suggested 8.30 p.m. are to be found in categories Ab and G1, and as such are those, who, as has been commented earlier on in this report, are more known to follow the RAI news bulletin, with which TVM's news bulletin conflicts.

4.7.0 Overall Satisfaction with TVM's Main News Bulletin

4.7.1 The current level of overall satisfaction with TVM's news bulletin are analysed in Tables 10 - 12. 4% of the Maltese have no views on the matter, whilst 53% and 43% respectively stated that they were satisfied and dissatisfied.

4.7.2 The ones who are satisfied and dissatisfied are almost equally distributed by sex and age except for the 65 +, among whom there are more satisfied than dissatisfied (68% versus 27%). But dissatisfaction is much higher among AB (67% versus 30%). It is significantly less among C2 (dissatisfied 39% versus 59% satisfied) and DE (dissatisfied 36% versus 57% satisfied). The breakdowns by newspaper readership does not indicate significant variations. Full details are given in Table 10.

4.7.3 The reasons for overall satisfaction given by respondents are analysed in Table 11. 24% did not explain their position when asked 'Why?'. The most common reason for satisfaction given by 63% of respondents was that the news was well presented and kept one abreast of developments.

4.7.4 Table 12 analyses the dissatisfaction among those who said they were overall dissatisfied with TVM's News Bulletin. Only 2% did not give reasons for their dissatisfaction. Overpoliticization, in the sense that there were too many references to local politics and to what local politicians do, was mentioned by 47% as one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction. 15% stated that the news was badly presented, 13% said that the programme was 'dry', 9% stated that the presentation was not impartial, 8% stated that the contents was generally second-hand, 7% that the news was not documented and 5% that the news was not detailed and comprehensive (the term used in the Tables is 'inclusive'). A number of other reasons were given, and these, together with all the breakdowns, are given in the table.

4.7.5 The fact that there was such a high concentration of opinion on 'overpoliticisation', understood in the way it has been explained above, in response to an open-ended question is significant. It clearly shows that the Maltese viewers are dissatisfied that they have to be exposed all the time through the news to what their politicians are up to. Overexposure by the politicians is creating a negative effect which will ultimately affect the image of the politicians themselves.

4.8.0 Political Bias

4.8.1 59% of the Maltese do not think that TVM News Bulletin are biased in favour of any one political party. 26% believe that they are biased in favour of the Nationalist Party whilst 14% think they are biased in favour of the Malta Labour Party. 1% did not commit themselves. The view that bias in favour of the Nationalist Party exist is more prevalent in the C2 and DE socio-economic categories and in the G2 and G3 Newspaper readership group. The opposite view that bias in favour of the Malta Labour Party exists, is slightly more common among AB and C1 socio-economic categories and very strongly represented in the G1 category. Full details with the usual breakdowns are presented in Table 13.

4.9.0 Priorities for Newscasting

4.9.1 Participants in the study were requested to rank six types of items that are normally covered by the News, namely: Important Local Events, Political Activities, Important International Events, Ministerial Activities, Important Sports Activities and Trade Union Activities. These six items were listed to interviewees in rotation to avoid bias in favour of the first mentioned. A summary of the ranking that emerges is presented in Table 14. In Table 15 these items are cross-tabulated by Sex and Age whilst in Table 16 and 17 they are tabulated against Socio-Economic Group and Newspaper Readership respectively.

4.9.2 A striking factor that emerges from a close study of this data is the fact that the Maltese have expressed themselves against the inclusion of too much about local political activities in the News. First preference to this item is only 2%. Important Local Events are considered by 75.9% of all Maltese to demand top priority. By implication these events are not to be necessarily linked to local politics. Table 14 furthermore shows that the second preference of the Maltese is for Important International Events, which obtained 13% as first preferences and 65.9% second preferences. Important Sports Activities was ranked third with 5% first preferences, 3.7% second preferences and 31.3% third preferences. Fourth came political activities with 2.% first preferences, 7.4% second preferences, 28% third preferences and 28% fourth preferences. These are followed by Ministerial Activities and Trade Union Activities, in this order.

4.93 This data is consistent with data elicited from other sections of this study and suggests that the Maltese do not want to have all their News Bulletin filled up with local politics, and much less with Minis-

terial or Trade Union activities. They are more interested in events of importance that have news value.

4.10.0 Reportage of Political Activities in the News

4.10.1 The Maltese were specifically asked whether too much reporting on local political developments was carried in Xandir Malta's News bulletins. The answers to this very specific question are given in Table 18: 40% said that there is too much, another 26% said that there is a lot, 31% said that the current level is 'just right', whilst 3% said that there is a little, and another 1% said that there is too little. The highest percentage of those who said that the current level is just right was reached by the 65+, of whom 43% had this opinion. The highest percentage of those who said that we have too much was obtained by those aged 31-50, of whom 45% were of this opinion. In terms of Newspaper Readership, the highest percentage (49%) of those who said we have too much reporting of local politics in the News was obtained by G2 Newspapers readers. Full details are presented in the Tables.

4.10.2 Those participating in this study were also asked what they would like to see more of in the News Bulletin of Xandir Malta. 29% did not have suggestions to offer. Others offered more than one suggestion. The full list, together with the breakdown for each suggestion, is presented in Table 19. 12% would like to have more coverage of current events and another twelve per cent would like to have more documented news. 11% would like to have more international and foreign news whilst 10% would like to have more local news. Another 10% specifically stated, in reply to this open-ended question, that they want more news which was not related to politics. 8% stated that they would prefer to have news on educational and cultural events included more often in the news; 6% would like to have more coverage of important news whilst another 6% insisted on more precision.

V POLITICAL BROADCASTS

5.1 Political Broadcasts fall under the direct responsibility of the Malta Broadcasting Authority according to Law. As such the Authority has a special interest to ensure that its schedule of political broadcasts conforms both to the expectations of the Statute and of the Maltese population at large. The current schedule incorporates three types of Broadcasts, namely Political Debates, Press Conferences and Programmes produced completely by one Political Party. Tables 20 to 28 deal specifically with the various types of Political Broadcasts currently within the programme of the Authority, and analyse the views of the Maltese to various aspects of them.

5.2.0 Overall Viewership of Political Broadcasts

5.2.1 Press Conferences are never watched by 36% of all television viewers in Malta. They are watched 'sometimes' by 44% of all viewers aged 16 upwards; always by 20%. Females are slightly less interested than males, and the youngest are the least interested. In general C2 viewers watch Press Conferences least in proportion to the others. Those who do not read any newspaper recorded the highest disinterest in Press Conferences with 47% of them stating that they never watch a Political Press Conference. The full details are given in Table 20.

5.2.2 Political Debates are never seen by 36% of all viewers. They are seen sometimes by 43% and always by 21% of all viewers. Details are also given in Table 20. Again females and the young showed the least interest in such debates. C1 watch Debates the least. Again, non-Newspaper readers register a high disinterest, obtaining a percentage of 46%.

5.2.3 Political Programmes produced exclusively by an individual political party are never seen by 39% of all viewers, they are watched sometimes by 42% and always by 19% of all viewers. The proportion of disinterested females is higher here, with 45% of the females, as against 33% of Males, stating that they never watch such a programme. The full details which are also presented in Table 20 show that there is also consistency in the viewing habits of the 16-17. This time socio- economic category AB registered the highest rate of disinterest. Again non-newspaper readers register a high 49% of disinterest in this type of programme.

5.3.0 Party Allegiance and Viewership

5.3.1 In Table 21 the data obtained from a question on whether respondents follow all the political programmes is analysed. This question was put to all those respondents who indicated that they watch, at least sometimes, any one of the three types of political broadcasts in the scheme.

5.3.2 82% were reticent to indicate whether they watch broadcasts in which both parties were involved, or whether they watch only those programmes produced by or whose topic is selected by their own party. 15% said they prefer to watch programmes covering both parties whilst 3% insisted that they watch only those programmes produced or whose topic is selected by the party they support. Full breakdowns are given in Table 21.

5.3.3 Table 22 in turn analyses the reasons why those 15% stated that they watch programmes produced by or covering both parties. Of these 70% stated that they do so in order that they can form a clear opinion themselves and therefore be able to judge. 12% simply do so to keep themselves informed, a few said that they enjoy the arguments. Since the absolute figures are small, care must be used in extrapolating too much from the breakdowns in this Table.

5.3.4 In Table 23 the reasons given by the 3% who insist that they only follow their own party's programmes are analysed. 33% very strongly stated that they are put off by the other party, at times using very strong language to express themselves in answer to this open-ended question. 50% stated that they are simply not interested in the other party whilst 17% preferred not to state their reasons. The reader's attention is again drawn to the fact that absolute numbers are small, and care is needed in their interpretation.

5.4.0 Preferred Days and Times for Political Broadcasts

5.4.1 Political Broadcasts are currently broadcast on Fridays at 9.15 p.m. The Malta Broadcasting Authority is interested to know the opinions of the Maltese about the choice of this particular day and of this particular time. The data obtained is presented in Tables 24 to 27.

5.4.2 Table 24 shows that 94% of all respondents consider Friday as being an appropriate day. The remaining 6% prefer another day. Details of the other days suggested are given in Table 25. 13% of this 6% said that any other day except Friday would suit their programme.

The day most commonly mentioned was Monday. Since the majority of the Maltese consider Friday to be appropriate no change is indicated on the basis of the data obtained by this study.

5.4.3 Tables 26 and 27 analyse the views on the current timing of these programmes. 75% of all Maltese consider the current timing as appropriate, the remaining 25% do not. Of those who do not consider the current choice of time to be appropriate, 76% would like to have these broadcasts scheduled for an earlier slot whilst 22% would prefer to have them later. 1% did not commit themselves as to when it would suit them better even though they had stated they do not consider the current schedule appropriate in this regard.

5.4.4 Table 28 shows that 68% of all respondents believe that the volume of political broadcasts currently broadcast is 'enough', whilst 23% feel that this is 'too much' and 9% feel that there is 'too little'. The 50-65 registered the highest percentage of those who believed the volume is excessive (28%). This same percentage was registered by the AB socio-economic category. G2 registered 25% who also stated the same.

VI PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

6.1 In recent years it has become customary for some of the Parliamentary Debates to be broadcast. Some of these have been broadcast live whilst others have been broadcast at a later time. The Malta Broadcasting Authority wants to know what the Maltese think about this practice.

6.1.0 Budget Debates

6.1.1 Table 29 shows that 20% of the Maltese population do not watch Budget Debates broadcast from Parliament. Another 20% follow all the transmissions, 5% follow about an hour from every transmission whilst 4% follow about half an hour from every transmission. 31% indicated that they watch long selections, but with intervals whilst 19% watch only very short selections from them.

6.1.2 Those who watch these transmissions least are non-newspaper readers. The highest figure for viewership of all the transmissions, when data is analysed according to socio-economic category, was obtained by C2 respondents (23%). Lengthy selections with intervals are seen mostly by AB (35%). Full details are given in Table 29.

6.1.3 Table 30 shows that 16% of all Maltese are of the opinion that Budget Debates ought not to be televised. 84% agree that they should be televised. The extent to which they should be televised is in turn studied in Table 31. Of all those who had agreed that these debates ought to be televised, 63% stated that they would prefer them to be televised in full. 31% stated they would prefer them not be televised in full whilst 6% had no specific view on the extent of coverage.

6.1.4 Table 32 seeks to document the views of the Maltese who agreed that some or all of the Budget Debates ought to be televised. Of these 96% agree that the main Budget Speech delivered by the Minister of Finance needs to be televised; 83% said that the Prime Minister's speech ought to be televised, 77% said that the Opposition's reply ought to be televised while only 51% said that they thought the debates on the individual ministries ought to be televised. Figures are not significantly different when looked at from within the various sub-divisions available in the Table, except perhaps that among G2. In this category a relatively high number (71%) said they

would prefer to have the debates on the individual ministries televised.

6.1.5 The Malta Broadcasting Authority is interested to know what the Maltese consider to be the best time for broadcasting Budget Debates. The question was asked even to those who would prefer these debates not to be broadcast at all. Detailed figures are presented in Table 33, for each section of the budget already referred to above.

6.1.6 As far as the main budget speech goes, 15% did not have any opinion on this matter and declined to answer. 70% indicated that they would prefer these transmissions to be live transmissions, 12% said they would prefer them to be transmitted late in the evening, after they have been recorded whilst a mere 3% said these debates should be televised late at night. The highest percentage for direct transmission was found to be among G2, at 80%. Within the other breakdowns the figures do not vary enormously among the various groups.

6.1.6 59% would like the Prime Minister's speech to be transmitted directly; whilst 14% said they would prefer it to be transmitted in the evening whilst 3% would like it to be transmitted late at night. 24% offered no opinion on this item. C2 viewers registered the highest percentage with 62% of them wanting direct transmission of this part of the Budget.

6.1.7 Table 33 furthermore shows that 28% did not have any views on the preferred time when the speech by the Leader of the Opposition ought to be broadcast; 56% prefer to have it broadcast direct whilst 13% and 3% prefer to have it transmitted recorded late evening and late at night respectively.

6.1.8 Table 33 also includes figures on what the Maltese would like to see happening with regard to the debates on individual ministries. 46% had no opinion on the matter. 39% would like them to be transmitted live, whilst 10% would prefer evening transmission. 5% said they should be transmitted late at night.

6.2.0 Extent of Transmissions from Parliament

6.2.1 Table 34 shows that 28% of all Maltese consider that there is currently too much broadcasting from Parliament in Malta. 60% said that the amount currently televised is 'just right' whilst another 11% said that there is too little coverage of Parliament through direct or recorded broadcasting of the debates themselves. Females consider

current levels more excessive than males. Those aged 31-50 registered the highest percentage when respondents were classified by age (34%). AB viewers differ significantly from the rest of the socio-economic groups: AB:36% versus an average of 27% for the other three socio-economic groups. Full details for the various breakdowns are presented in the Tables.

6.3.0 Family Conflicts

6.3.1 It is widely known that opinion on the extent of broadcasting from Parliament is somehow related to access to a particular broadcast. Problems may arise within a household if only one television set is available and members of the same family unit have different views on politics in general and on whether top priority should in any case be given to a political broadcast or a broadcast from parliament. In view of this a number of questions were put to participants in this study so that the Malta Broadcasting Authority could have the information required to make important policy decisions. Tables 35 - 36 deal with this specific aspect.

6.3.2 The data presented in Table 35 shows that 76% of Maltese households have only one TV set. 22% have two sets whilst 1% of the households have three sets. Table 36 in turn shows that 12% of all respondents who have only one TV set at home reported that there is always an argument whenever a Parliamentary Debate is being broadcast on television because a member of the family would prefer to switch to a different channel. 26% said that there is an argument 'sometimes'; 15% said they rarely have an argument because of this conflict of programmes whilst 47% said they never have an argument of this kind. The highest incidence of argumentation was reported by those aged 16-17 (27%).

6.4.0 Duration of Transmissions from Parliament

6.4.1 Participants in this study were specifically tested on the idea that Parliamentary Debates would not be transmitted in their entirety, but in the form of edited selections. Tables 37 and 38 present the data obtained from such testing.

6.4.2 5% did not have an opinion on this matter, as can be seen from Table 37. 52% agreed with the idea of editing Parliamentary transmissions while 43% did not agree with the idea. Females were more in agreement than men, as were the younger respondents. The higher socio-economic groups also were more in favour of selections. When the figures were broken down by Newspaper Readership, the

G1 participants were the ones who favour editing most (61% as opposed to 33% by G2 and 57% by G3).

6.4.3 Table 38 in turn seeks to discover what is the expected duration of a selection. Three specific options were presented to respondents and they were asked to express a preference. 2% could not commit themselves, whilst 46% of all those who had expressed themselves in favour of editing Parliamentary transmissions stated that they would prefer a half-hour transmission. 25% stated that editing should reduce the transmission of a whole debate to an hour, whilst 27% stated they would prefer short clips brought into the news bulletin themselves. Full details and breakdowns are given in Table 38.

6.5.0 Parliament on Radio and/or a Separate TV channel

6.5.1 The Malta Broadcasting Authority is interested to know to what extent the Maltese expect or prefer Parliament to be broadcast on radio and on what the Maltese feel about the possibility of setting up a separate TV channel for the transmission of Parliament. Tables 39 to 42 cover these two areas.

6.5.2 Figures in Table 39 show that 20% of the Maltese over 16 years of age do not agree that Parliamentary Debates should be broadcast on Radio. 78% agree that they should. Table 40 in turn shows that 69% of those who agree that Parliament should be transmitted by Radio want transmissions to be live. 10% indicated they would prefer them to be transmitted on the day following the debate whilst 8% prefer them to be transmitted early in the afternoon. 11% prefer Parliament to be transmitted late at night.

6.5.3 When asked what they thought about the idea of a separate TV channel to cover Parliament, 3% of respondents had no views on the matter; 17% did not agree, whilst 79% said they would prefer Parliament to have its own channel, thus implying that in this way the normal schedule of the existing channel would not need to be disrupted. Percentages do not vary when the figures are broken down according to the various classifications used in this study. Full details are presented in Table 41.

6.5.4 What from the whole activity of Parliament, in addition to the budget debates, should be transmitted? This question was also put to those participating in this study, and the responses elicited are summarised in Table 42. 58% simply stated "Nothing!". 11% would prefer all the debates to be transmitted whilst another 11% would prefer only some special legislation to be transmitted. 13% stated that whenever there was an issue of national importance, the debate

should go on the air. The full list of topics mentioned, ranging from "Debates on the Environment" to "Debates on Women Affairs", are listed, together with all the breakdowns in the Table.

VII CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The foregoing data points to a set of tendencies among the Maltese which the Malta Broadcasting Authority needs to consider very carefully for the success of its role in Maltese society.

7.2 The Maltese, it has been very clearly proved by this study, are very keen observers of the local and the international scene. Although this could not be said of every Maltese citizen over 16, the Maltese in general have an interest in what is happening around them both in Malta and abroad. They require the instruments whereby they can be kept abreast of what is happening and the modern media of social communication are the instruments whereby this level of "maintenance" could be upheld.

7.3 Radio communication still has its role in Malta, particularly to certain sectors of the population. News broadcasts by radio have a good following of an average of 10% of the population. The Noon has the highest number of daily listeners; the 6.00 p.m. edition has the highest audience on average.

7.4 TVM's 8.00 p.m. News Bulletin is by far the most important programme carried by the Station, followed by an average 80% of the total population of Malta and Gozo. Its popularity and huge audience support does not however necessarily mean that it is acclaimed by such a huge audience as a success story. 53% of the total population of Malta and Gozo are satisfied with its contents, 43% said they were dissatisfied.

7.5 The reasons for satisfaction have been amply discussed in the Report: complacency by a huge 24% of those satisfied, satisfaction for keeping them abreast of developments by 63%. The reasons for dissatisfaction, expressed more succinctly and critically by the unsatisfied, are causes for concern to the Malta Broadcasting Authority, and indeed for anyone connected with broadcasting and possibly with journalism in Malta. The statement made by the Maltese in this study is clear. The Maltese are less interested in what their politicians as such do. They are very interested in events, both local and international and want to hear more about them. The current practice of journalists to restrict themselves to what Ministers do and say when reporting an event as if that is the most important aspect of that event has been very strongly criticised by the Maltese. The practice might,

in consequence, be harming the politicians themselves through the dissonance created by this type of reportage. This Study has detected very clearly what the priorities of the Maltese are, and journalists would do well to digest them to ensure that the product they present to consumers satisfies current demands and not be purely supply pushed.

7.6 The content of News transmissions is not the only aspect that needs to be examined. The quality of the reports and the presentation has also been frequently criticised by the Maltese. It was claimed that news is often written as if it were going to be read and not listened to. The range of available technical devices to document news through short, to the point, updated interviews and documentaries, was noticed to be greatly missing. A sizeable number of those who criticised the station pointed out that TVM's News Bulletin is not living up to their expectations of a live medium. The criticism suggests that those who produce the News Bulletin are perhaps too much dependent on heavily out-of-phase technology and too readily satisfied with unsatisfactory journalistic styles.

7.7 Political Broadcasts also create a lot of interest among the Maltese. They are never followed, whatever form they take, by slightly more than a third of the Maltese adult population. But they are very regularly watched by about 20% of the total Maltese adult population. The rest watch them at times.

7.8 This study shows that the number of Maltese who are still very reticent to disclose publicly their political allegiance is still very high. Many did not want to disclose whether they watch all the broadcasts or merely those produced by, or whose topic is selected by, their own party. Of those who did disclose this information, many watch all these broadcasts so that they "could inform themselves". Others clearly do so. Thus, that they "could then judge for themselves". A small group of 3% of all Maltese are very intolerant and can watch only transmissions by their own political party.

7.9 This study does not indicate that there is extensive unhappiness about either the day or the time for these transmissions.

7.10 The Malta Broadcasting Authority is always responsible for transmissions from Parliament. 20% of the Maltese adult population never follow these transmissions; another 20% follow all of them. The rest follow selections.

7.11 As such the entry of Parliament in the sitting room does not create extensive negative feelings among the Maltese even though

16%, for example, are of the opinion that Budget Debates should not be broadcast. In reply to questions on the extent of how much to transmit, the Maltese clearly disclosed priorities: the Budget Speech itself is more important than any other part of the debate, the addresses by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition are more important than the debates on the individual ministries. It is clear that the Maltese would not mind interference in the daily programme schedule for important events from Parliament. But, on the basis of these findings, the Authority, and indeed Parliament itself, ought to be able to sense the message that more discretion needs to be used before deciding to transmit.

7.12 The fact that as many as 28% of all the Maltese stated that there is currently too much transmission from Parliament suggests that alternative and more creative ways of transmitting Parliament need to be looked for. This Study tested the opinions of the Maltese on the possible introduction of a separate channel for such transmissions. 78% agreed with this idea. But what seems to be at stake most in this regard is again the "mode" of transmitting Parliament. The current system is to transmit whole debates in their entirety, or to report them without introducing any particularly noteworthy statement "live" in the report. This study suggests that this kind of transmission is not what a sizeable section of the Maltese population expect. Instead this study detects a demand for mature editing, creative presentation styles and more exposure to events and content-matter rather than to personalities and political figures.

APPENDIX A

TECHNICAL REPORT

I SAMPLING PROCEDURE

1.1 A sample of 540 Maltese individuals aged 16 and over were personally interviewed.

1.2 The Objectives of this study can only be met if both adolescent and adult population of Malta is covered by this study. This creates a problem since no exhaustive list of individuals under 18 exists. On the other hand, persons over 18 are listed in the Electoral Register and this was used as the source for names and addresses for the purposes of this study for those 18 years and older. For this reason, the research methodology sought to cover both the 16 - 17 year old and those above 18 years of age in a way which ensures representation and scientific accuracy. The selection of the sample had to be divided into two parts, one covering the 18+, and another covering the 16 - 17 year olds.

1.3 For the 18 year old and over, a two-stage probability sampling technique was used.

1.4 For this purpose, all the addresses in Malta and Gozo that appeared in the last edition of the Electoral Register were electronically divided into 450 'Electoral blocks', each containing an approximately equal number of addresses.

1.5 From these blocks 20 were selected at random by a computer, using a random seed. From each of the selected 'blocks' 27 names were again selected at regular intervals by the computer, again using a random seed. A total of 540 addresses were chosen in this manner. Interviewers were each given a list of 27 names for each block chosen and were requested to interview 24 names from those 27. The additional three names in each are required to offset any changes that would have occurred in the electoral register since its publication due to individuals moving house, empty residences, deaths etc. This gave a total sample of 480 individuals aged 18 and over.

1.6 For the under 18, a modified quota system needed to be used. The same blocks randomly selected for those aged 18 and over were used, and each interviewer was asked to interview 3 additional persons between the ages of 16 and 17 residing in that area. The quota

was stratified by sex to represent the demographic characteristics of Malta and Gozo. In view of this some interviewers had to interview 2 males and 1 female, others had to interview 1 male and 2 females from the block assigned to them.

1.7 Interviewing took place in the following localities:

Birkirkara	Paola
Birkirkara	Qormi
Birzebbuga	Rabat
Cospicua	Sliema
Gharghur	St Julian's
Hamrun	Tarxien
Kercem (Gozo)	Xaghra (Gozo)
Mellieha	Zurrieq
Mosta	Zurrieq
Msida	Tal-Virtu (Rabat)

II ANALYSIS

2.1 All the data was recorded on a questionnaire specially designed for this particular study, a copy of the Maltese version is being annexed as Appendix II. The data was processed by computer.

2.2 Whenever feasible, results are analysed by Sex, by Age, by the Socio-Economic Category, and by Newspaper Readership. Whenever an individual did not have an occupation or a profession himself/herself, the socio-economic category of the Head of Household was used. Sometimes selective cross-tabulations by a selection of the above factors was used, depending on the nature of the question put. The breakdowns are the following:

i. Sex

Male
Female

ii. Age

16 - 17
18 - 30
31 - 50
50 - 65
65 +

iii. Socio-Economic Groups

- Group 1 AB professional, managerial, administrative
- Group 2 C1 higher clerical, clerical, supervisor, skilled craftsmen and technicians, owner/manager of small business
- Group 3 C2 skilled manual workers and foremen
- Group 4 DE semi-skilled, unskilled, labourers, casual workers and those whose income is provided by the state.

iv. Newspaper Readership

None: No Newspaper read, none was favourite.

G1: Favourite Newspaper: In-Nazzjon Taghna
or In-Nazzjon Taghna and The Times

G2: Favourite Newspaper: L-Orizzont
or L-Orizzont and The Times

G3: Favourite Newspaper: In-Nazzjon & L-Orizzont
or The Times & L-Orizzont & In-Nazzjon

III FIELDWORK

3.1 The quantitative research was conducted by a team of experienced interviewers. All the interviewers were thoroughly briefed before the commencement of the fieldwork. Dummy interviews were carried out during the briefing session in order to ensure that difficulties that may arise during the actual fieldwork could be solved before the actual fieldwork.

3.2 Care was taken to ensure that interviewing took place during a period when there was no hot debate on the matters under study since this would have affected the outcome. Interviewing was conducted in the last two weeks of February 1990.

3.3 The interviewing team was constantly under the supervision of an experienced supervisor, to whom any difficulties of a radical nature were referred.

SCN[]

i. Age: 16 - 17 1
18 - 30 2
31 - 50 3
50 - 65 4
65 + 5 [C1]

ii. Sex: Male 1
Female 2 [C2]

iii. Socio-Economic Category:

OCCUPATION OF SELF/HEAD OF HOUSHOLD

[Please write in FULL]

Group 1 AB professional, managerial, administrative 1

Group 2 C1 higher clerical, clerical, supervisor, skilled craftsmen and technicians, owner/manager of small business 2

Group 3 C2 skilled manual workers and foremen 3

Group 4 DE semi-skilled, unskilled, labourers, casual workers and those whose income is paid by Govt. 4 [C3]

A. NEWS SECTION

1. Inti x'tisma' jew tara minn dawn?

	QATT 1 - 2	2 - 3	4 - 6	KULJUM
	FIL-GIMGHA	FIL-GIMGHA	FIL-GIMGHA	
L-AHBARIJIET TAR-RADJU FIS 7.00 AM	1 2	3	4	5 [C4]
L-AHBARIJIET TAR-RADJU F'NOS IN-NHAR	1 2	3	4	5 [C5]
L-AHBARIJIET TAR-RADJU FIS-6.00 PM	1 2	3	4	5 [C6]
L-AHBARIJIET TAT-8.00 P.M. TA'TVM	1 2	3	4	5 [C7]
L-AHBARIJIET TA'TVM TAL-MALTI TAL-AHHAR	1 2	3	4	5 [C8]
L-AHBARIJIET TAR-RAI FIL-GHAXIJA	1 2	3	4	5 [C9]

2a. Inti taqbel li l-ahjar hin ghall-ahbarijiet principali tat-TV huwa fit-8.00 p.m.?

IVA 1
LE 2 [C10]

b. Jekk LE, x'hin tahseb li jkun l-ahjar hin? [] [C11]

3. Inti kuntent bl-ahbarijet kif migjuba lilna minn Xandir Malta?

IVA 1
LE 2 [C12]

Ghaliex?

[C13001-09]

4. Inti tara li l-ahbarijiet ta' Xandir Malta BHALISSA ixaqilbu iktar lejn Partit Politiku milli lejn iehor?

LE 0
IVA LEJN IL-PN 1
IVA LEJN IL-MLP 2 [C14]

5. Minn din il-lista' liema tahseb li ghandu jiehu l-aktar
prominenza fl-ahbarijet IMMARKA MINN 1 SA 8 SHOWCARD A

AVVENIMENTI KBAR LOKALI	[]	[C15001]
ATTIVITAJIET POLITICI	[]	[C15002]
AVVENIMENT KBAR INTERNAZZJONALI	[]	[C15003]
ATTIVITAJIET TAL-MINISTRI	[]	[C15004]
ATTIVITAJIET SPORTIVI SPECJALI	[]	[C15005]
ATTIVITAJIET TAL-UNIONS	[]	[C15006]

6. Inti Tahseb li fl-ahbarijiet ta' Xandir Malta hemm hafna
rappurtar ta' grajjiet politici Maltin?

IVA, HEMM IZZEJJED	1
IVA, HEMM HAFNA	2
TAJJEB KIF QEGHDIN	3
LE, HEMM FTIT	4
LE, HEMM FTIT WISQ	5 [C16]

7. X'tixtieq tara AKTAR fl-ahbarijiet ta' Xandir Malta?
[C17001-09]

B. POLITICAL BROADCASTS

8. Inti thobb tarahom/tisma' x-xandiriet politici?

	QATT	KULTANT	DEJJEM	
KONFERENZA STAMPA	1	2	3	[C18]
DIBATTITU POLITIKU	1	2	3	[C19]
PROGRAMM IMTELLA MINN PARTIT	1	2	3	[C20]

9. Jekk 'KULTANT' jew 'DEJJEM' inti tara tal-partiti kollha, jew
tal-Partit tieghek biss?

TAL-PARTITI KOLLHA	1
TAL-PARTIT TIEGHI BISS	2 [C21]

Ghaliex?

[C22001-09]

10. Fuq x'hiex tippreferi ssegwihom L-AKTAR? FUQ IR-RADJU 1
FUQ IT-TV 2 [C23]

11. Dawn il-programmi jixxandru nhar ta' GIMGHA fid-9.15 p.m.

A) Tahseb li din hija GURNATA TAJBA FOST IL-GIMGHA? IVA 1
LE 2 [C24]

Jekk LE, liema Gurnata fost il-gimgha tkun l-ahjar?

[] [C25]

B) Tahseb li dan huwa hin tajjeb ghal dawn ix-Xandiriet?

IVA 1
LE 2 [C26]

Jekk LE, x'l-ahjar: JIXXANDRU IKTAR KMIENI 1

jew IKTAR TARD 2 [C27]

12. Inti tahseb li minn dawn ix-xandiriet ghandna

	FTIT WISQ	1
	BIZZEJJED	2
jew	IZZEJJED	3 [C28]

C. XANDIRIET MILL-PARLAMENT

13. F'xi okkazzjoniet specjali bhal fiz-zmien tal-BUDGET, ikun hemm xandiriet mill-Parlament? Inti x'tara minnhom?

	XEJN	1	
	KOLLHA	2	
	MADWAR SIEGHA KULL META JIXXANDRU	3	
	MADWAR NOFS SIEGHA KULL META JIXXANDRU	4	
	BICCIET FTIT JEW WISQ TWAL IMMA 'L HAWN U 'L HINN	5	
	VERU BICCIET QOSRA	6	[C29]

14. Tahseb li dawn ghandhom jixxandru bit-TV? IVA 1
LE 2 [C30]

Jekk IVA, ghandhom jixxandru kollha? IVA 1
LE 2 [C31]

15. Minn dawn, x'ghandu jixxandar?

	IVA	LE	
Id-Dikors tal-Budget	1	2	[C32]
Id-Diskors tal-Prim Ministru	1	2	[C33]
Id-Diskors tal-Kap tal-Oppozizzjoni	1	2	[C34]
Id-dibatti fuq il-Ministeri individwali?	1	2	[C35]

16. Jekk IVA, X'HIN ghandhom jixxandru SHOWCARD B

	DIRETT	IRREKORDJAT U MXANDAR	
		TARD FIL- TARD BIL-	
		GHAXIJA LEJL	
Id-Dikors tal-Budget	1	2	3 [C36]
Id-Diskors tal-Prim Ministru	1	2	3 [C37]
Id-Diskors tal-Kap tal-Oppozizzjoni	1	2	3 [C38]
Id-dibatti fuq il-Ministeri individwali?	1	2	3 [C39]

17. Inti tahseb li l-Maltin ghandhom wisq trasmissjonijiet tal-Parlament fuq it-TV?

	IVA WISQ	1	
	TAJJEB KIF AHNA	2	
	FTIT WISQ	3	[C40]

18. Kemm-il sett tat-TV ghandkom id-dar? [] [C41]

ASK ONLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE ONLY ONE TV SET AT HOME

Fil-Familja tieghek gieli jkun hemm xi argument matul dawn it-trasmissjonijiet minhabba li jkun hemm min irid jara programm iehor fuq xi stazzjon iehor? IVA DEJJEM 1

	KULTANT	2	
	RARI	3	
	LE QATT	4	[C42]

19. Inti taqbel kieku XANDIR MALTA kellu jittrasmetti siltiet biss minn dan it-trasmissjonijiet?

	IVA	1	
	LE	2	[C43]

Jekk IVA, kemm ghandhu jkun l-itwal hin ta' gabra fil-qosor?

	NOFS SIEGHA MINN DIBATTITU SHIH	1	
	SIEGHA MINN DIBATTITU SHIH	2	
	SILTIET FL-AHBARIJIET BISS	3	[C44]

20. Inti taqbel li d-dibattiti fil-parlament ghandhom jigu trasmessu fuq ir-Radju?

LE 1
IVA 2 [C45]

Jekk IVA, ghandhom jixxandru

DAK IL-HIN STESS 1
L-GHADA 2
F'HIN KMIENI WARA NOFSINHAR 3
F'HIN TARD FIL-GHAXIJA 4 [C46]

21. Inti tippreferexxi kieku dawn id-dibattici jkunu mxandra minn stazzjon apposta u mhux minflok programmi ohra fuq TVM?

LE 1
IVA 2 [C47]

22. Minn barra l-Budget, hemm xi Suggetti li taqbel li ghandhom jigu mxandra mill-Parlament meta jkunu diskussi?

LE, XEJN 1
ID-DIBATTITI KOLLHA 2
OHRA (specifika) _____ [C48001-09]

23. Mill-gazzetti MALTIN TA' KULJUM, liema hija/huma l-favorita/i tieghek?

L-EBDA WAHDA 1
TIMES 2
NAZZJON 3
ORIZZONT 4
KOLLHA 5 [C49001-4]