

**REPRESENTATION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN TELEVISION
NEWS BROADCASTS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF GHANA
TELEVISION (GTV) EVENING NEWS BULLETIN IN 2004.**

BY

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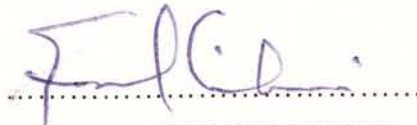
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MAY 2009

CERTIFICATION
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UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

The undersigned certify that he has read, approved and recommended to the School of Communication Studies this thesis entitled:

REPRESENTATION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN TELEVISION NEWS BROADCASTS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF *GHANA TELEVISION (GTV) EVENING NEWS BULLETIN IN 2004*, in fulfillment of an M. PHIL in Communication Studies.



PROF. KWAME KARIKARI

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DATE: 31 May, 2009

DECLARATION

I do acknowledge that I have used information from other sources, which have been duly recognized. Aside from this I, Afua Amankwa Sarkodie, state with academic honesty that everything else in this thesis is my original work.

This project has never been presented either in whole or in part for any purpose anywhere.

I am solely responsible for any errors in the work.



AFUA AMANKWA SARKODIE

DATE: 28/05/09

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear departed mother who taught me that there isn't anything like "too much education."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the staff of Ghana Television for the support they gave me. They gladly gave their time and resources to the success of this work.

I remain forever indebted to Prof. Kwame Karikari of the School of Communication Studies, whose guidance and rather harsh criticism helped bring out the best in me. His insistence on thoroughness clearly reflects in the quality of this research.

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And ultimately, to the Most High God, to whom I am eternally grateful, his Grace has been sufficient unto me.

AFUA AMANKWA SARKODIE

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to research into how rural communities in Ghana are covered and represented by a Public broadcasting television station, *Ghana Television (GTV)*. The study also sought to establish whether there exist a fair balance between the volume of news coverage given to elitist/urban news as opposed to news of, and about, rural communities in the year 2004.

The researcher mainly used content analysis as the method of data collection and systematic random sampling was the sampling technique used. A total of 101 tapes, comprising 1353 news items constituted the total sample size for the study.

The study showed that generally, *GTV*'s evening news was biased towards urban or elitist based news as against news from rural areas.

The study also revealed that the electioneering campaign of 2004 had an impact on the rate and level of coverage of rural news. Indeed, coverage of rural areas greatly increased in November 2004, which was the run - up to the December 2004 elections.

On the other hand coverage of rural areas declined to an all time low in late December 2004 and January 2005; this was the period after the general elections. After the election, the attention of the news shifted to urban Ghana,



mainly Accra where all the concentration was about who has won or lost the election.

The research brought into focus the fact that news stories, even though they may originate from rural areas are seldom about rural people. In other words, the newsmakers in such news items were often officialdom, political figures and elites in general.

The study also found that very little prominence was given to news items from rural areas. Indeed, for the period reviewed, only one news item from a rural area made it to the headlines of the news.

The study found out that news of and about rural communities, its people and livelihoods were not considered headline making news. In cases where this type of news was given any prominence at all, it only served to reinforce stereotypes of rural people being poor, dependent and suffering.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Most African countries have most of their populations resident in rural areas; Ghana is no exception to this situation. According to the 2000, population census of Ghana, about 60% of Ghana's population is resident in rural areas, with the remaining 40% in urban areas. These figures are no different from the United Nations population figures for Ghana (1996) which put Ghana's rural population at 64.9% and urban at 34.8%.

It is this 64.9 percent who mainly provide the backbone of the economy, which has been described as agriculture – based. This is because rural residents are mostly farmers and fishermen. Despite their important contribution to the economy, their standards of living and the level of development in their communities and attention given to their needs have not been at pace with those of urban dwellers.

Cities and district capitals continue to enjoy most of the country's infrastructure, such as better roads, health facilities, housing projects, and good educational institutions. Attempts have been made by governments to bridge this gap but the situation is far from being equal. These unequal levels of development between urban and rural communities greatly contribute to the never-ending problem of rural – urban migration.

The media's coverage in Ghana has been largely urban centered. In the print media for instance circulation in rural areas is lower than the urban areas. Figures available from the *Daily Graphic*, the largest selling newspaper, show that circulation is between 85,000 to 100,000 copies daily, with 72% distributed in urban areas.

Accessing the media however is one of the important requirements for development of communities. C.M Mercado (1992:14) defines development as a "process of providing disadvantaged people in a community the opportunities to realize and improve their knowledge, attitude and skill to utilize, sustain and improve the quality of their lives and the society where they belong". This definition implies that people need knowledge and information to make progress and informed decisions.

In this regard, radio has played a very significant role, especially with the introduction of community radio and the liberalization of the airwaves.

Television, (which is the focus of this study), even though an equally if not more powerful medium has not been as helpful and useful to rural communities as opposed to urban areas, not even the *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)* which has a mandate to serve all Ghanaians.

Indeed the GBC decree (NLCD 226, 1968) states that, among other objectives, the GBC is obliged to:

- prepare in the field of culture, education, information and entertainment programmes reflecting national progress and aspirations.
- broadcast the programmes prepared in the main Ghanaian languages and in English and such other foreign languages as the Corporation may determine.

However this does not happen and as Twumasi (1980) observes, because the news is largely urban based, whatever information percolates into the village is for the most part urban oriented and is filtered through interpreters. The entry of private television stations

has not changed or altered the situation much. *Metro TV*, *TV3*, *TV Africa* and *Crystal TV* are all products of the liberalization of the airwaves, but the trend of marginalisation of rural communities has not changed. This according to the Audience and Research Department of GBC could be due to the fact that television still remains largely an urban medium.

An urban medium in the sense that its coverage of news is mainly elitist and centers on the presidency and the executive, with most of the news stories coming from urban areas, especially Accra. Besides this Ken Amankwa, Deputy Director General, GBC maintained that television sets are not exactly common in rural areas. He claims that figures available from the Research Department of GBC indicates that there are about three million television sets in the country with an average of about 40 – 50 TV sets in a town of about five thousand residents.

Indeed, until as recently as February 2002, *GTV* evening news was solely in English. With the introduction of news in Ghanaian languages as part of the package for *GTV* evening news, the assumption was that, rural residents who do not understand English could now have the opportunity to listen to the news in their own languages.

Indeed the opportunity has come, but even though the news can now be heard in familiar Ghanaian languages, the news is hardly about rural communities and their issues unless the news is connected to officialdom.

It is however interesting to note that in the year under study, coverage of rural news increased dramatically in the last quarter of the year as opposed to the first quarter of the year. The reason is obvious, because the latter part of the year marked the beginning of election campaigning and subsequent election. From the tapes reviewed for this study it appeared during the last quarter of the year rural communities assumed an almost immediate importance to *GTV* and indeed to all other TV stations. Of course it

will not be farfetched to deuce that this sudden interest in rural communities by *GTV* was largely if not solely due to the fact that the presidency, and indeed all political leaders were seriously beating a fast track to the villages to canvas for votes. It is also interesting to note that even in these times when rural communities were supposedly having their *fifteen minutes of fame*, the news stories rarely centered on the people themselves and their issues. These stories centered on the visiting elites.

Ms. Lucy Brown, Head of News, *GTV* admits that indeed this has been the pattern and that the station is quite aware of this imbalance in its news coverage. She claims that since 1983 the trend has been to try and balance news coverage to reflect all groups in the country. Now the awareness is that people would rather hear about themselves and experiences they can identify with.

This provision of balance still remains a pipedream, as there is evidence on the ground that the situation is far from improving.

Ms. Brown indicated that 80% of news stories in the regular news line up of *GTV* are centered on officialdom, about the presidency and the elites. Stories from rural areas are featured on weekends; usually Sundays when there is little or no news about the executive.

For *GTV*, the explanation is that they make up for their lack of rural news by being the only television station with regular documentaries on rural communities, but even then the focus is not on the people but the projects being undertaken by government or non – governmental agencies.

Ms. Brown also indicated that sometimes it is simply a matter of who pays the piper calling the tune. *GTV* is government owned and depends heavily on government funding so they are obliged to give prominence to their benefactors.

How does an assertion like this reflect on the indices of news values and worthiness as outlined by White (1950) and Galtung and Ruge (1965)

White lists nine factors which influence the selection of news items. These are labour, accidents and disasters, crime and vice, human interest, national, political and international.

Galtung and Ruge mention time span, intensity or threshold, value, clarity/lack of ambiguity, cultural proximity or relevance, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition and socio-cultural values of the receiving society as indices that affect the selection of news items.

If these are indices for deciding news worthiness, then rural communities do need to receive more attention than has been given them.

Or is it the case that rural communities do not have stories that have these indices, or are rural residents and their stories not news worthy.

These are questions that need answers and television stations owe it as a responsibility to provide us with some answers.

1.1 Problem Definition

Boafo (1987) defines rural news as “reporting and writing news with a rural perspective. It is news and other related materials gathered and packaged mainly in the rural areas as opposed to the so – called rural news written for ruralities in urban areas by urban dwellers and with urban biases.”

He adds, “Rural news is news that informs and educates urban cities and governments about the needs, aspirations, problems, successes, joys, values and general life of the rural dwellers. In turn it informs and educates rural dwellers about government policies, ideas and such other factors they might need for survival, progress or improved living standards.”

Boafo's definition shows that giving prominence to news of and about rural communities is of immense importance to national development. Despite this the practice at *GTV* as indicated by Ms Brown has been to give prominence to the presidency and the executive as opposed to rural communities.

This study will therefore attempt to study the seeming imbalance in news coverage of urban vis a vis rural communities. It will also study why officialdom or elitism always gets the edge over rural residents and their lifestyles. The study will also look into the kind of coverage given rural communities if and when they are featured. These issues will be studied against the backdrop of rural news coverage in the first and last quarters of an election year and how the electioneering process impacted on rural coverage.

1.2 Objectives

The study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. How often were news items of and about rural communities covered by *GTV* in January to March as opposed October to December, 2004 and the reasons why.
2. How rural communities are portrayed in the news.
3. What are the constraints faced by *GTV* in its coverage of rural news.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Communication is a necessary tool for development of every community, rural or otherwise. Television is one of the most effective means of mass communication. This study is important because over the years, news has centered on urban areas and the executive arm of government. This study is important because it attempts to examine the principal issues that contribute to this situation.

It also addresses the effects of this situation on development as posited by Okuma (1993) in her study of rural women in Nigeria. She observed that development communication has been practically accepted in all developing countries to be an integral part of development planning and that access to media, as well as other forms of communication is an indispensable prerequisite for development and social change in communities. Ngugi (1995) also sees communication as *sine qua non* to development. He sees it as the systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and

techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate and train rural populations or people at the grass root levels in a community.”

Mass media messages have the potential and capacity of promoting specific development objectives in communities, such as increasing food production, adult literacy, public health education, family planning and other aspects of development.

Access to media is imperative for every community's development. It is therefore a matter of course that rural communities are given equal access and adequate coverage.

1.4 Significance

The significance of this study would be evident in the fact that:

- Media houses would find the information useful in improving their coverage of the country's communities.
- Reporters assigned to cover rural areas would hopefully begin to actually focus on the people themselves and not the activities of officials when they visit the rural areas.
- Policy makers, governing and regulatory bodies of GTV may also begin to ensure that all groups are given adequate coverage. Improved rural coverage will also mean that policy makers will receive more information to guide their policy decisions for development.
- The study would hopefully provide some inputs for students and practicing journalists who are considering rural reporting as a career change by highlighting reasons, benefits, and insights into the necessity and importance of giving stories from the rural communities more prominence.

- Finally the study would add and contribute to the pool of knowledge and research on media coverage of rural communities.
- It would also serve as a basis for further investigation and research into into the issue.

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested.

1. That it is likely that news reports by GTV is predominantly urban based and centered on the elite in the society.
2. That it is likely that rural residents would be given stereotypic images and portrayal of poverty and agriculture – based lifestyles.
3. That the increased amount of rural news during the last quarter of 2004 was due to the elections

1.6 Operational Definitions

These definitions pertain to this study and the purposes thereof.

(1) **Representation:** How much coverage, voice and presence is given rural communities by Ghana Television in its newscasts.

(2) **Rural** – A rural area refers to places outside regional and district capitals, where the lifestyle pertains to agriculture and simple quiet living. These are areas with a population of 5000 or less and any other place designated as such.

(3) **Population** – The number of people living in a particular rural area vis – a – vis the amount of average given them by television news reporting.

(4) **Urban area** – This refers to the regional and or any other place designated as such.

(5) **Rural News** – News that comes from places outside regional or district capitals.

(6) **Urban News** – News coming from regional capitals.

(7) **Political/Elitist News** – News that has to do with politicians, government officials and the presidency.

(8) **Press/Media** – In this study it refers to television.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide a theoretical underpinning to the issue under study. This study as mentioned earlier is to examine the coverage of rural news or its lack thereof. The fact that 2004 (the year under study) was an election year is also going to be used to draw a relation between the coverage of rural news as relates to the

elections. The study will also attempt to draw a link between the amount of coverage given to rural communities and how it may relate to the promotion of the development of rural communities.

Because this study borders on why news about rural communities rarely make it to the news line up of GTV, the researcher chose the gatekeeping theory as the theoretical framework in which to place the study.

2.1 Gatekeeping theory

The term gatekeeper was introduced into the English language in 1947 by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist and applied to the communication field by David Manning in 1950. Since then it has been used in studies in the mass communication process especially with regard to any action that involves choosing or rejecting some potential news items for publication. Even though presently, the gatekeeper's role seems to be limited by technological advances (like internet, which ensures that the public have access to

almost every kind of information that interests them) the gatekeeper still plays a very important role in the selection and placement of what news stories the public get to see, read or hear about.

The thrust of this study would therefore attempt to examine what goes into the selection or non-selection of news items by editors. This study will specifically look at the supposed selection of news about political figures and the elite over news from rural areas. It would also examine what factors inform news editors in their selection of news items.

Lewin (1947), in studying food habits, pointed out that food comes to the family table through what he called "channels." To change food habits would be the equivalent to changing the food that moves through the channels. Certain areas within these channels where decisions are made then function as gates. Lewin's gatekeeper work is most distinctly embodied in the following statement:

"The constellation of the forces before and after the gate region is decisively different in such a way that the passing of the unit through the whole channel depends to a high degree upon what happens in the gate region." Understanding the functioning of the gate also involves understanding the factors that determine the decision of the gatekeeper.

White was the first to study the role of the gatekeeper in a media environment. He chose the telegraph editor of an American non-metropolitan daily paper as his gatekeeper in one of the first clinical studies of the principle applied to a new medium.

The study of White focused on one wire editor and the movement of wire service stories through his gate. It focused on why certain stories were rejected instead of why the ones used were chosen. This telegraph editor was in charge of the selection of national and

international news that would appear on the front and jump pages of the paper, and his selection was final. Therefore, according to White, the telegraph editor may be the most important in this instance.

However in the case of *GTV*, the news editor as indicated by Ms. Brown may not be the single most important person in the decision making process but s/he still wields a lot of influence. Subsequent studies have expanded the concept of gates as well as the elements that influence the flow of news to include not only the editor but reporters, ownership and all those who affect the flow of news at one point or the other. (Gieber, 1960)

White listed nine factors which influence the selection of news. These are labour, accidents and disasters, crime and vice, human interest, national, political and international.

Galtung and Ruge (1965) also outlined certain criteria that inform the choice of news items. These are time span, intensity or threshold, value, clarity/lack of ambiguity, cultural proximity or relevance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition and socio-cultural values of the receiving society.

Gieber (1960) also wrote: "The source must decide whether the information is sufficiently important to his interest group and community as a whole. On the other hand, the reporter must judge whether the information has some value according to the perception of news".

Unlike White who limited the identification of the gatekeeper to the editor, Gieber expanded it to include press associations or any one segment of the news editorial staff.

Westley and Mc Lean's (1957) model effectively explains the role of the gatekeeper. (See model on attached)

Here 'C' plays the role of the gate keeper, it occupies the critical position of accepting information from the sender 'A' (the advocate).

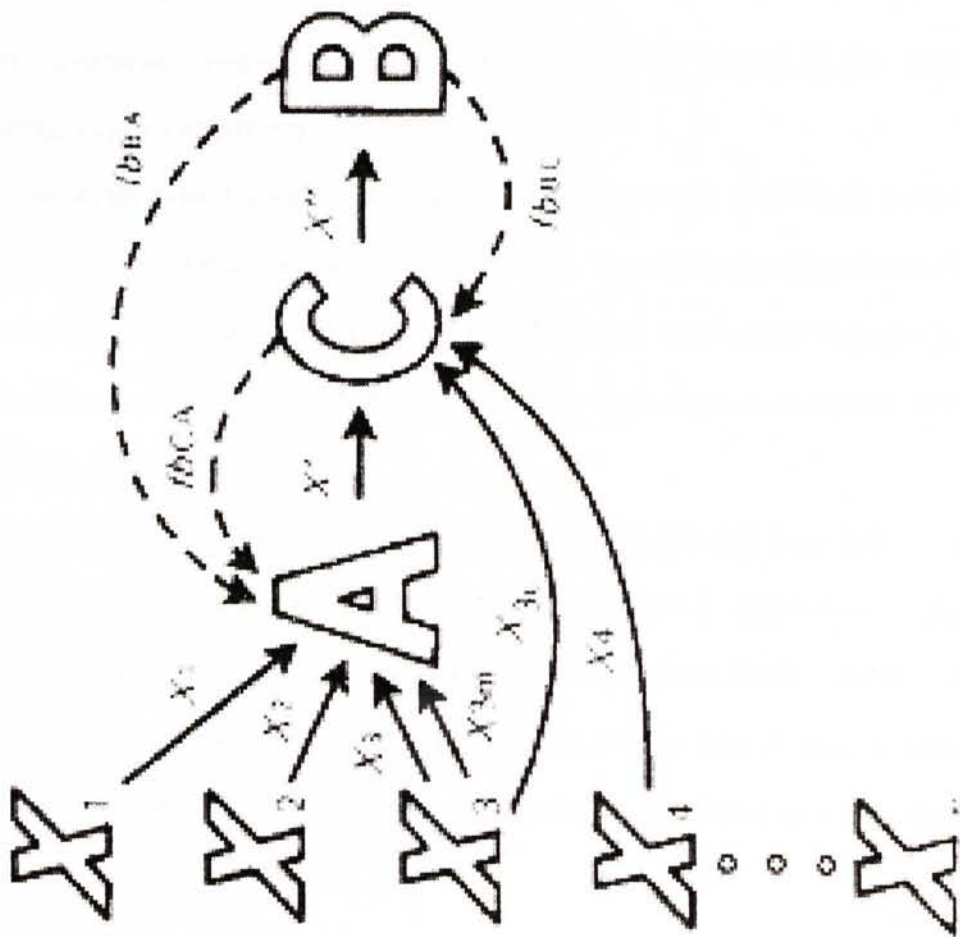
'C' refines the information and sends it on to the audience which is 'B' (behaviour agent or the individual receiving the information). The most important critical feature is that 'C' serves as agent for 'B' by selecting the effects appropriate for 'B's satisfaction.

'C' also translates these messages into symbols that can be understood before transmitting them via some medium to B.

It also means that the model incorporates all persons and things who are involved in the flow of news. The model depicts communication as an organic process in a dynamic environment.

Dimmick (1974) terms gatekeeping an "uncertain theory"; he based his discussion on the observation that gatekeepers are uncertain which events are to be defined as news. He contends that it is the receiving society that eventually makes the decision. Dimmick also considers available space and traditional news values as factors affecting the gatekeeping process.

Mc Quail (1986) adds that bureaucratic pressures from within the newsroom control news and news policy. He maintains that the audience is not necessarily the whole body of potential readers (viewers) of the medium, but they are more significant for the communicator.



Westley-MacLean Model

Source: Bruce Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communication Research," *Audio Visual Communication Review*, Winter, 1953. By permission.

Davison et al (1977) point out that individual reporters even on local stories often determine the subjects or the angles to the subjects about which they write even if they are assigned by a superior.

GTV has reporters in rural areas, but whatever gatekeeping functions they may exercise ends after their stories are filed and sent to Accra. These stories are referred to as "orphaned stories" because the reporters are not in Accra to fight or insist on their placement so they could be and are often ignored. (ref. Ms. Lucy Brown)

Epstein (1973), whose work has mainly been in television, cautions that any attempt to separate effects of news processes itself is difficult. He adds, "It is not possible to determine, simply by historical research or content analysis, systematic distortions in the images of events presented in the media without first independently establishing the actual course of the events.

Epstein advocates beyond research to finding out the cause of the situation and suggesting ways of improving it.

In another dimension, Epstein also submits that producers and house rules in media organizations also affect the gatekeeping process. He points out that whatever initiative the newsmen may have is mitigated by the fact that it must meet the expectation and policies of the producer if their story is to get on air. Eventually he fulfils the needs of the organization. Epstein writes:

"The analogy becomes even more strained if it is argued that even though newsmen have no distinct sphere of control over their material in the process, news decisions are still made on the basis of professional values – that is standards that lie outside the organization – rather than according to the dictates of the organization, whether they be executives or correspondents, share certain outlooks on what constitutes news stories

and will act according to these concepts even when actions conflict with the interests of the organisation that employs them.”

Epstein argues that while newsmen have certain shared values of what constitutes news, it does not follow that these news values will prevail when they run counter to the structural constraints and logic of the organization. In answer to his own question: “Do news organizations lend themselves to any sort of systematic analysis?” he concludes: “While any given news decision, when taken alone, may seem idiosyncratic, it is still possible paradoxically, for the total output of an organization to be largely determined by general rules, routines and policies.”

Donohew and his associates (1965) expand the use of information beyond the news media and point out that all social organizations depend to some extent on information use and its control. He says if mass communication involves control of information and knowledge, then in light of the way decisions are made in a modern pluralistic society, the study of the gatekeepers who execute control decisions in the knowledge flow is especially urgent.

Processes within mass communication may be viewed within a framework of a total social system made up of a series of subsystems whose primary concerns include control of information with an interest in gaining other social ends.

Questions then arise, according to Donohew (1965), of how such controls are exercised, where in the process they occur, and what the consequences of these controls are for the overall social system. He notes that media make up subsystems that cut across source and audience subsystems and for the social system as a whole.

Gatekeeping then functions as a form of knowledge control. Its functions extend beyond selection to include shaping, display, timing, withholding and repetition.

Brown (1980) advocates a return to the original concepts of Lewin, in which gate keeping mirrors the perceptions of society. He focuses on Lewin's idea that gate sections are governed either by impartial rules or by gatekeepers, with the power to make decisions or to transfer, but that the power is independent from other regions and ranges of impartial rules. For his study, Brown used a single social issue and traced it over a period of two years in two news magazines.

Badgikian (1973), in his famous RAND study speaks of the restraints on gate keeping imposed by mechanical functions. His study touches on points salient to the concept of gate keeping citing Breed's study (1960) of social influence in the news as a "benchmark". Badgikian writes, "Policy is exerted in effective ways; editorial executives control assignment of stories, which is the most crucial decision in journalism. They decide whether a finished story will be used or not, and if used what emphasis and length."

Continuing his emphasis on restraints on the gatekeeper, he writes:

"The gatekeeper, though he seems to perform like one, is not a valueless machine operating in a vacuum. His decisions, resulting in the printing of most stories seen by the public, reflect his personal as well as his professional values and all the surrounding pressures converging on him."

Sigel (1973) however takes issue with Badgikian's assertion that there is a minimum of bureaucracy. "Most news results from choice, not decisions," he writes and adds that the

stories are choices of many decision makers who choose what stories get prominence and which does not.

These choices, says Sigel, are the result of internal politics. The final gatekeeper strives for ideal balance among the many news items available. Oddly, he observes that ownership plays a minor role in editorial gatekeeping. In Sigel's view, news selection is a continuing battle of prestige among editors and reporters.

He figures that for these editors and reporters, where their story is placed reflect their standing on the bureaucratic ladder. The intrinsic values of the news and the receiving society take a secondary role.

Battidam (1986) also seems to support this view generally, he writes:

"The editors and publishers play the unique role of determining what we should read and see and why one particular news story should make the front page or be the lead story in a news broadcast etc".

Black and Bryant (1992) also contend that editorial policy is another form of gatekeeping and that the *New York Times* and the *New York Daily News* are examples of media houses with different editorial policy.

The *New York Times*, they write, prides itself "in the thoroughness and attention to detail of its substantive reporting by playing down the sensational and the deviant in the interest of propriety, taste and standards" while the *New York Daily News* "emphasizes the sensational and the bizarre as a matter of policy".

Subsequent studies into the theory have shown that the journalist's self-perception as the person who decides what people need to know is deeply ingrained. Indeed, it has been suggested that the identification and dissemination of what is worth knowing is the journalist's most basic and vital task in a democratic society. (Janowitz 1975)

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide context and background for the study by giving insights into related studies into the problem under study. Not a lot of research has been conducted into this problem in Ghana, however experiences and similar studies from other environments would be used.

3.1 Related studies

Loveland (1977) in a study conducted on how the American mass media covered the Indian society found that the publications of the mass media were written for an urban elite. She concluded that the mass media are, with their limited content and urban orientation, more class-media oriented than mass-media oriented".

Semmel (1976) in a similar study compared four newspapers in their coverage of news. He realized that each paper was largely confined to events in large metropolitan centres particularly the capital cities of targeted countries. It tended to focus on the activities of individual elite groups and government agencies in the countries reported about.

He adds that the coverage “show a pronounced elite slant”. “Countries such as England, Soviet Union, France, Japan, Italy, West Germany and Israel dominated the news. He explained that since these same countries ranked among the leading political and economic powers in the world, the elite U.S. press tended to give them more attention thereby neglecting “central Africa, Northern Africa, parts of Latin America, Micronesia and the Scandinavian”

This can be likened to the situation where elites are given more and positive coverage than rural communities at *GTV*.

In a study on “Community development” Ernst Sandra (1972) analyzed the type of community development coverage in three newspapers representing different levels of interest: national, metropolitan and small town newspapers respectively.

Ernst found out that community development coverage was oriented only towards the city audience with virtually no participation from the countryside. The researcher considered this to be quite a limitation on the press.

Likewise, Bernigan Frances (1979) noted that the flow of information from the cities to the rural areas was inadequate and lopsided, and so a vice versa approach must be adopted to generate an exchange of ideas.

In her view, until recently the approach of development communication had been the marketing approach called “Persuasive Communication”. The media were used to support development initiatives and directions, thus, encouraging people to support development projects.

The approach was one of extortion, highlighting benefits to be derived from community projects and urging people to take advantage of them.

This suggests that in situations where rural communities are covered, the emphasis is not on them but projects being undertaken by government as happened during the last quarter of the year under review, where rural communities were given maximum exposure because there was a sudden urgency to commission as many rural community projects as possible.

In place of this kind of coverage, Frances suggests that there is the need to continue to use a communication approach to inform and point out the reasons why central development projects are being done.

But this kind of assertiveness is difficult to achieve in a state owned media house like *GTV*.

In Gadzekpo's "Is there a place for the state owned media in a constitutional democracy?" she found out that governments, including constitutional regimes have always attempted to have some control over state-owned media to probably ensure that their policies and programmes are given adequate publicity devoid of criticism and critical mindedness.

Karikari however provides another angle to the same issue in Africa: the press and democracy. He writes: The sordid record of state monopoly over the media has provoked the widespread rejection of state participation, as regards the ownership of the press." He says, "A few commentators do not only consider this unavoidable, they even propose retaining some measure of state control – including licensing."

At the macro level Gunaratne (1982) in an analysis of reportage of the Third World in the Australian press noted that in spite of the international clamour for a new more just and efficient world information and communication order in reporting the third world, the

press carried less favourable news less development news that was not political or crime/accident related.

In a study by Potter (2002) he analyzed the web pages of 471 radio stations. He realized that almost 80% of his respondents would have preferred to listen to programmes about them and experiences that relates to them but instead only 26% of actual programming was community based.

This assertion was confirmed by Ms. Brown who indicated that studies conducted by the Audience and Research Department show that the station would be regarded in a better light if they had more news items and programmes about rural communities. After all as Schramm puts it (1964) puts it, even the urban dweller would still like to hear news about his roots.

Napoli (2002) in a study on minority media tried to look at the coverage of Hispanic and Black America. He noted that there were no specific programmes designed for and devoted to these groups. He also noted that in situations where these minorities are mentioned, it often has to do with crime and drug related issues. This is akin to the situation where rural communities are often associated with disease, poverty, ignorance and substandard forms of living.

He writes, "The diversity principle extends in part, from the traditional democratic theory notion of a well functioning or market place of policies in which citizens' abilities to participate effectively in a democratic process are contingent upon their abilities to consider a wide array of ideas and viewpoints from a wide array of sources."

He adds, "The availability of content targeting minority interests has long been perceived as an important means of providing such content diversity." As noted by the Federal

Communications Commission, "It has long been an established policy of the Commission that the Commission that the American systems of broadcasting must serve significant minorities among our population."

Napoli further argues that exposure to diverse points of view is particularly vital within the context of minority media so that greater cultural understanding and social cohesion can be achieved.

Economics, he notes, also play a role, because as is often the case of minorities have a smaller income, and therefore the trend of the media is to address the higher income groups who can patronize what they have to offer.

Could this be the case that because our rural residents mainly engaged in substandard economic ventures, they are not considered a profitable interest?

Schramm (1964) agrees with Napoli (2002) that this situation must be rectified. Commenting on the role of the media in development he writes, "To achieve development people must be informed, persuaded, and educated. Information must flow not only to them but also from them, so that they may participate in the acts and decisions in nation building. Information must flow within all levels of society."

Communication can aid government in its development projects by making people aware of their grassroots and how they can aid it in providing facilities to increase their productivity, live healthier lives and participate in their own development so as to be able to share in the benefits of modern life.

Schramm adds, "In almost all developing countries, the urban dweller usually has his roots in the rural area and the mass media, should make him aware of his responsibility



towards his village and also origin by giving him coverage to problems and achievements of the rural areas. This can help bridge the gap between the traditional Africans living in mud – hut villages, virtually and their urban compatriots. The mass media can therefore be said to be performing their role fully in the act of nation building by assisting in information flow from the capital to rural areas and vice versa. When people in rural areas are aware of government's goals and policies they can contribute their quota to the social, economic, and political changes taking place in the country. Again it is only by making the government and city dwellers aware of the events and happenings in the rural areas that they can be helped in their transition to modernization."

In a country like Ghana, which is predominantly agricultural, efforts would be made by the mass media to draw attention to issues affecting farmers, fishermen and women who are largely concentrated in the rural areas. This suggests that the media should endeavour to create an atmosphere for development by focusing attention on problems and goals for development.

Editors owe it a duty and responsibility to select and give prominence to news items with a rural prospective.

And to the professional journalists in African countries who are tasked to cover rural areas, it should be a matter of social responsibility. Indeed what is journalism if it is not devoted to social development of ones nation?

Okigbo (1992) contends that journalists need not necessarily report only positive stories from such areas. "Negative stories on such events such as crop failures, natural disasters, epidemics, can also serve the cause of development if they point the way to

avoidable mistakes, human errors or administrative inefficiencies and suggest how future occurrences can be avoided.”

Kasoma (1992), in a bid to give guidelines for rural reportage, identifies four categories.

They are:

- (1) The reporting done by the town journalist who reports the village to the town.
- (2) The reporting carried out by the town journalists when reporting the village to the village.
- (3) That performed by the village journalist who is reporting the village to the town and finally.
- (4) That undertaken by the village journalists when reporting the village to the village.

In the first category the journalist is stationed in a town or an urban area and reports what goes on in the rural area to urban dwellers.

This happens when the reporter accompanies a government official who is invited to commission a government project in a rural community. Here the emphasis is on officialdom. This in fact is the practice of television news coverage in Ghana today.

The second category is made possible in communities where rural or provincial newspapers exist.

The third type is the one done by a rural reporter for town dwellers. According to Kasoma “Most of the people who live and work in the urbanized areas in Africa felt the need for news from home”

The last category is when a rural based journalist reports for and about the rural people.

Kasoma's attempt at providing some sort of guide for the coverage of rural news is aimed at rescuing the situation in our TV stations.

These suggestions by Kasoma, even though useful, do not serve as a panacea to the problem.

Editors need to apply fair judgement based on sound journalistic principles in their selection of what stories make the news.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This study is an analysis of the frequency and content of rural news stories, which featured on the evening news bulletins of *GTV* in 2004. The study covers the first quarter (January to March) and last quarter (October to November) 2004.

Content Analysis and in-depth interview methods were the research methods used.

This chapter therefore presents a description of the various steps and procedures that were employed to collect the data.

4.1 Content Analysis

Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest contents of communication.”

Kerlinger (1986) defines content analysis as a “method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.”

Content analysis was used as the main research method because it provides an objective view of events and minimizes researcher bias. Content analysis also provides an accurate representation for a body of messages which allows for easy quantification. This method also aids precision, as conclusions drawn would be based on content reviewed. That is why Krippendorf (1980) defines content analyses as a "research technique for making replicable and valid references from data to their context."

An added advantage in using content analyses is that the material or text to be used is readily available. This saves time and cost.

One limitation though, is the fact that content analyses studies only content and therefore cannot draw meaningful contexts in the relationship between these contents and the perception of audiences about these contents and the influence and consequences of these contents on audiences. (Epstein 1973).

4.2 In – depth Interview

This kind of interview is defined as a give-and-take verbal exchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinions or belief from another person or persons (Maccoby and Maccoby, 1954, quoted in Denzin, 1987:103)

Lindlof (1995) simply defines it as a conversation with a purpose.

In-depth interviews with the news editor of *GTV* as well as regional reporters of the media house under study was used to elicit information and responses from these news editors to put the study into some context and perspective. It also helped in situating the numbers and figures from the content analyses within some sort of framework. This was

be done by using opinion, knowledge and experience type questions. The in - depth interviews were used to translate the research objectives into specific questions that tapped a conceptual domain in the researcher's theory of gatekeeping.

The interviews also produced responses that bore on the hypotheses posited.

The researcher employed the use of a general interview guide to provide some form of guidance and uniformity in the process.

While the researcher acknowledges that interviews are generally subjective, strenuous attempts were made to balance or offset this subjectivity by the stringent nature of the content analyses provided.

4.3 Study Setting

Ghana Television (GTV)

Ghana Television is a state owned broadcasting house. It airs for about 20 hours a day. It has three major news bulletins a day. These are the 2pm, 7pm and 10:30pm news bulletins. The 7pm or evening news is their principal news bulletin which lasts for about an hour with business, weather and the news in local languages as part of the package. *GTV's* news stories are mostly straight news items mainly from and about the capital, political and social elites.

GTV was chosen as the setting because it is state owned and is obliged by law to cover and reach the whole country with programmes in languages that are familiar to the citizens of the country (NLCD 226).

It also has the widest territorial spread, reaching over 90% of the country.

4.4 Period of Study

The period chosen for this study is January to March and October to December 2004. These are the first and last quarters of the year 2004.

The idea behind choosing these periods was to help the researcher establish whether the pattern of rural news coverage bears some relationship to the political calendar of the country. The amount of coverage given to rural communities in the first quarter of the year when there was little political activity was compared to that of the last quarter of the year which formed the peak of political campaigning in the run up to the 2004 elections.

The last quarter marked the period when a lot of rural communities were inundated with visits from officialdom and political party representatives who all form part of the elite. The approach was to observe whether the news would dominantly be about visiting government officials, political party functionaries or about the rural communities these individuals visited.

4.5 Sampling Procedure

The universe of the study was limited to all evening news bulletins of GTV for the periods covering January to March and October to December 2004.

A sample size of 101 news tapes, which comprised of a total of 1353 news items were chosen for the study.

The sample size represents about 56.1% of the total number of evening news bulletins for the days that were sampled for the period under study.

The method that was used to select the sample was the constructed week method. Using a calendar starting from Monday 5th January 2004, subsequent days for the period were chosen by choosing every other day in the week for the months under study.

4.6 Content Categories

The content categories are as follows:

- (a) Frequency of mention of rural news
- (b) Predominant images associated with rural communities
- (c) Placement of rural news items
- (d) Subject of rural news stories

4.7 Interviews

The researcher conducted personal and in-depth interview with the news directors, news editors and regional correspondents of GTV. This was important because the editors and directors are the ones who are responsible for deciding what stories get selected as news items, their placement and what is rejected. The interview with the news editor was conducted using the face - to - face approach or one - on - one approach with the researcher acting as the interviewer.

Telephone interviews were used for the various regional correspondents. This was intended to save time and money, in that the researcher did not need to travel to the various regions to interview the correspondents.

The researcher however acknowledges that telephone interviews did not give the researcher the opportunity of eliciting more elaborate responses from the respondents

because of cost considerations and the fact that the researcher will not be face to face with the respondents.

4.8 Data Collection Instruments

A coding frame (see appendix) was used to serve as a guide to help elicit relevant data for the analysis. A coding sheet was developed for this purpose. Some of the variables that were studied included placement, representation, focus and origin of story among others. Other data like story setting, date of broadcast and type of story were also coded.

A general interview guide was also used to help in getting detailed responses and explanations from the news editor and regional reporters.

4.9 Data Analysis

The univariate analysis was used to measure the variables. To enable the researcher do this, the variables – placement, direction, occupations associated with rural people were analysed to find out for instance if the 2004 elections played a role in the amount of news coverage given to rural communities.

After coding the variables, the data were computerized, after which the findings were descriptively analysed. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used in the analysis.

Data representation methods such as frequency distribution tables, pie charts, histograms and other graphical presentations were used to provide comprehensive summaries of the data.

Details of these findings are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. This is designed to provide or present answers to the research questions, which were posited at the beginning of the research. The findings are generally supported by tables, graphs figures and the interviews conducted with reporters and editors.

5.1 Number of News Stories/Bulletins

The researcher had a universe of 183 days, spanning the first and last quarters of 2004.

Out of this, the researcher randomly selected 89 days (47%) for the study.

The first question the research attempts to answer is whether GTV news items are predominantly from urban areas and are about the elite.

Table 1: Number of News Stories - 1st and Last Quarter 2004

Type	Urban	Rural	Foreign	sports	Business	Total
Frequency	823	106	274	55	95	1353
Percentage	60%	9%	20%	4%	7%	100%

Evaluation

A grand total of 1,353 news stories were used for the study. Again out of this total, only 106 of these news items were from and or about rural communities, this represents about 9% of the total, on the contrary 823 news items were from urban areas, this is a 60% representation of total number of news items analysed for the study. This shows that more than half of all news stories for *GTV* news are from and about urban dwellers and the elite.

The combination of sports, business and foreign news totaled 424 news items, representing a total of 31%.

The chart below shows the general tendency for the news to be of and about urban areas and their inhabitants or the elite.

Chart 1: GTV News Bulletins at 7pm – 1st and Last Quarter 2004

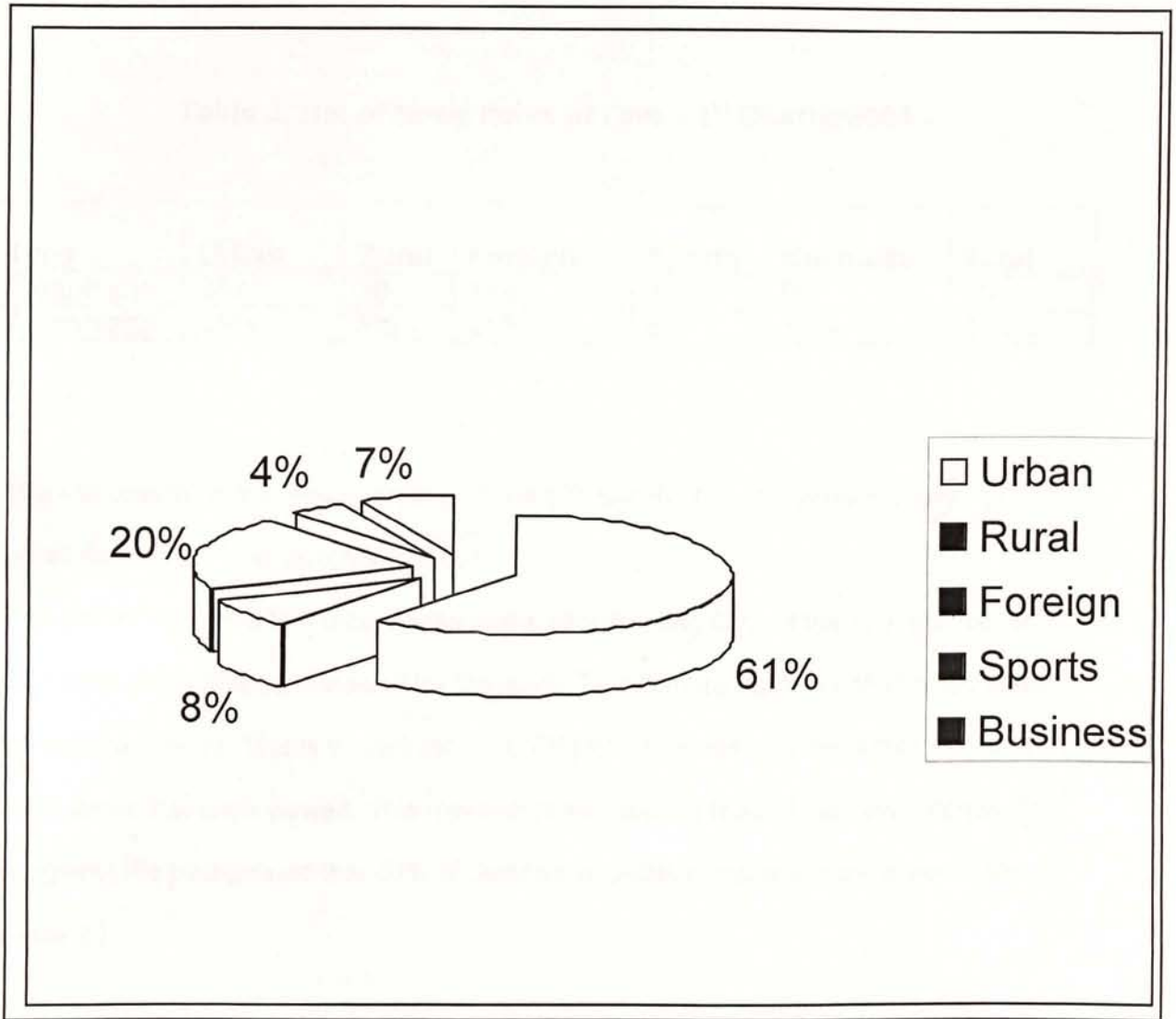


Chart 1 presents an overview of the all news stories and how they were distributed in the six months under study.

The researcher attempts to break this down into the first and last quarters of 2004 for a more comprehensive analysis.

5.2 Number of stories – 1st Quarter

Table 2: No. of News Items at 7pm – 1st Quarter2004

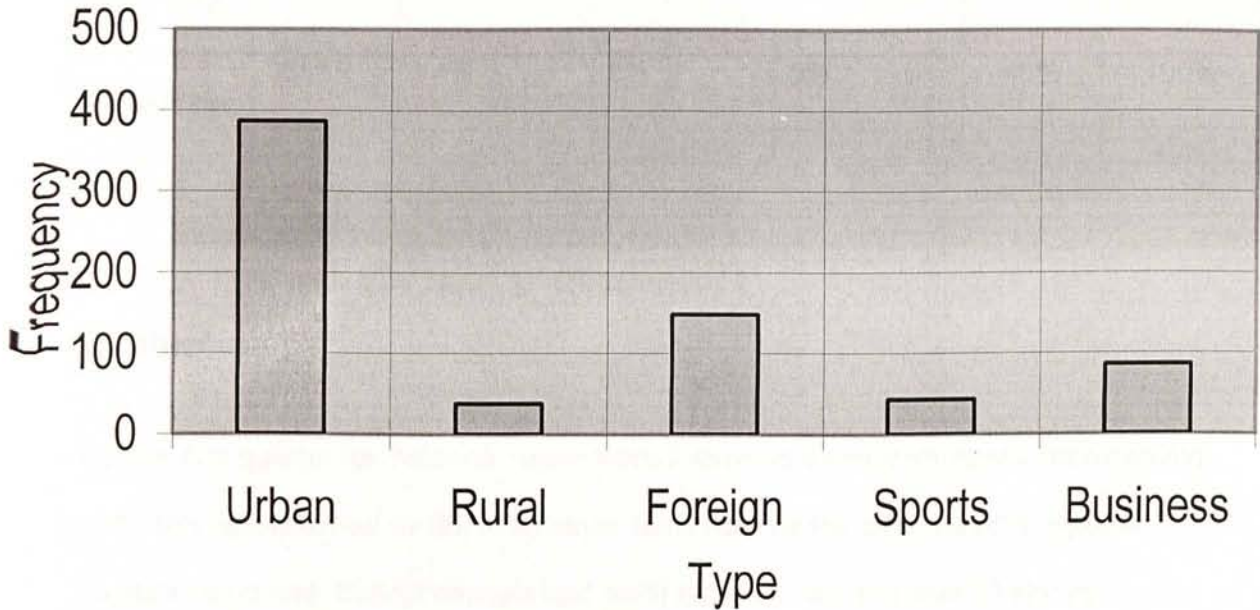
Type	Urban	Rural	Foreign	Sports	Business	Total
Frequency	387	38	148	43	86	702
Percentage	55%	5%	21%	6%	12%	100%

The first quarter of the year spanning January to March, 2004 followed the same pro urban news pattern as described above.

The quarter recorded 387 urban news items, representing 55% of the total number of 702 news items that were viewed for the study. This is more than half of all news items for the first quarter. This is in contrast to 38(5%) which represents the number of rural news items that were viewed. This represents just about a third of the news stories. This is against the background that 60% of Ghana's population reside in rural areas. (See Table 2.)

Chart 2 demonstrates this point.

Chart 2: GTV News at 7pm -1st Quarter 2004



Even in situations where the news were from urban areas, the concentration was towards Accra as opposed to the other Regional capitals for instance. This assertion was supported by more than half of the regional reporters interviewed. Some of the reasons they gave for this imbalance included a belief that urban residents had access to and understanding of the news than rural residents.

Other reasons included lack of space and airtime, similar stories being aired or an agenda against a particular rural news reporter

5.3 Origin of Story – 1ST Quarter

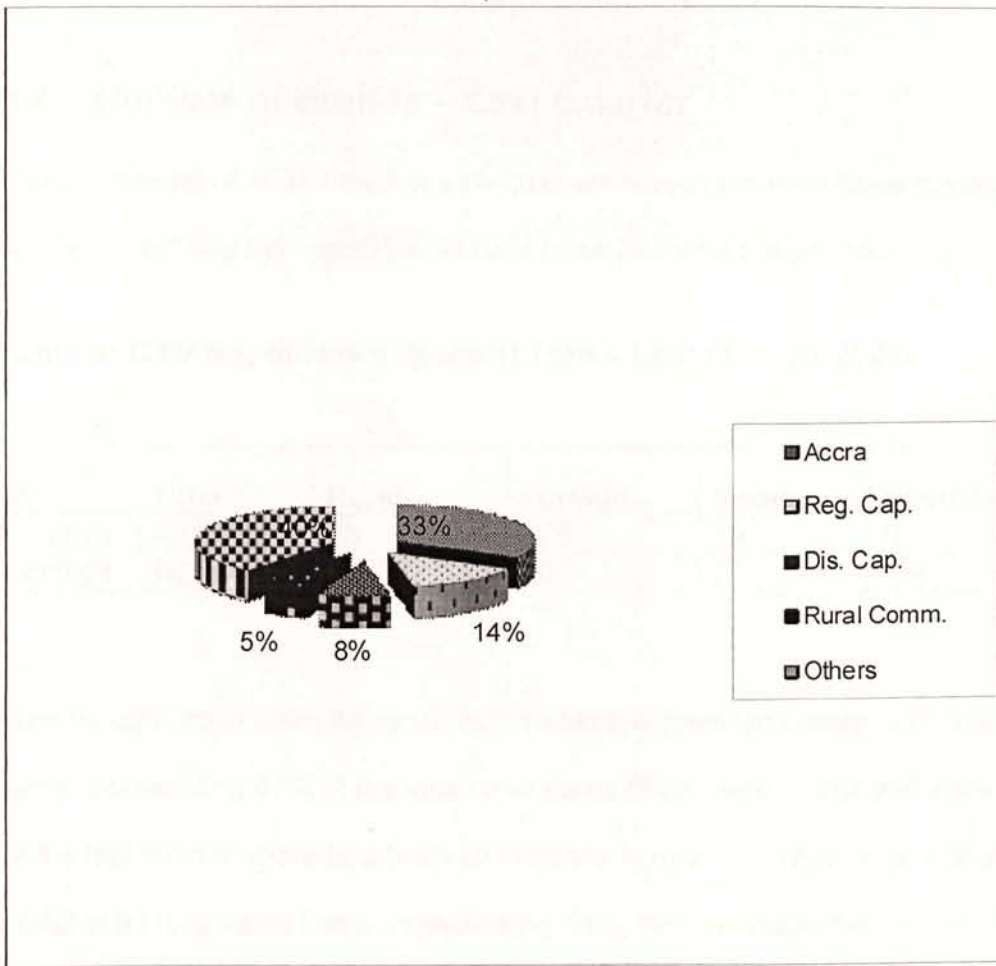
Table 3: GTV News At 7pm (*Origin Of Story*) – 1st Quarter 2004.

Source	Accra	Reg. Capital	Dis. Capital	Rural Com.	Others	Total
Frequency	233	96	58	38	277	702
Percentage	33%	14%	8%	5%	40%	100%

Evaluation

For the first quarter for instance, there were 233 news items from Accra, representing 33%, this was followed by 96(14%) news items from all the other nine(9) regional capitals combined. District capitals had 58(8) news stories and only 38 stories, representing 5% came from rural communities. This is captured in the chart 3.

Chart 3: GTV News at 7pm Origin of Story 1st Quarter 2004



Even though this marked the beginning of an election year, it appeared there was no immediate need to focus a lot of attention on rural communities.

The concentration was still on urban areas especially Accra and other regional capitals, with little news and information streaming in from rural communities.



5.4 Number of Stories – Last Quarter

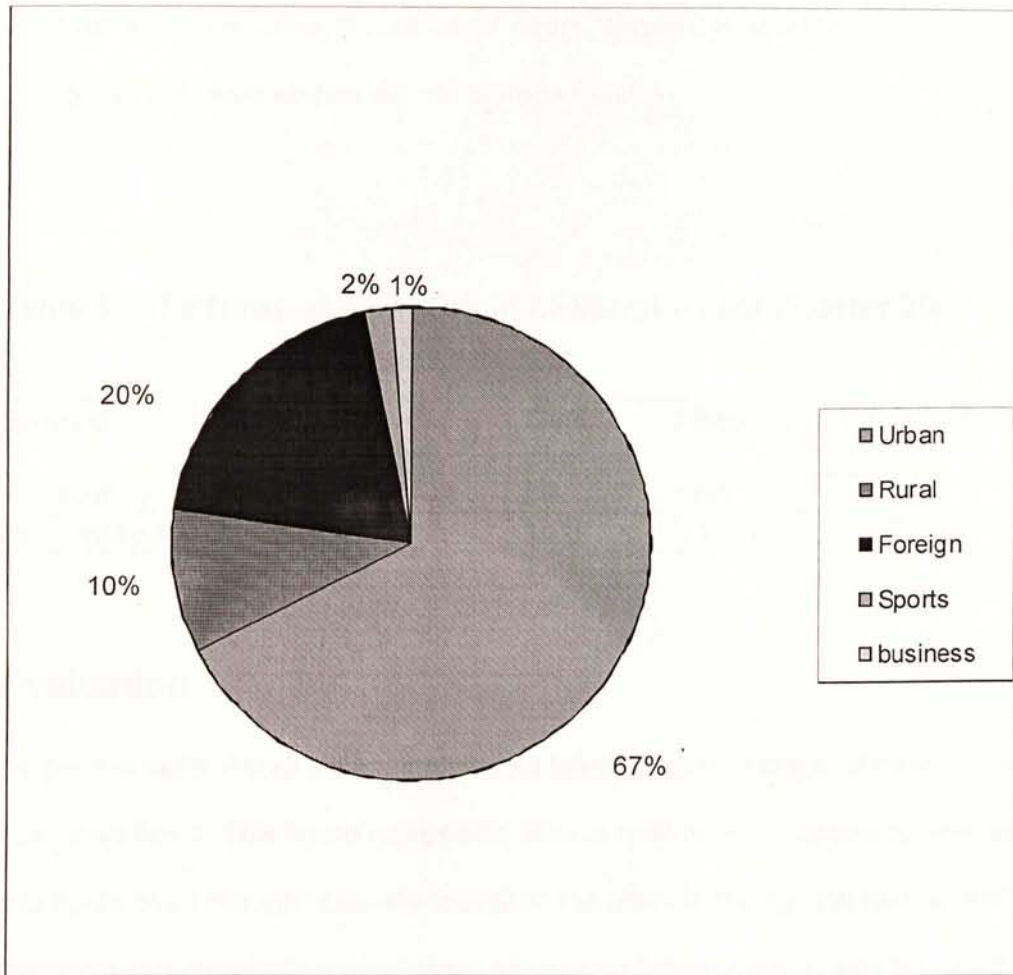
The last quarter of 2004 however saw quite an increase in rural news coverage, with November posting the highest of 41 rural news items for the period.

Table 4: GTV No. of News items at 7pm – Last Quarter 2004

Type	Urban	Rural	Foreign	Sports	Business	Total
Frequency	436	68	126	12	9	651
Percentage	67%	10%	20%	2%	1%	100%

Even though urban news items still dominated the news landscape, with 436 news items, representing 67% of the total news items of 651 news items that were reviewed for the last quarter, there had been an increase in rural coverage. The quarter recorded a total of 68 rural news items, representing 10%, almost double the amount of rural coverage for the first quarter, which had 38 (5%) rural news items. See chart 4

Chart 4: GTV News at 7pm -4th Quarter 2004



Almost all the respondents interviewed agreed that the increase in coverage in the last quarter of the year was as a result of the elections. Indeed one correspondent insisted that, such has been the trend every election year.

5.5 Origin of Story – Last Quarter

Even though the number of rural news items rose in this quarter, the distribution in terms of origin of the news stories did not change much.

Table 5: GTV News at 7pm (Origin of Story) – Last Quarter 2004

Source	Accra	Reg. capital	Dist. capital	Rural area	Other	Total
Frequency	224	123	89	68	147	651
Percentage	34%	19%	14%	10%	23%	100%

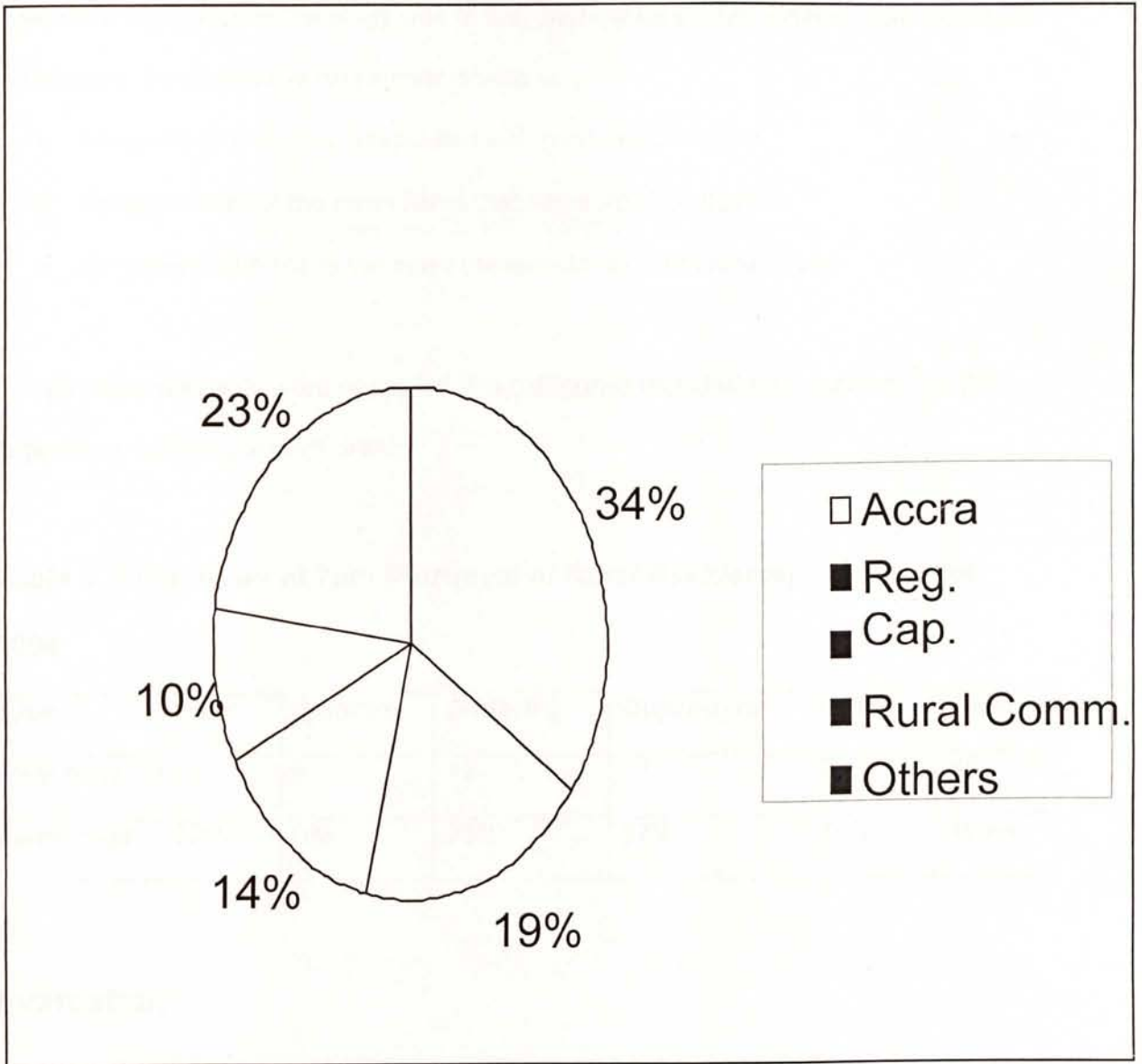
Evaluation

As per the table, Accra still maintained its lead in terms of origin of news stories, with 224 news items. This figure represents 34% of total news coverage for the last quarter, this figure even though relatively less than the amount for the first quarter still speaks to the trend of more urban related news as opposed to news from and about rural communities.

Needless to say that about 93% of the urban news items were about elites especially political leaders, officialdom and government officials.

Chart 5 below shows the distribution of the origin of news items for the last quarter:

Chart 5: GTV News at 7pm (Origin of Story) – Last Quarter



5.6 Portrayal of Rural Residents – 1st Quarter

One of the objectives of the study was to find out how rural communities were portrayed in the news. To do this the researcher looked at

- occupations that were associated with rural residents and
- subject matter of the news items that came from rural areas.
- the people who made the news (newsmakers) in the rural areas

On how rural residents were portrayed, the categories included rural residents as poor, dependent, suffering and ignorant.

Table 6: Rural News at 7pm (*Portrayal of Rural Residents*) - 1st Quarter

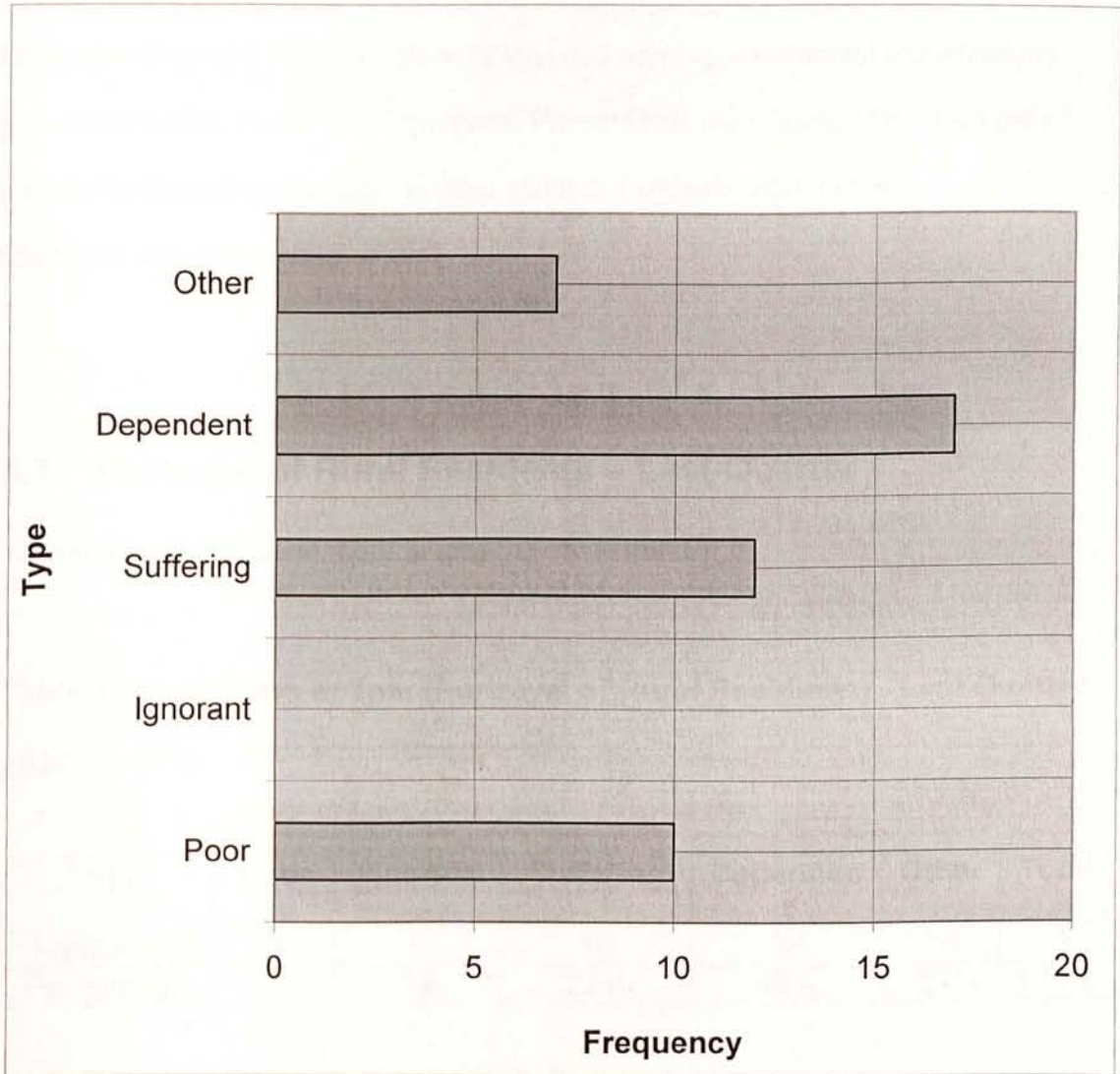
2004

Type	Poor	Ignorant	Suffering	Dependent	Other	Total
Frequency	10	0	12	17	7	46
Percentage	22%	0%	26%	37%	15%	100%

Evaluation

It was apparent that more often than not, rural residents were portrayed or presented as being dependent. This was evident in the use of phrases like, "until the NGO provided these bore holes, the people had no means of potable water" and "the minister advised that government was no longer provide all the needs of the people, communities are now expected to initiate self help projects for their own betterment". This was the trend in the first quarter.

Chart 6: Rural News at 7pm (Portrayal of Rural Residents)- 1st Quarter 2004



As shown in the chart above over half (63%) of the rural news items portrayed rural residents as dependent and suffering, twenty two percent (22%) portrayed them as poor. However the researcher did not find any stories that purposefully portrayed rural residents as ignorant.

Most of the pictures that came with the rural stories also fed into the perceptions captured above. The pictures showed for instance, rural communities at gatherings or durbars waiting for/on one benefactor or the other to come and commission one project or the other.

More often than not these benefactors included non – governmental organizations, government officials and philanthropists. Projects that were being commissioned or initiated by these benefactors included schools, hospitals, bore holes, telecommunication among others.

5.7 Portrayal of Rural Residents – Last Quarter

The last quarter followed more or less the same trend.

Table 7: Rural News at 7pm (Portrayal of Rural Residents) - Last Quarter 2004

Type	Poor	Ignorant	Suffering	Dependent	Other	Total
Frequency	8	0	16	34	15	73
Percentage	11%	0%	22%	46%	21%	100%

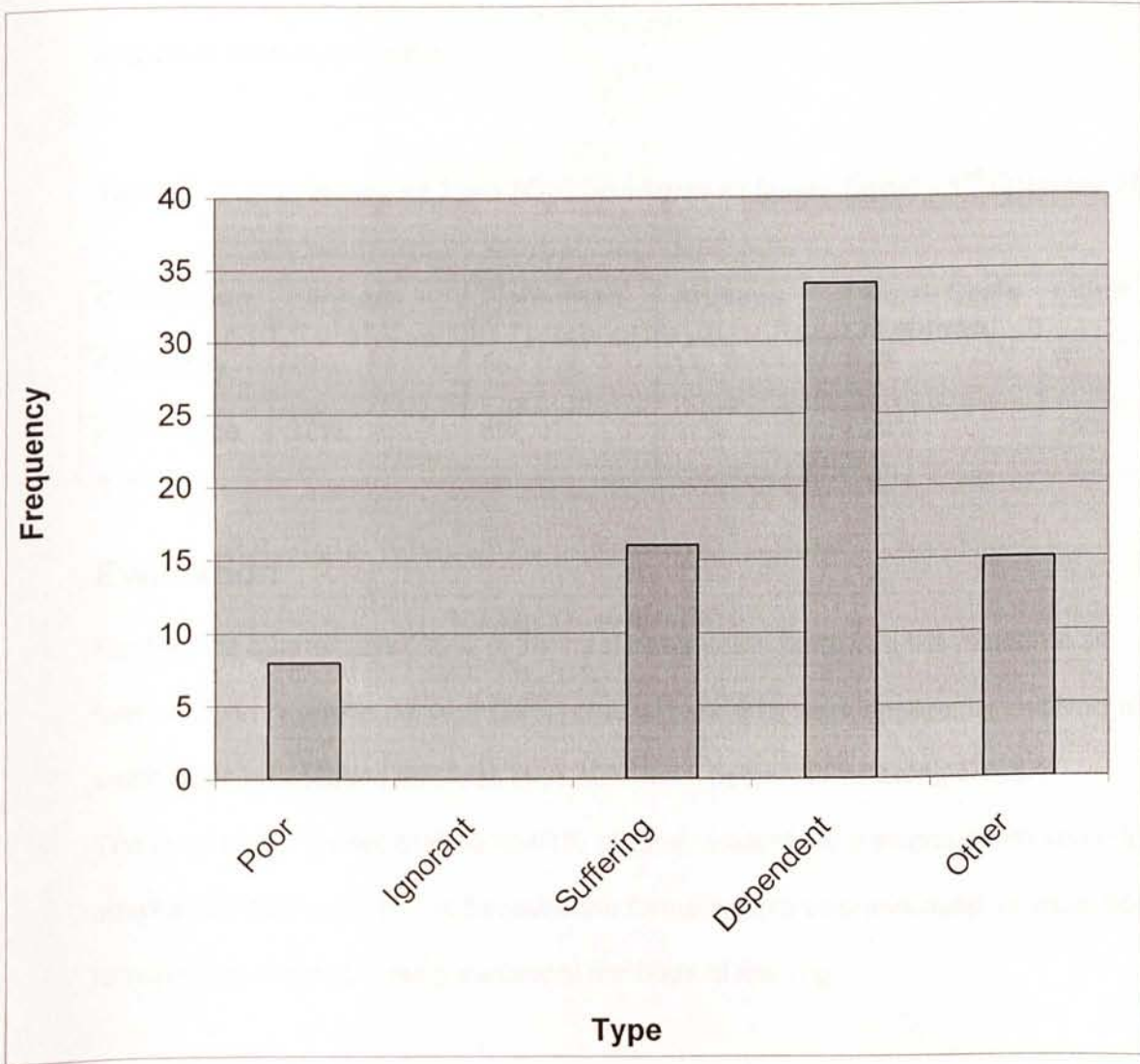
Evaluation

In a similar fashion to the first quarter, the last quarter had over half (79%) of the news items reviewed portraying rural residents as suffering, dependent and poor.

Again a phrase like “the people appealed to the government to provide them with.....” showed this kind of trend.

And like the first quarter, there were no news items portraying rural residents as ignorant. The chart below illustrates this observation

Chart 7: Rural News at 7pm (Portrayal of Rural in Residents)
Last Quarter 2004



5.8 Occupations Associated with Rural Residents – 1st Quarter

To provide context and meaning to the images and portrayal that was given to rural communities and the residents, the research tried to establish a relationship between the occupations that were predominant in the rural news stories and the images that were associated with these stories. Some of the occupations were farming, fishing, artisanship and small scale businesses.

Table 8: Rural News at 7pm (*Occupations in News Item*) - 1st Quarter 2004

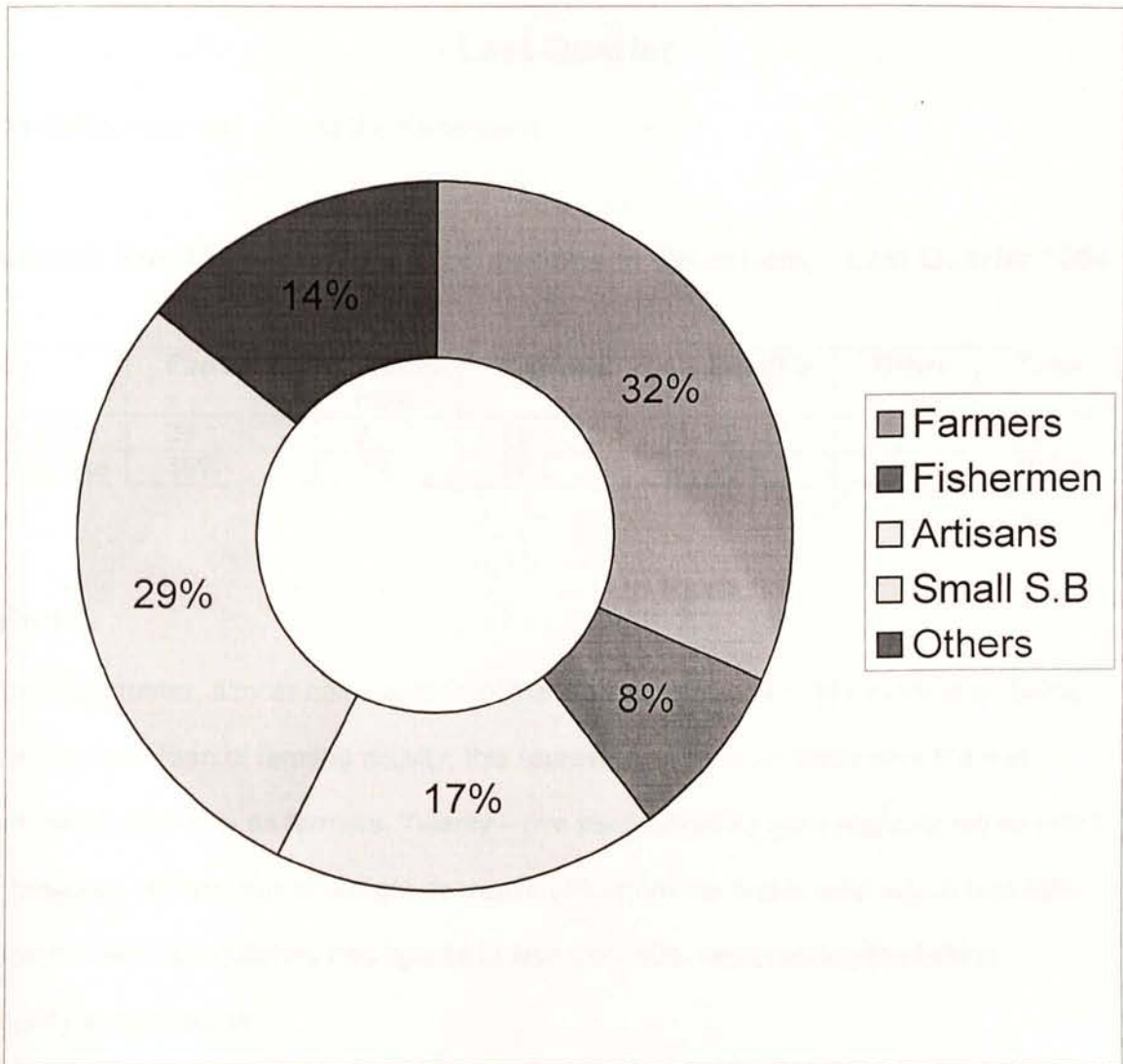
Occupation	Farmers	Fishermen	Artisans	Small Scale Business	Other	Total
Frequency	20	5	11	18	9	63
Percentage	32%	8%	17%	29%	14%	100%

Evaluation

For the first quarter, over 30% of the rural news items portrayed the residents as farmers, twenty – nine percent (29%) of rural residents were apparently involved with small scale businesses and less than 20% were perceived as being artisans.

The chart below shows that about 61% of rural resident were involved with some form of small scale business. This is because the farmers were also portrayed as small scale farmers who were still using traditional methods of farming.

Chart 8: Rural News at 7pm (Occupations in News Item) - 1st Quarter 2004



5.9 Occupations Associated with Rural Residents - Last Quarter

The last quarter had almost the same trend.

Table 9: Rural News at 7pm (Occupations in News Item) - Last Quarter 2004

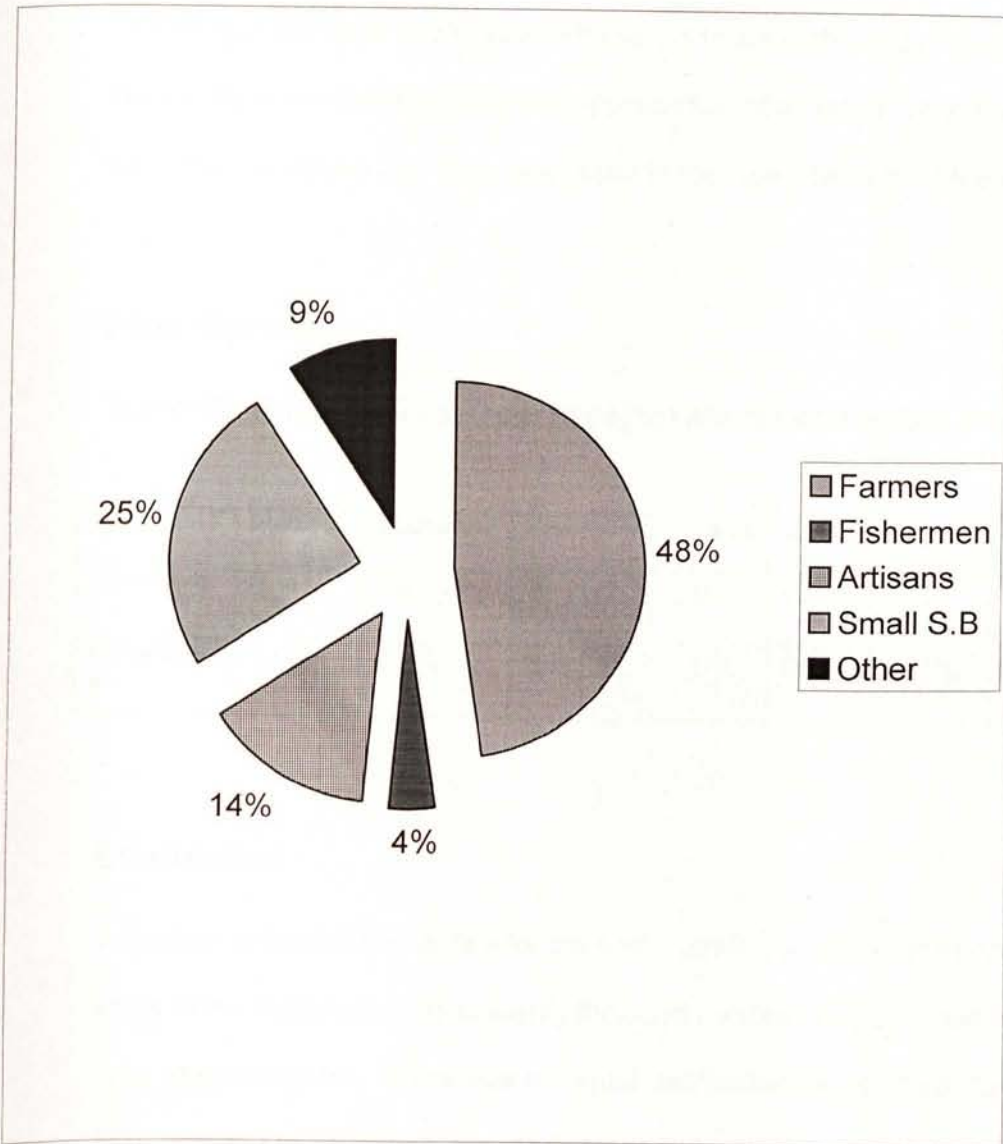
Type	Farmers	Fisher men	Artisans	Small S.	Other	Total
Frequency	36	3	11	19	7	76
Percentage	48%	4%	14%	25%	9%	100%

Evaluation

With the last quarter, almost half, i.e. 48% of the stories portrayed rural residents as being involved in some form of farming activity, this represents a 16% increase from the first quarter, which had 32% as farmers. Twenty – five percent (25%) were represented as small scale business owners; this is a slight decrease (4%) from the first quarter which had 29%. Both the first and last quarters had figures of less than 10% representing the fishing community in rural areas.

The chart below is a presentation of how the various occupations were allotted in the last quarter.

Chart 9: Rural News at 7pm (Occupations in News Item) Last Quarter 2004



5.10 Subject Matter – 1st Quarter

The subject matter of news report shows the focus of the story; it also shows the journalists' own understanding and appreciation of an issue. This is why the researcher looked at the issues that were discussed in the news items from the rural communities.

First Quarter

Table 10: Rural News at 7pm (*Subject Matter of Stories*) – 1st Quarter 2004

Type	Political	Economic	Chieftaincy	Land	Labour	Health	Religion	Education	Other	Total
Frequency	8	19	2	0	0	10	1	8	10	58
Percentage	14%	33%	3%	0%	0%	17%	2%	14%	17%	100%

Evaluation

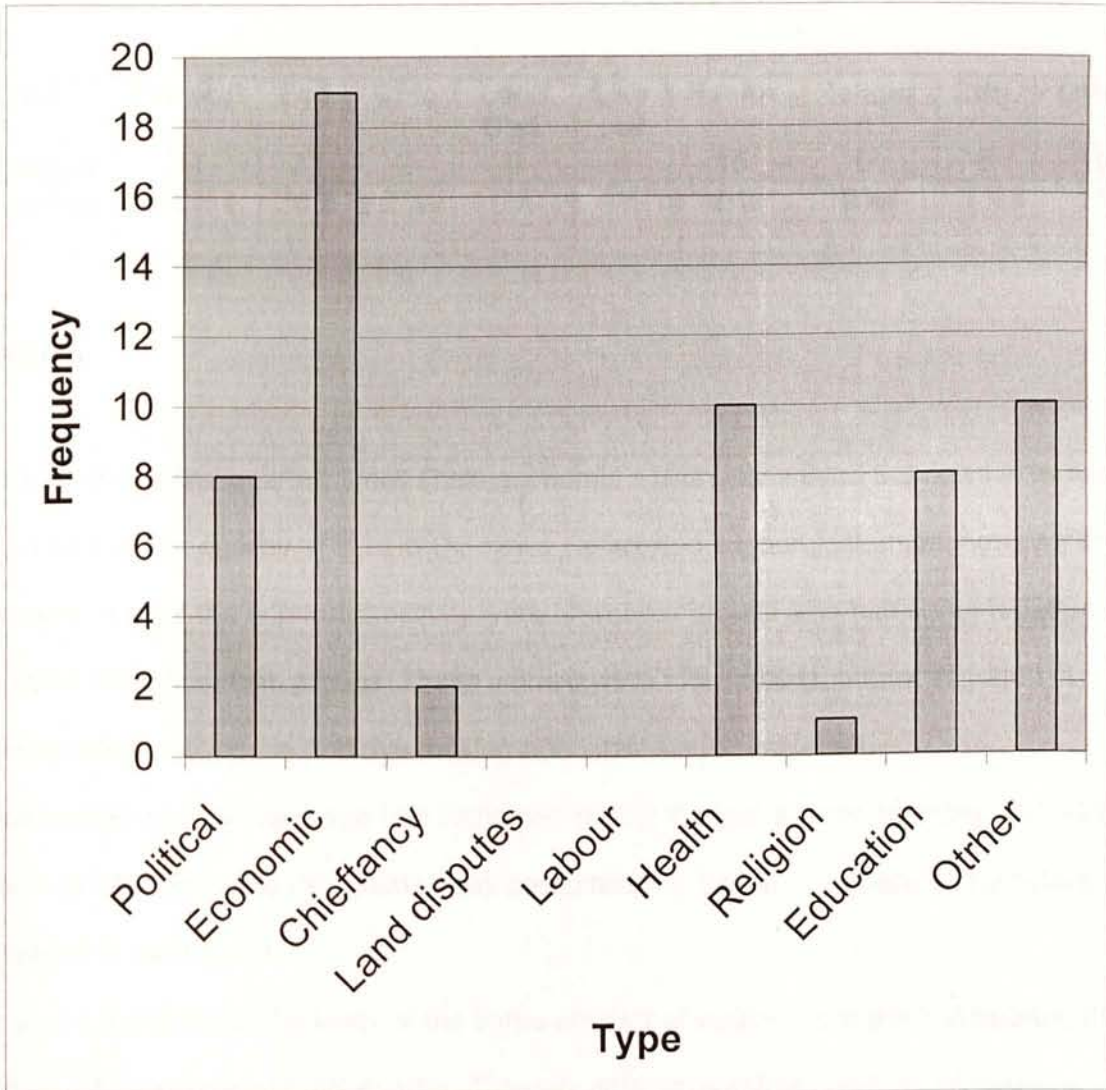
Just about a third of the stories for the first quarter, i.e. 33% had to do with economics; some of the themes for this category included rural farming activities, small scale business enterprises. There was an equal distribution between education and politics, 14% apiece. On education, the stories leaned towards provision of schools and educational tools for basic schools especially. The political stories centered on government activity and projects on education in rural communities.

Health issues which were raised in the reports had to do with education and eradication of diseases such as malaria. Provision of health facilities and HIV education by NGO's also featured quite prominently.

And as shown in the diagram below, labour and land issues did not appear to be a favourite subject matter for reporters, there was virtually no news reports on these

subjects. Even though chieftaincy and religion made a showing, there was very little to show for it, both subjects averaged just about 2.5% in the first quarter.

Chart 10: Rural News at 7pm (Subject Matter of Stories) 1st Quarter 2004



5.11 Subject Matter - Last Quarter

The last quarter of the year had the same trend with slight changes.

Table 11: Rural News at 7pm (Subject Matters of Stories) - Last Quarter 2004

Type	Political	Eco.	Chief	Land Dist.	Labour	Health	Religion	Edu.	Other	Total
Frequency	24	31	2	0	4	15	0	6	10	92
Percentage	26%	34%	2%	0%	4%	16%	0%	7%	11%	100%

Evaluation

As was shown in the first quarter, small scale economic activity dominated the news in terms of focus. Like the first quarter, a third of the news stories had economic themes, however in this quarter a lot of the economic activity were of women groups who had come together to form small scale business groups. These women were more often than not engaged in traditional soap making, tie and dye making and other similar industries.

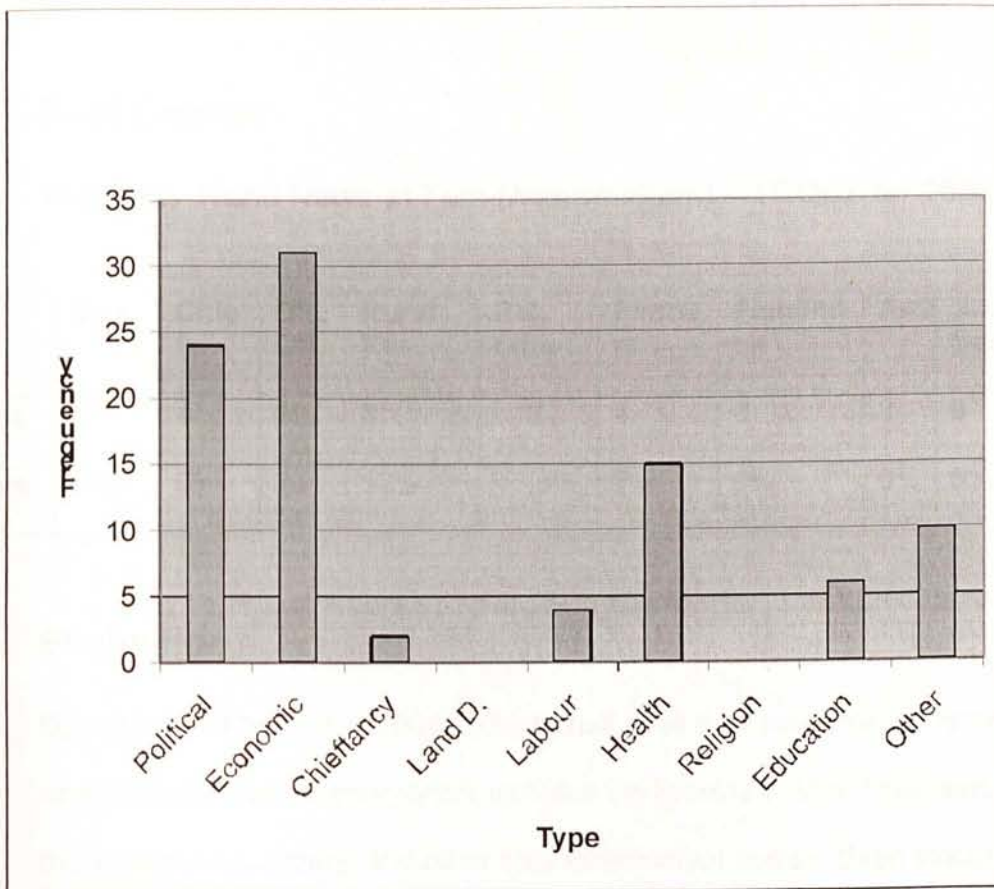
As noted earlier political coverage had increased during the last quarter, by more than 10%, subjects of interest during this quarter was predominantly based on political party activity (campaign) in rural areas.

Health as a subject matter had almost the same amount of volume as in the first quarter; there was only a 1% decrease in this quarter. The only difference in this quarter was that coverage of health centered on sod –cutting and commissioning of health facilities for rural communities.

As can be deduced from the graph below, coverage of education in this quarter suffered a 50% decrease from the first quarter. It decreased from 14% in the first quarter to 7% in the last quarter.

Chieftaincy and labour issues had total of 6%. Religion and land disputes had virtually no coverage at all.

Chart 11: Rural News at 7pm (Subject Matter) Last Quarter 2004



5. 12 Newsmakers – 1st Quarter

Newsmakers make the news; more often than not the newsmakers determine the focus of the story. The researcher attempted to see who made the news in the few times that rural areas were covered in the news.

First Quarter

Table 12: Rural News at 7pm (*Newsmakers*) – 1st Quarter 2004

Type	Gov	Chie fs	Dis. Off.	Rural Res.	Rel. Ldrs	Farme rs	Fisherm en	Artis	Small Scale	Others	Total
Frequency	27	4	19	8	2	4	0	0	0	2	64
Percentage	41%	6%	29%	12%	3%	6%	0%	0%	0%	3%	100%

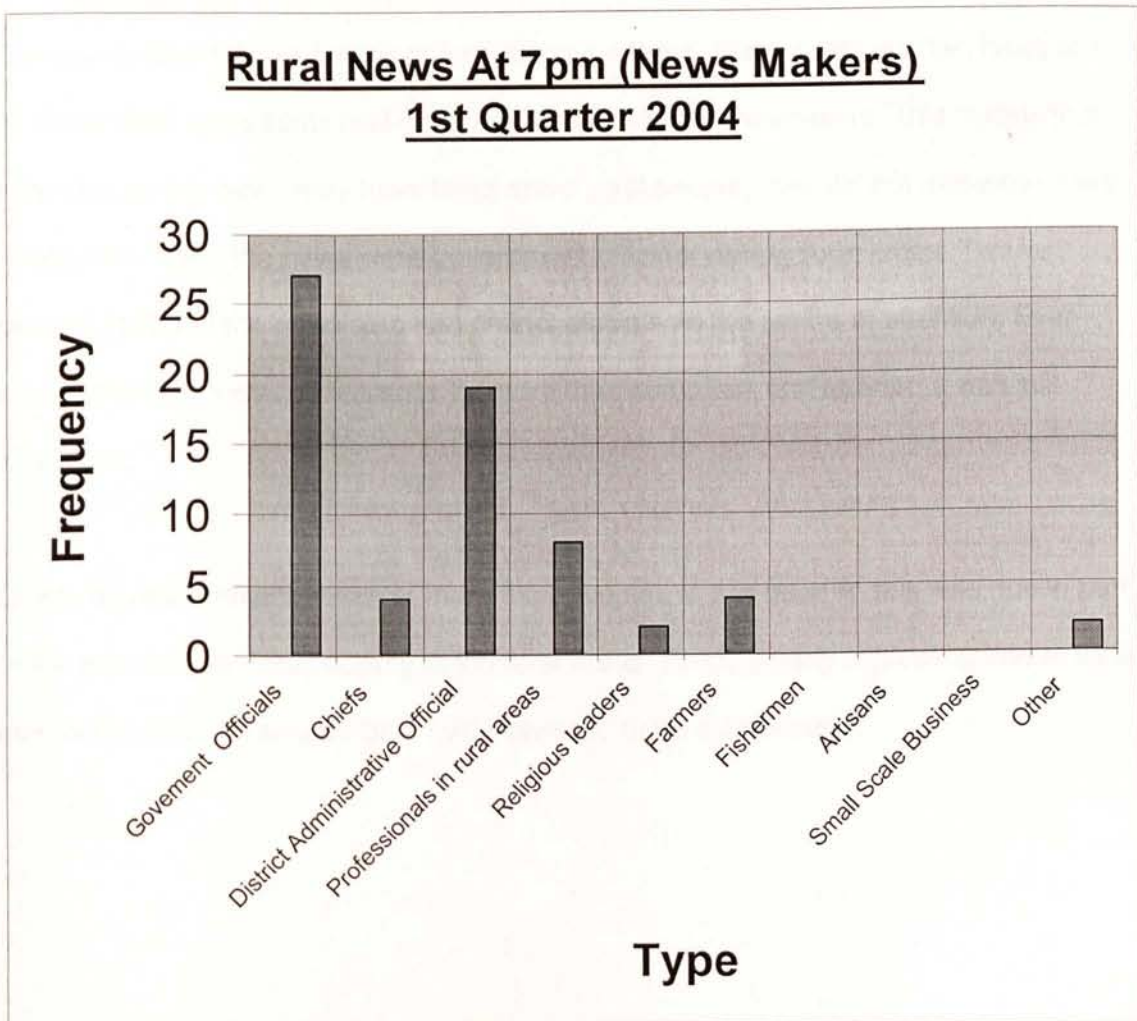
Evaluation

During the first quarter of 2004, close to half of all rural news had government officials as newsmakers. These newsmakers included the President, Vice President, the executive, the legislature, judiciary, and other such government bodies. Even though the news traffic to rural communities was quite slow in this quarter, officialdom seem to have dominated whatever little coverage that was given to the rural communities.

Twenty – nine percent (29%) of the news stories had district officials as newsmakers. These district officials still form a part of government/officialdom. This means that 70% of rural news stories had some government official as the newsmaker. This provides a very interesting analogy since studies have shown that people prefer and are interested in news of and about themselves (Potter 2002).

This also proves Brown's assertion earlier than most times it is simply a situation of the piper calling the tune.

Chart 12



The chart above shows that only 12% of rural news covered had rural residents as newsmakers. This represents a negligible fraction of total rural news coverage in the first quarter. This trend suggests that coverage given to rural communities was not generated out of a need to cover rural news but rather it was the need to give coverage to government activity in these rural communities.

5.13 Newsmakers - Last Quarter

The last quarter followed more or less the same trend, like the first quarter; close to half of all the rural news items had government officials as newsmakers. This means that even though the news may have been about rural people, they did not make the news. Those who made the news were government officials visiting rural areas. Twelve percent (12%) of the news also had district officials as the centre of attention. Even though this figure was a decrease by more than half of the first quarter, it was still significant.

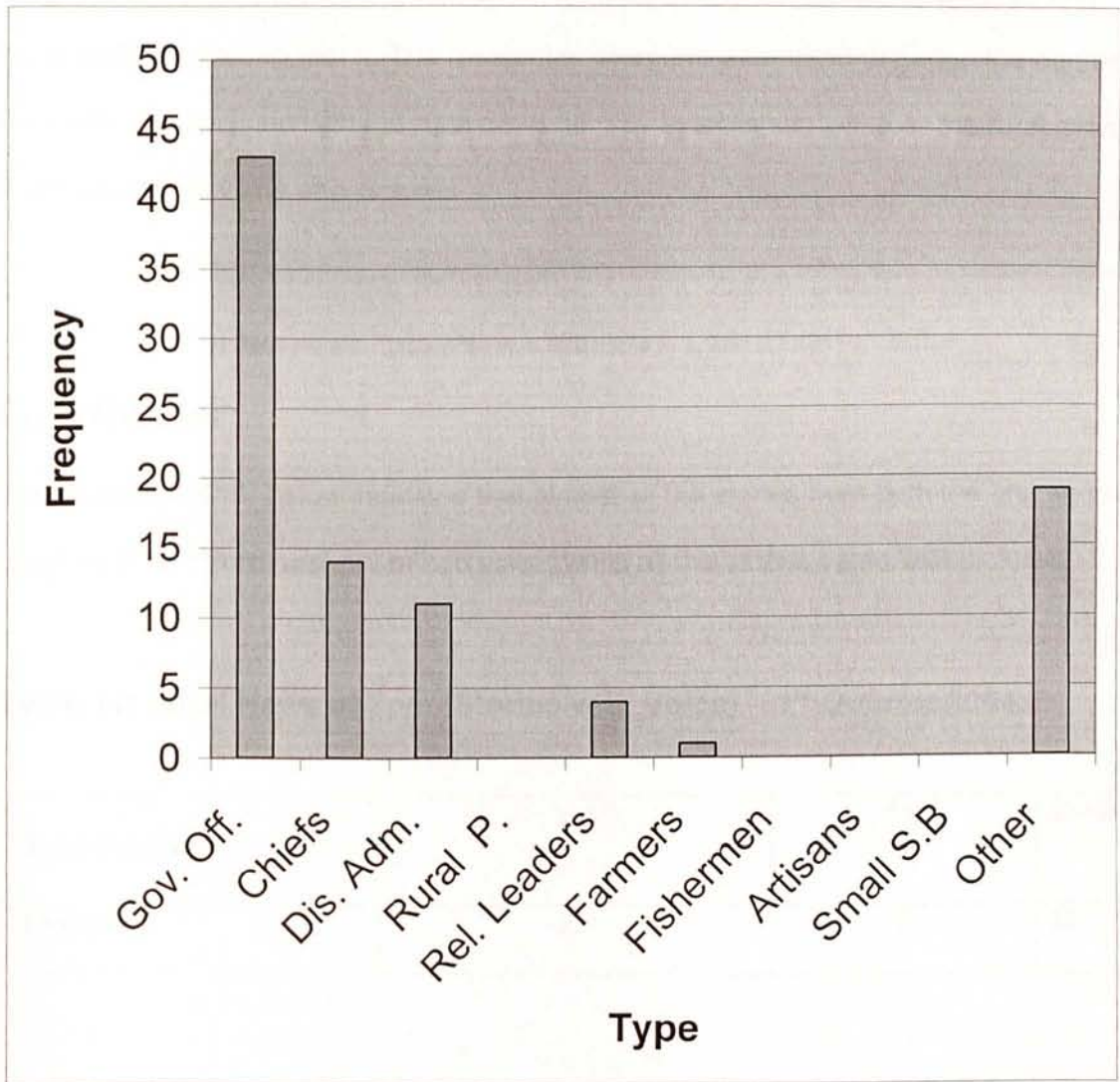
Chiefs as newsmakers however more than doubled in this quarter, this was due in part to the increased political activity in the rural areas. Political party representation at rural events like festivals and durbars had increased quite substantially.

Table 13: Rural News at 7pm (News Makers) - Last Quarter 2004

Type	Gov. Off.	Chiefs	Dis. Adm.	Prof. In rural	Rel. Leaders	Farmers	Fishermen	Small S.B	Other	Total
Frequency	43	14	11	0	4	1	0	0	19	92
Percentage	47%	15%	12%	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	21%	100%

Chart13 provides a pictorial representation of the situation of the situation during the last quarter.

Chart 13: Rural News at 7pm (News Makers)- Last Quarter 2004



5.14 Stories with Pictures and Voice – 1st Quarter

It is possible to determine the importance or relevance of a story by the pictures and voice that come along with it. The researcher therefore attempted to gauge the degree of importance associated with the rural news item by establishing whether the rural news items came with voice and pictures.

First Quarter

The tables (14 &15) below indicates that almost all the stories from both the first and last quarters of and from rural areas had voice, while all the stories came with pictures.

Table 14: Rural News at 7pm (Stories with Voice) – 1st Quarter 2004.

Type (Voices)	Yes	No	Total
Frequency	32	6	38

Table 15: Rural News at 7pm (Stories with Pictures) – 1st Quarter 2004.

Type (Pictures)	Yes	No	Total
Frequency	38	0	38
Percentage	100%	0%	100%

Evaluation

In the first quarter, more than 80% of the stories came with voice; however the voice was given to the newsmakers who were rarely rural residents.

Even though all the sampled rural news items came with pictures, most of the pictures and images were of newsmakers and in instances where the pictures dwelled on residents, they were images of rural people as poor, suffering, and dependent on outside help.

Charts 14 & 15 capture the situation as explained above.

Chart 14: Rural News at 7pm on (Story with Voices) 1st Quarter 2004

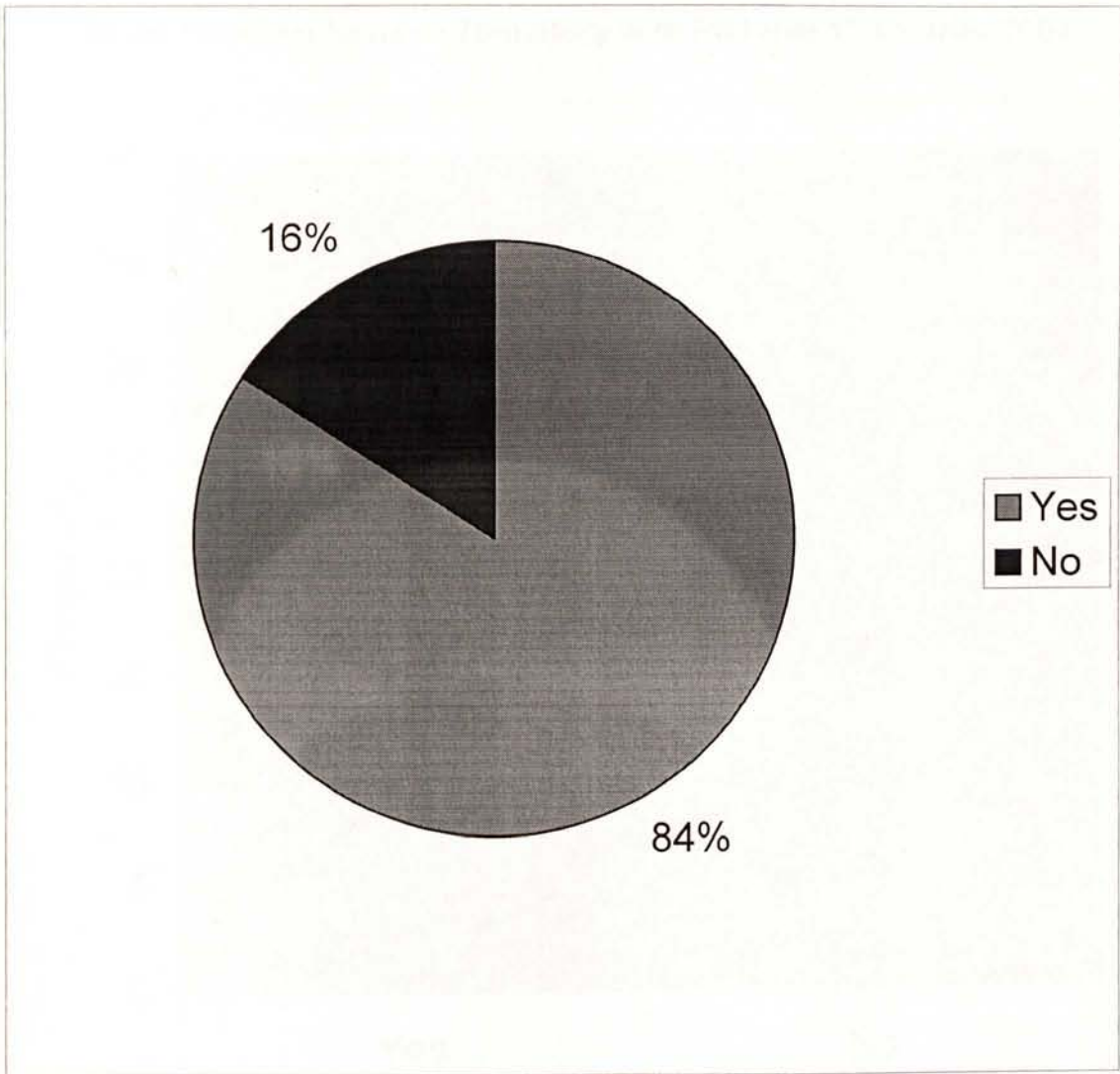
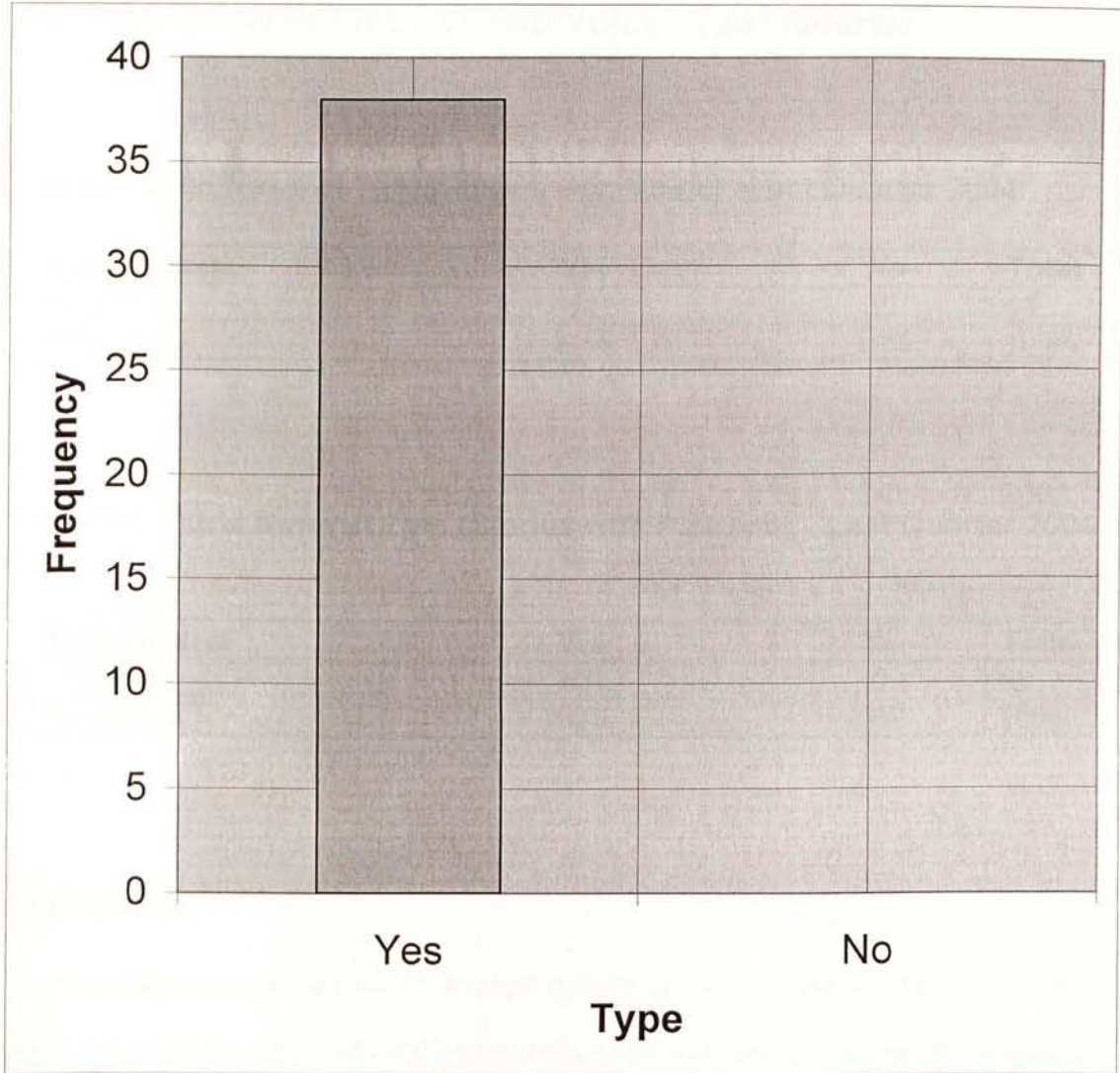


Chart 15: Rural News at 7pm Story with Pictures 1st Quarter 2004



5.15 Stories with Pictures and Voice - Last Quarter

Table 16: Rural News at 7pm (Stories with Voice) - Last Quarter 2004

Type (Voices)	Yes	No	Total
Frequency	51	17	68
Percentage	81%	19%	100%

Table 17: Rural News at 7pm (Stories with Pictures) - Last Quarter 2004

Type Pictures	Yes	No	Total
Frequency	68	0	68
Percentage	100%	0%	100%

Evaluation

The trend did not change much in the last quarter of the year. As can be seen from Table 16, more than 80% of rural news items came with voice; however there was a slight increase in the number of news items as opposed to the first quarter. As regards pictures, the last quarter was a reflection of the first quarter.

Indeed, all stories came with pictures which were representative of the coverage that was given them. This is shown in the chart 16 & 17 .

Chart 16: Rural News at 7pm Story with Without Voices – Last Quarter 2004

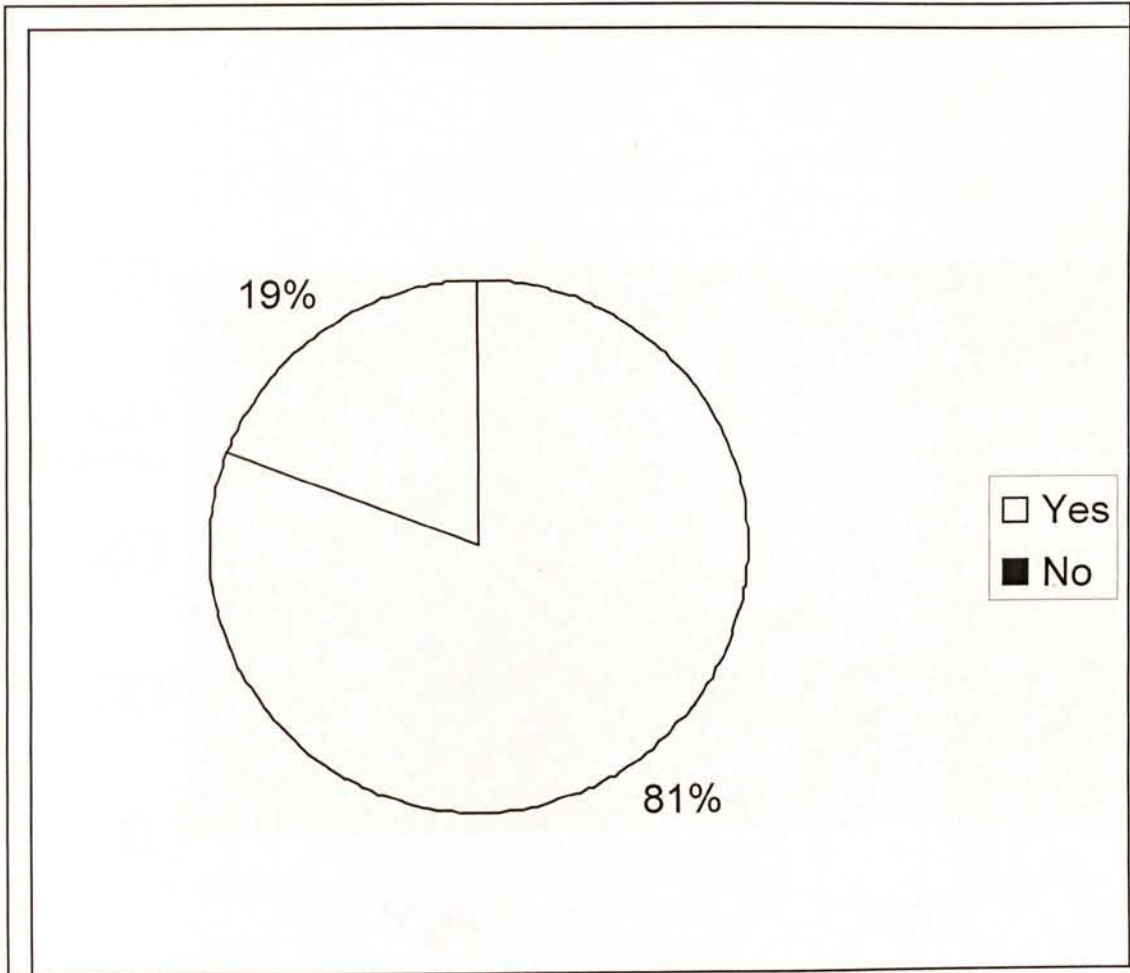
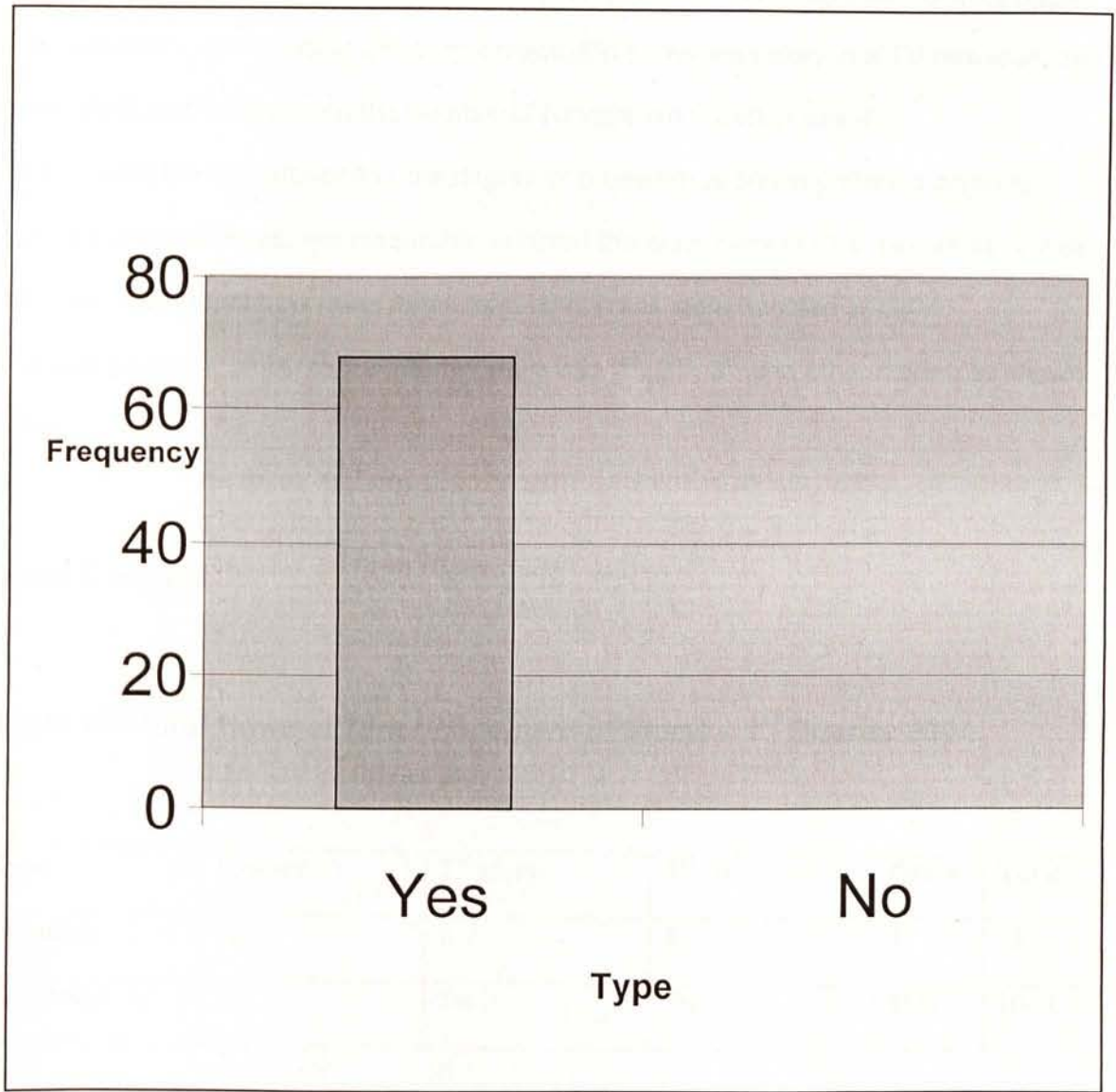


Chart 17: Rural News at 7pm (Story with and without Pictures)
Last Quarter 2004



5.16 Placement of Story – 1st Quarter

Hiebert, Ungrait and Bohn (1985) contend that "placement of a story on the front page of a newspaper as the cover article in a magazine or the lead story in a TV newscast can have significant influence on the number of persons who read or see it".

So to enable the researcher find the degree of prominence and importance given to stories from rural areas, the researcher adopted the placement of rural stories as one of the measures to test how news items from rural areas were handled at GTV.

The categories for placement of stories were into 1st, 2nd, 3rd and other stories as shown below.

First Quarter

Table 18: Rural News at 7pm (*Placement of Story*) – 1st Quarter 2004

Type	1 st story	2 nd story	3 rd story	Other	Total
Frequency	1	2	3	32	38
Percentage	2%	5%	7%	86%	100%

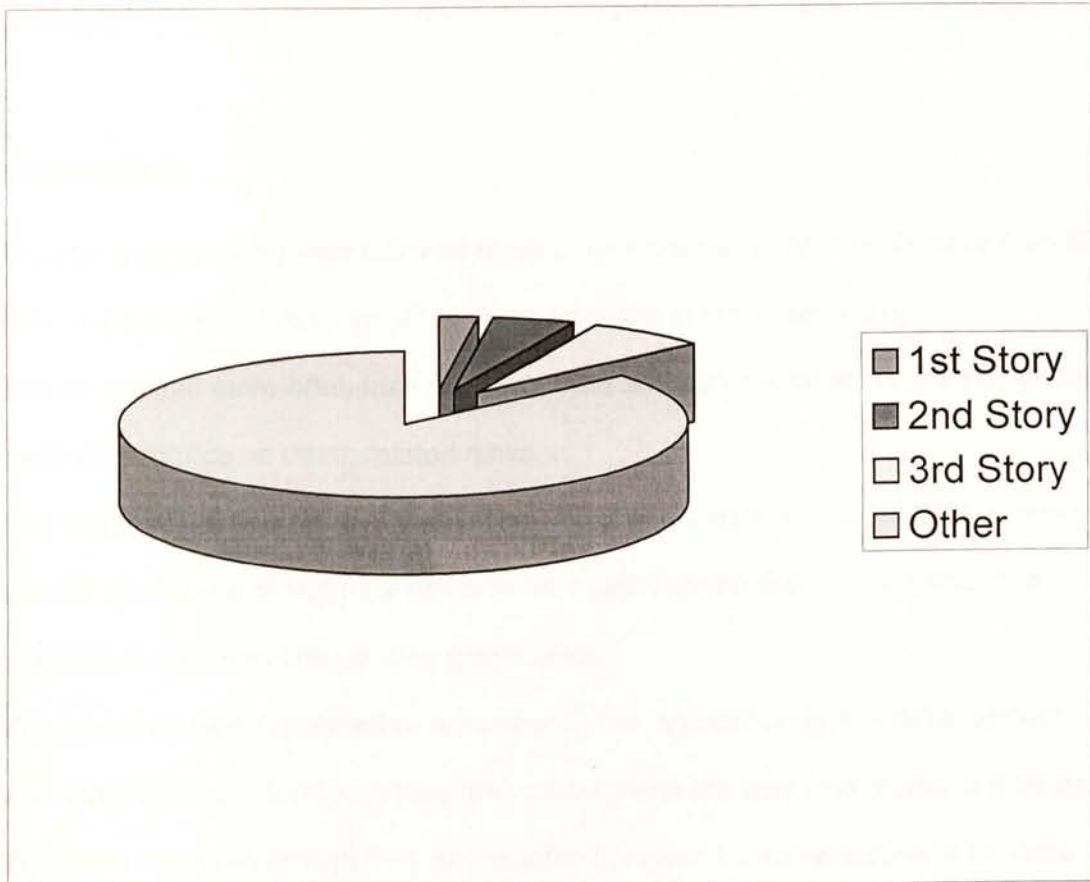
Evaluation

In the first quarter of the year under review, there was only one occasion when a rural news item took the first spot or made headline news. This was a news item from the Nsein Traditional area, when the Regional Minister inspected progress made on the Presidential Special Initiative. Apart from this there were only five other occasions when rural news items made the second and third positions in the news line up. This means

that for the whole quarter less than a fifth (15%) of rural news items made it to the first three slots in GTV's evening news bulletin.

The chart below accurately captures this situation.

Chart 18: Rural News at 7pm (Placement of Story) 1st Quarter 2004



5.17 Placement of Story - Last Quarter

Table 19: Distribution Table on Placement of Story – 4th Quarter 2004

Type	1 st Story	2 nd Story	3 rd Story	Other	Total
Frequency	0	7	8	53	68
Percentage	0	10%	10%	80%	100%

Evaluation

The last quarter of the year followed more or less the same trend, with more than 80% of all rural news items taking the 4th or much later slot in the news line up.

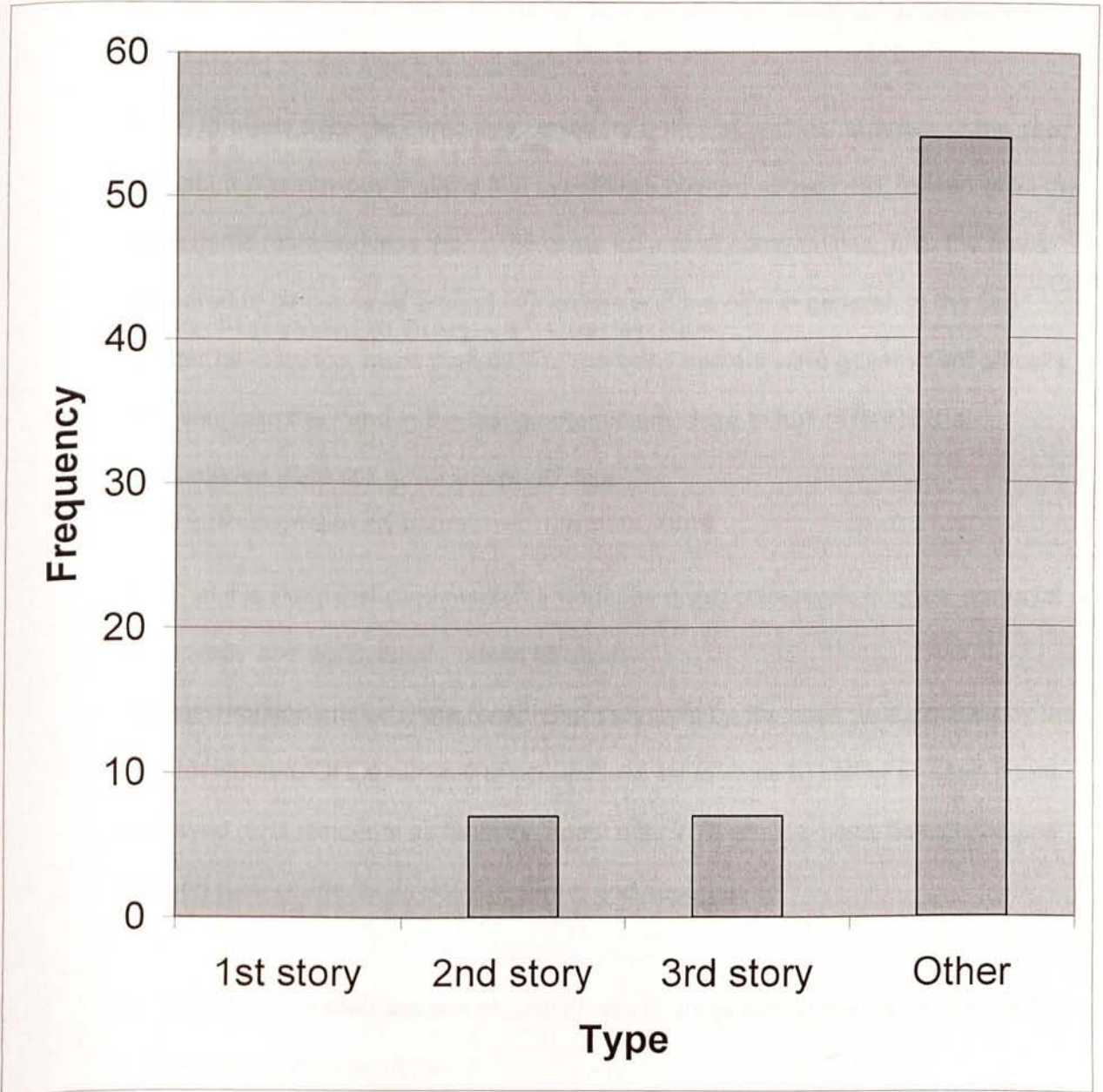
This shows that more often than not news from and about rural areas are not given as much prominence as urban related news.

This suggests that cumulatively speaking, for both quarters just about 20%, which is a total 21 stories out of 106 rural news items, made it to the first, second and third positions in the news line up. See graph below:

This assertion was supported by a number of the regional correspondents spoken to who asserted that often times they are unhappy with the way their stories are treated. They said that even though they appreciated the need for some editing to be done on the stories, it is disappointing to see one's story turned upside down or totally missing from the national news line – up.

This assertion is however contested by the editors who insist that choice and placement of stories are based primarily on national interest, content, order of importance and the editor's view.

Chart 19: Placement of Story – 4th Quarter 2004



5.18 Test of Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were posited:

1. That it is likely that news reports by GTV are predominantly urban based and centered on the elite in the society.

Using analysis from the content reviewed for both first and last quarters of the year studied, it was obvious that the first hypothesis posited above held. Indeed of all the news items reviewed less than 10% came from rural communities. Also the news appeared to be centered around officialdom and the elite in general. In the first quarter for instance, more than 40% of the news makers were government officials. This was also the trend in the last quarter where close to half (47%) of the newsmakers were still government officials.

2. That it is likely that rural residents would be given stereotypic images, portrayal of poverty and agricultural - based lifestyles.

This assumption made by the researcher proved to be the case as supported by the content studied. Of the number of occupations listed close to half of all news items portrayed rural residents as farmers. Again over 70% of rural news items reviewed showed rural residents as poor, suffering and dependent.

3. That the increased amount of rural news coverage during the last quarter of 2004 was due to the elections.

After reviewing the content the researcher recognized that the 2004 elections did affect coverage of rural news.

Even though it was obvious that rural news coverage was generally low for both quarters, coverage of rural news for the last quarter was double the amount of

coverage for the first quarter. That is to say, during the last quarter which was the period for the electioneering campaign, coverage was 10% as compared to 5% in the first quarter.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter makes a critical assessment of the findings made in the preceding chapter. The chapter will also present a detailed discussion of the findings, as well as draw meaningful and relevant conclusions from the data gathered.

The researcher will also attempt to make some recommendation based on the findings gathered and the conclusions drawn.

Finally, the limitations associated with the study will also be discussed.

6.1 Summaries of Major Findings

Generally rural news coverage in the last quarter of 2004 was better than the first quarter of 2004.

From the sample size of 702 news items reviewed for the first quarter, only 38 news items were of or from rural areas. This represents a mere 5% of all news items reviewed for the period. Comparatively, coverage of rural news items doubled in the last quarter, making up about 10% of total news coverage for the quarter. Indeed out of the 651 news items reviewed for the quarter, 68 of them were rural news items.

Rural residents were given the same stereotypic images in both the first and last quarters. Well over half of all rural news items in both quarters portrayed rural residents

as being poor, dependent or suffering. In the first quarter for instance, over 70% of the news items fell into these categories. Likewise in the last quarter, over 80% of all rural news items analysed portrayed rural residents as either poor, dependent or suffering. This was buttressed with occupations, pictures and images that were associated with residents of rural communities. Some of the predominant occupations associated with these stories were small scale farming, fishing and artisanship.

Again the representation of rural residents as dependent was evident in the focus and subject matter of the stories covered. More than half (50%) of the rural news stories focused on development projects that were being undertaken by NGO's, donor countries and the government. This trend of coverage inadvertently feeds to the assertion that rural residents are poor and dependent and can do little or nothing for themselves especially without external help.

Generally it appeared that stories from rural areas were given very little prominence and preference over urban news items. Out of a total of 1353 news items reviewed for the period, only 106 were from rural areas, this represents less than 10% of all news items analysed. This shows a general disinterest in rural news.

Also in instances where rural news items were chosen, they were pushed to the latter part of the local news in favour of elitist news from the urban areas.

In situations where rural news items were given some prominence, the newsmakers were more often than not government officials, chiefs and district administrative officials. This pattern was evident in more than 70% of the rural news items analysed for the study. This implies that the stories rarely focused on the ordinary rural man or woman and the issues they might find relevant.

However it was interesting to note that almost more than 80% of all rural news items came with voice and all the news items came with pictures, but again the voice was given to the newsmakers who were mostly not rural residents. The pictures that came with the story also reinforced the stereotypic perceptions associated with rural residents (as discussed above).

6.2 Discussion

The findings of the study raise a number of vital questions for discussion.

Among them are issues such as:

- How often news of and about rural areas are covered and reported by the nation's main television station (*GTV*)?
- What images are associated with stories from rural areas
- Whether the politics of the nation has anything to do with trend of coverage of news items

It was realized from the study undertaken that news from rural areas were hardly covered by *Ghana Television*, and that the only times that rural news played a prominent role in the news was when the presidency, the executive and government administrative machinery were in the news. And as Boateng (1996) puts it:...it is common knowledge that the state –owned media tend to show a clear bias in favour of the government of the day in their news coverage and editorial opinions. This is in keeping with the old adage that he who pays the piper calls the tune, except that in this case the money used really belongs to the state and not the government of the day.

It is probably because of such purported biases that people like Wereko Brobbey (1996) can throw out challenges such as:

If anybody can tell me the last time they heard a *GBC* news commentary critical of, or written by a well known adversary of the government, I shall take of my tarzan's loin cloth. Fact is that it will never happen and I shall be spared the 'black bushes.'

Such harsh criticism should put enormous pressure on state owned media like GTV to stray away from the penchant to cover news that is mostly of government and other parastatals. GTV needs to realize that rural residents or communities form more than 60% of Ghana's population and as such are entitled equal if not more coverage from the so called nation's station.

The medium of television continues to play a very important and powerful role in our lives. It is therefore necessary for television stations to exercise a certain amount of circumspection and responsibility in whatever stories they may choose to report.

It was obvious from the study that almost all the news items from and about rural communities had practically the same stereotypic images. These images often represented rural people as poor, suffering and dependent on the largesse and magnanimity of government, NGO's and donor bodies. The images also represented a people who lived simple lives which is characterized by small scale farming, petty trading and artisanship.

This kind of representation or portrayal does not do much to educate and inform the average urban viewer about the real issues or way of life of people living in rural communities. Indeed such images rather feed and into the stereotypic but not necessarily correct impressions urban residents may have formed about rural communities. This is not to say however that these images are totally misrepresentative of life in rural areas, as much as these images do reflect some aspects of rural living, it is

also important for these reports to also focus on the triumphs and success stories that can come from these areas.

On the issue of politics and rural coverage, it was most enlightening to find out that the highest number of rural news items were recorded in November 2004, which had 41 rural news stories. The researcher gathered that this was the period for the most intensive political campaigning. This period was the run up to the December 7, elections in 2004.

All of a sudden it appeared that rural had assumed an inexplicable importance on the coverage calendar of Ghana Television. Needless to say that at this time almost every political figure who mattered was trooping to these villages to solicit for votes. Even during this period, it appeared once again that the focus was not on the communities and their problems but on the politicians and their campaign messages.

Naturally December and January had the least number of rural news items. January posted five (5) rural news items, representing a 9% out of a total of 181 news items that were analysed for the month of January, as opposed to 101 news items from urban areas. December had the second lowest number of rural news items, posting just nine (9) stories. This period was after the elections and political activity had gone down drastically and obviously so had the interest in coverage of rural communities.

6.3 Limitations

Like all other such academic exercises this study had its limitations.

The method of research chosen even though useful could not give an all round interpretation of the issues. This is because as posited by (Epstein 1973) content analyses studies only content and therefore cannot draw meaningful contexts in the relationship between these contents and the perception of audiences about these contents and the influence and consequences of these contents on audiences. In other words this study would have been complete if the researcher had for instance conducted a survey of viewers or rural residents to gauge their reaction to the way in which rural communities are portrayed on television.

Another limitation was access to information. Even though the information or the tapes that were meant to be used for the study were available, it was still difficult for the researcher to get a stand by video equipment to view the tapes. This shows that GTV is quite under equipped.

Again the researcher faced quite some difficulty in reaching all ten regional correspondents for the in – depth interviews. It was just impossible and the researcher had to finally settle for six out of the ten correspondents with the idea that the six will be representative of all ten regional correspondents.

Despite these limitations, the researcher firmly believes that the study has given enough and substantial exposition and insights into some of the issues raised.

The researcher expects that the study will be of immense benefit to the management of Ghana Television.

6.4 Recommendations

The study brought to life a lot of engaging issues, in the light of these findings the researcher has made a few recommendations.

There is no doubt about the potential of mass media to affect and influence the thinking and social conscience of a people. Television plays an even more powerful role in this regard. In other words television can and should be used as a tool to educate and inform its viewers.

Indeed studies have shown that people who live in urban areas prefer to hear stories from their hometowns and traditional areas, so it is incumbent on a nationwide television station like *Ghana Television* to increase their coverage of rural communities. Needless to say this kind of coverage should be a true reflection of rural living, that is to say such stories should be a mixed bag of good and not so good aspects of the everyday lives of these people. After all one picture they say is worth a thousand words, that is why it is imperative for the right images to be shown.

It is also essential for *GTV* to use a novel idea such as the news in local languages, which effectively addresses the language barrier (English), as a means of bridging the gap between rural and urban news reportage.

This idea of 'who pays the piper calling the tune' should be a thing of the past. Article 1(b) of the Broadcasting Standards published by the National Media Commission states that;

...broadcasting stations shall endeavour at all times to reflect and promote national development in their programmes and other output.

Ghana Television should be able to get to the place where its news items are purely based editorial decisions that reflect the true interest of its viewers.

Short of having a formula that effectively works out what percentage of the news should be from and about rural areas as against those from the urban areas and about the elite, regional correspondents could be given a say as to how their news reports are treated by the gatekeepers or editors in Accra.

If possible regional correspondents should de-link coverage of political figures from original stories that actually talk about rural residents and their issues.

It is hoped that these recommendations will go a long way to influence these issues which have been presented.

6.5. Conclusion

The task of the researcher for this study was to find out how rural communities are portrayed or represented in the news. The study also investigated the percentage balance of coverage of urban/elitist news as against coverage of rural areas and residents.

Ghana Television's evening news bulletin for 2004 provided the content of study for this research. Thousand three hundred and fifty three (1,353) tapes were reviewed for this purpose.

In – depth interviews were also conducted with regional correspondents of *GTV* across the country to complement the findings of the content that was analysed.

It was clear from the findings of the study that the majority (about 90%) GTV's evening news bulletin in 2004 was based on and about urban elites. There was also a strong presence of news about central government, officialdom, political figures/stories.

News from rural areas formed less than 10% of the evening news broadcast. About a third of the 10% rural news stories were concentrated in the last quarter of 2004, which was the lead up to the general elections in December 2004.

However from mid December to January 2005, there was a sharp decline in news items and stories from rural communities. After the elections, the attention of the station has obviously shifted to the fall out from the elections.

The researcher also established that in cases where the news was rural based it was rarely about the livelihoods and personal stories of the people; the emphasis was on government officials, district level appointees, visiting elites and government projects.

In the few stories that centered on rural inhabitants, they were portrayed and represented as poor, suffering and dependent on aid from central government, foreign missions and benevolent organizations. The researcher found this stereotypic casting in nearly all the news items reviewed.

The tapes reviewed also showed that even though most rural news items had images and voice accompanying it, the images were of the newsmakers, who were visiting elites, and the voice (sound bite) belonged to the same group of people.

The general conclusion drawn from the content studied was that news from rural areas and about rural residents were not considered as headline making news.

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CODING GUIDE

1. Media organization
.....

2. Type of Bulletin
.....

3. Date of Broadcast
.....

4. Duration of Broadcast
.....

5. Number of types of stories in Bulletin
 - a. Urban
 - b. Rural
 - c. International
 - d. Other

6. Origin of Story
 - a. Accra
 - b. Regional capital
 - c. District capital
 - d. Rural community

7. Does the story come with pictures?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

8. Does the story come with voice?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

9. News makers
 - a. Government officials
 - b. Chiefs
 - c. District administrative officers
 - d. Professionals in rural areas
 - e. Religious leaders
 - f. Farmers
 - g. Fishermen
 - h. Artisans
 - i. Small scale business operators
 - j. Other

10. Focus of story
 - a. Development projects
 - b. Politics
 - c. Chieftaincy
 - d. Agriculture
 - e. Health
 - f. Education
 - g. Land/forestry
 - h. Foreign aid
 - i. Other

11. Occupations associated with rural residents in news item
 - a. As farmers
 - b. As fishermen
 - c. As artisans
 - d. As small scale business operators
 - e. Other

12. Portrayal/images of rural residents
 - a. As poor
 - b. As ignorant
 - c. As suffering
 - d. As dependent
 - e. Other

13. Subject matter of stories

- a. Political
- b. Economic
- c. Chieftaincy
- d. Land disputes
- e. Labour
- e. Health
- f. education
- g. religion

14. Placement of story

- a. 1st story
- b. 2nd story
- c. 3rd story
- d. Other

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (EDITORS)

1. Do you have a news editorial policy?
2. If yes, what does it say about rural news coverage?
3. If no, why not?
4. Apart from your editorial policy, what else informs the selection of news items
5. How do you prioritize news items?
6. Specifically, what are the criteria for selecting rural news?
7. When is rural news a priority story for the headline?
8. What are the sources of rural news?
9. Do you have a regular stream or supply of rural news items from your correspondents in these areas?
10. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

11. What do you think accounts for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

12. Is there some sort of pressure, even if subtle, to squelch rural news in favour of political or elite related news?

13. Will there ever be a situation where there will be an equal balance between rural and urban/elitist news?

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL REPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?
2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?
3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general?(newsmakers)
4. How often do you see your stories or rural areas in the news line up?
5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?
6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?
7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

020 - 813504 (U)
Jumay Alhamdi (U)

manuel Mensah-Abludō
44 - 742882

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL RESPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?

many
not just
news value
with end empowerment of people

2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?

- generated from personal stories
- Ghana today (we cover ordinary story)
- if it is extraordinary, then we don't cover it

3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general?(newsmakers)

Not all the time... when these elites & political figures attend ~~events~~ social/community events we cover.
If a society/community event is interesting enough we cover.

4. How often do you see your stories or rural areas in the news line up?

Quite often. Especially when they have human interest stories.

5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?

There are many stories competing for a limited space/air time.



6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

Placement of the stories is impressive especially when enough time is given to each story and news ^{with} locals of the rural area

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

I believe political campaigns accounted for this average.

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

More stories with international appeal come from urban areas.

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

Lack of equipment

Low wages/salaries

Low morale when stories go unpublished

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL REPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?

Personalities involved and nature of event
- Coverage would be given to a children's outdoor
than a school's speech day.

2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?

Very often. Interest and attention will
be paid to the depressed communities
in order to have quality of life improved.

3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general? (newsmakers)

Sometimes. A conversation with them
opens a subject which when followed up
brings out a good story.

4. How often do you see your stories on rural areas in the news line up?

Very often and so when they are good
stories.

5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?

In this case, reasons may be for lack
of space, similar story already aired
or for personal agenda to black list a
reporter. (Against journalistic ethics) and
Bad stories.

6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

Very happy — eg a story that concerns ~~an~~ health hazards would be treated with importance and would warrant quick broadcast. (Prestige/Super from Mining Issue.)

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

Campaign period towards election year and therefore MPs would ~~target~~ normally target the Districts/rural areas to campaign.

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

Because of lack of logistics, ~~at~~ as it is easier covering events at urban areas than rural areas. Thus urban news items would be aired more.

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

- Lack of logistics especially vehicles (~~that~~ 4-wheel) for trekking to the rural areas, Personnel (only 1 team (4 members) work had great).

Tapes for recording not enough.
Cameras — only one.

FROM: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS,

FAX NO. : 233 21 234666

Jan. 20 2006 01:09PM 02

6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

Generally its O.K.

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

I believe it was so because the last quarter of 2004 was the time for political campaigning for the elections and since there are more people in the rurals than urban centres, politicians concentrate on campaigning in rural areas.

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items? At times I believe it is so because most international events take place in urban areas.

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

Low motivation, lack of job satisfaction due to unavailable logistics.

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL REPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?

- Economic & Social Affairs
- public interest

2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?

- monitor and cover
- motivate to cover
- coverage is based on fruit programmes

3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general? (newsmakers)

- not all the time
- decision is based on the agenda of the official

4. How often do you see your stories or rural areas in the news line up?

- not often
- urban centered news takes priority
- we are not treated fairly at all

5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?

- How story is covered
- rules and in house policies of ABC
- 9 rules governing coverage of religious programmes.

6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

- Sometimes it is perfectly done, other times it is haphazardly done. You can even have part of this story,

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

- elections were a factor

- Politicians would want to be covered during this time to assist the elections.

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

- Social classes (elites get more coverage)

- literacy -

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

- Logistics eg. equipment, vehicles

- Period/duration of the news

Att: David Hanson

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL REPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?

1. The story must be informative
2. It must be educative
3. Court rulings which serve as deterrent to others.

2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?

Once a fortnight.

3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general? (newsmakers)

Not always. At times what is happening in the society is also covered.

4. How often do you see your stories or rural areas in the news line up?

Formerly hardly, were they given attention. Now anytime they are sent, the stories are published.

5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?

Their editors felt only people in the urban areas read the news so only stories about those areas should be given attention.

6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

At times in an effort to abridge the stories, they are turned up side down. But they are not abridged. I am happy with them.

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

This should tell you that formerly we gave the rural area a very little attention.

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

The main reason is even if news are published about the rural communities, the facilities to listen or read are not there. Now they are covered because the reader public should know about the whole of Ghana.

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

Accra does not give much attention to us.

The facilities are not there eg cameras.

Vehicles to rural communities etc.

NR

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (REGIONAL REPORTERS)

1. What principles guide your selection of which stories to cover?

- stories that are of interest to the public - developmental issues
- Personalities attending the programme

2. How often do you originate personal story ideas based on the lifestyles and concerns of rural communities which you cover?

- Not often due to lack of video and other equipment
- There is only TV camera in the area and there is so much pressure on

3. Do your story ideas come from visiting political figures and elites in general? (newsmakers)

- Some of the ideas come from politicians but most of the ideas are from the communities.

4. How often do you see your stories or rural areas in the news line up?

- Very often because most part of the region are rural communities and most of the ~~my~~ stories are rural based.

5. If not often, what do you think are some of the reasons for this?

N/A

6. If and when you do see your submitted rural stories in the news line up are you happy with the way it is treated or placed in the line up?

Yes

7. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

It was because of the elections
This has been the case for all
the election years in the past

8. What do you think account for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

Its because most media houses
give much attention to official
ie focusing on people in high office

9. What are some of the constraints you face in your job?

- Lack of modern equipment
ie computers, recording material
(tape recorders)
- Lack of vehicles etc.

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (EDITORS)

1. Do you have a news editorial policy?

Yes

Equal & fair coverage of all parts of the country.

2. If yes, what does it say about rural news coverage?

There is no difference between rural and urban news. The content of news item determines its coverage.

3. If not, why not?

4. Apart from your editorial policy, what else informs the selection of news items?

In order of national importance
- Content -

5. How do you prioritize news items?

In order of national importance

6. Specifically, what are the criteria for selecting rural news?

As a national station we attempt to use news from all parts of the country - we try to be fair to all parts of the country

7. When is rural news a priority story for the headline?

When it is news worthy.

8. What are the sources of rural news?

from our correspondents on the ground in the various parts of the country.

9. Do you have a regular stream or supply of rural news items from your correspondents in these areas?

Yes

10. How come that in the last quarter of 2004, there were more news items from rural communities than in the first quarter of the year?

Just coincidence

11. What do you think accounts for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

I do not know that there is unfair balance, but if there is, it is not planned. Remember that the president and the senior ministers are based in the capital.

12. Is there some sort of pressure, even if subtle, to squelch rural news in favour of political or elite related news?

No, not what so ever.

13. Will there ever be a situation where there will be an equal balance between rural and urban/elitist news?

We always strive towards balance and equal access to the national station.

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE (EDITORS)

1. Do you have a news editorial policy?

YES

2. If yes, what does it say about rural news coverage?

equal opportunity and fair access to both the rural and urban areas when it comes to coverage.

3. If not, why not?

4. Apart from your editorial policy, what else informs the selection of news items?

Editor's view

5. How do you prioritize news items?

In order of importance

11. What do you think accounts for the unfair balance between the amount of urban based news as opposed to rural news items?

I do not think this is wholly true. It will be that at the time of your research this was true. But generally speaking the opposite is the situation. This is in spite of the fact the presidency remains widely which is key in our democracy.

12. Is there some sort of pressure, even if subtle, to squelch rural news in favour of political or elite related news?

NO

13. Will there ever be a situation where there will be an equal balance between rural and urban/elitist news?

I do not think there is an imbalance, not here in GTV News

Chart 1: GTV News Bulletins at 7pm – 1st and Last Quarter 2004

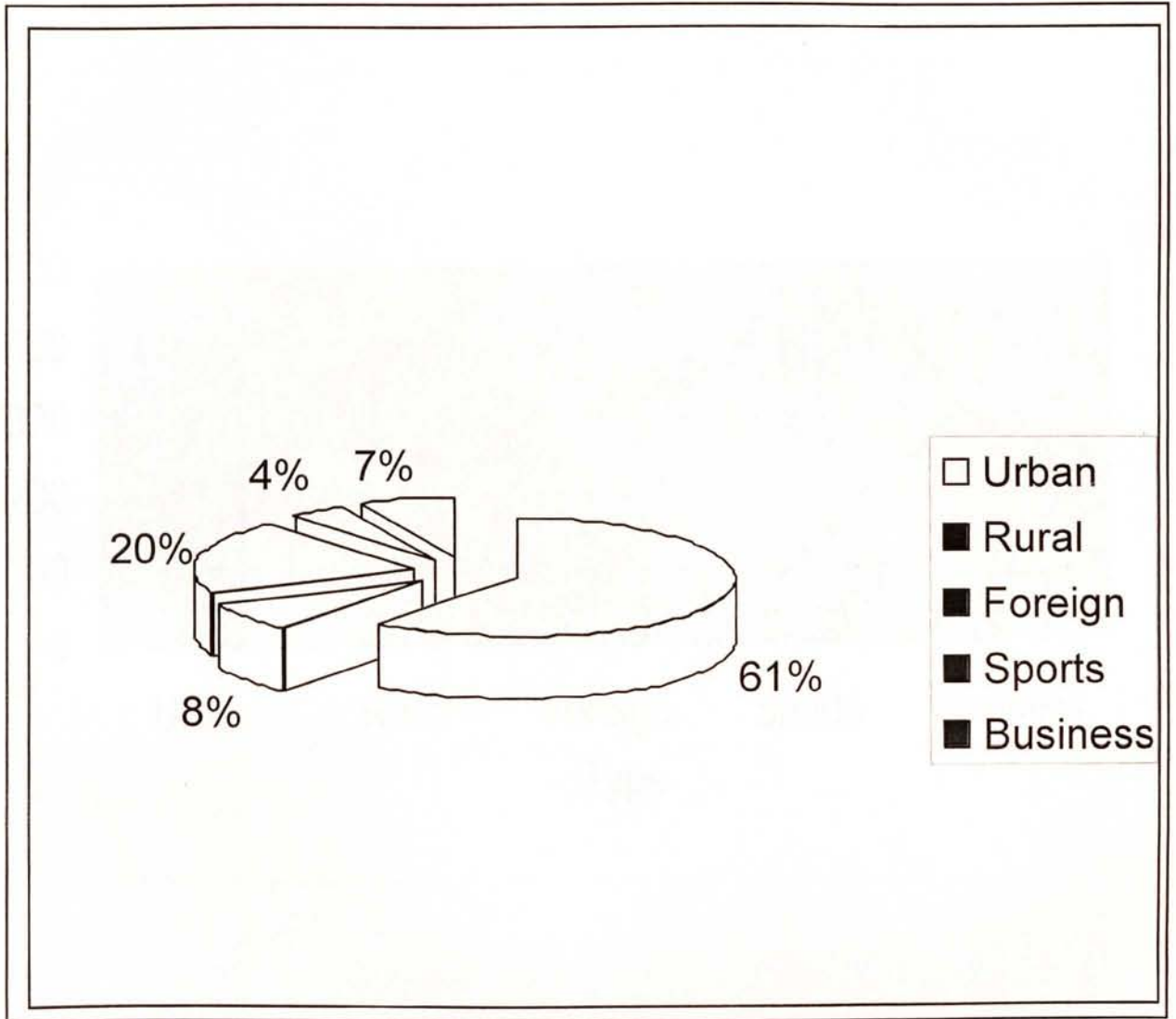


Chart 2: GTV News at 7pm -1st Quarter 2004

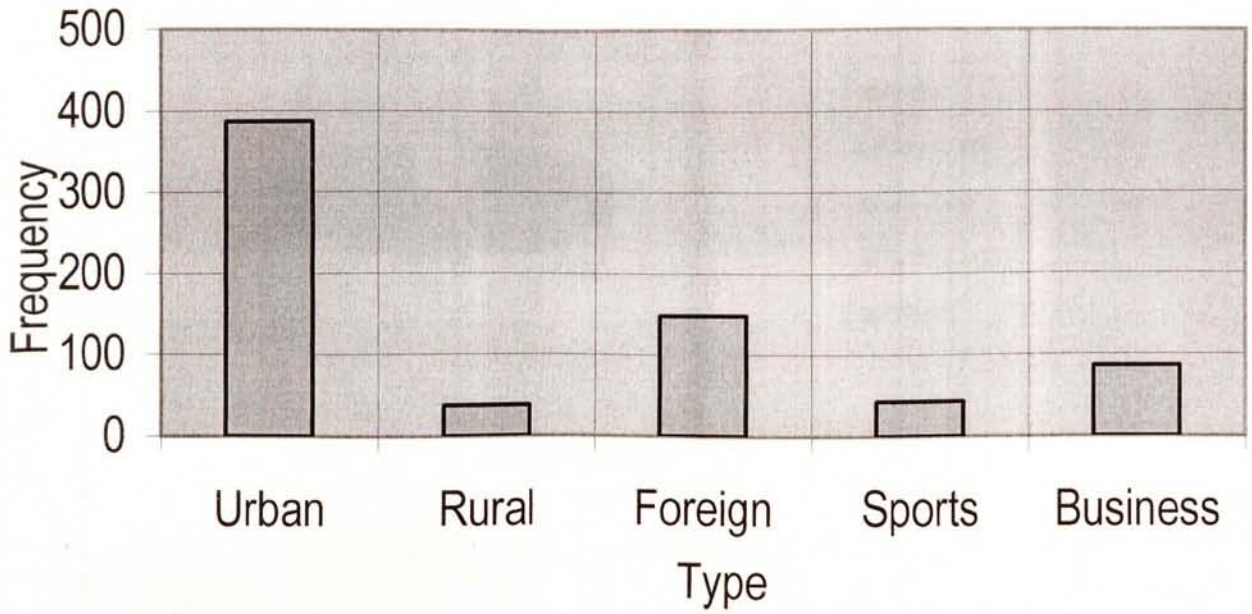


Chart 3: GTV News at 7pm Origin of Story 1st Quarter 2004



Chart 4: GTV News at 7pm -4th Quarter 2004

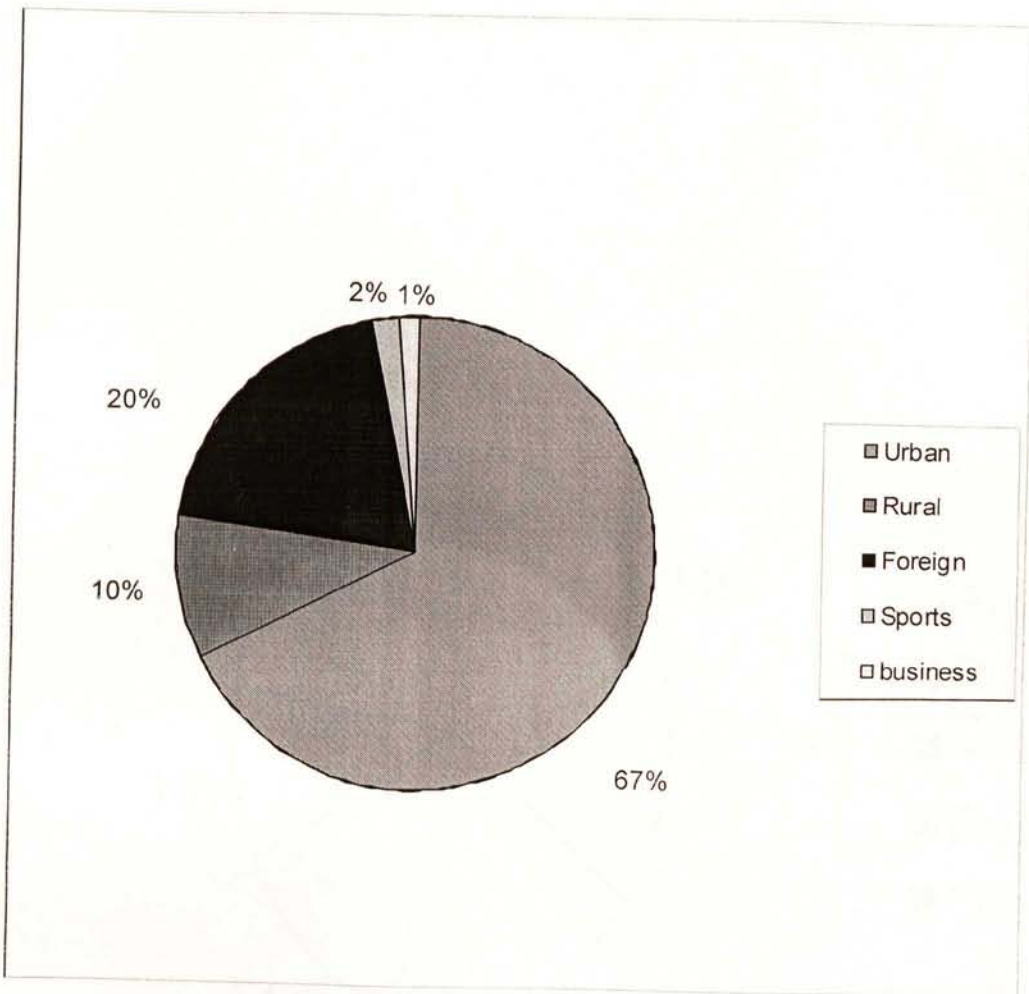


Chart 5: GTV News at 7pm (Origin of Story) – Last Quarter

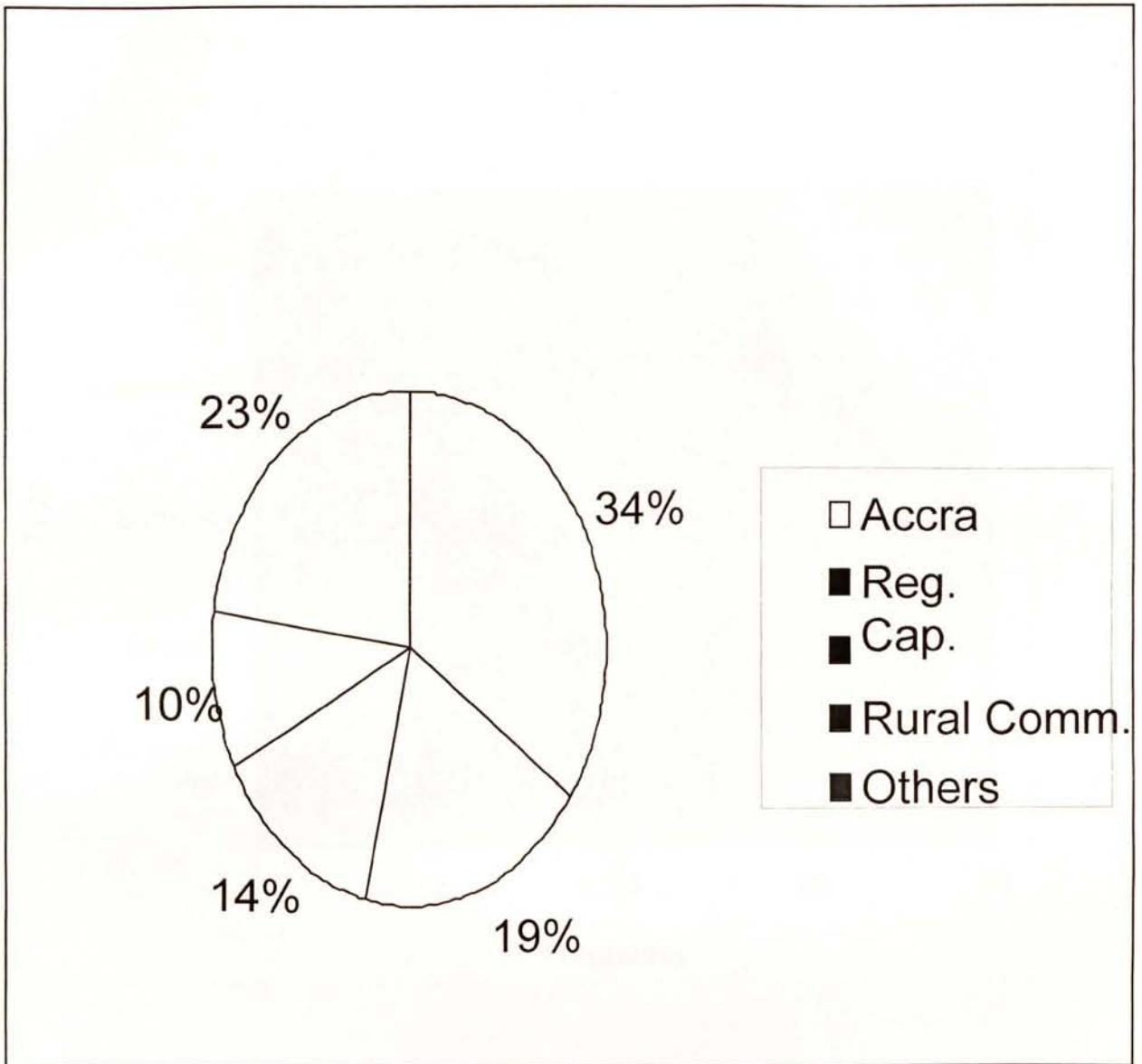


Chart 6: Rural News at 7pm (Portrayal of Rural Residents)- 1st Quarter 2004

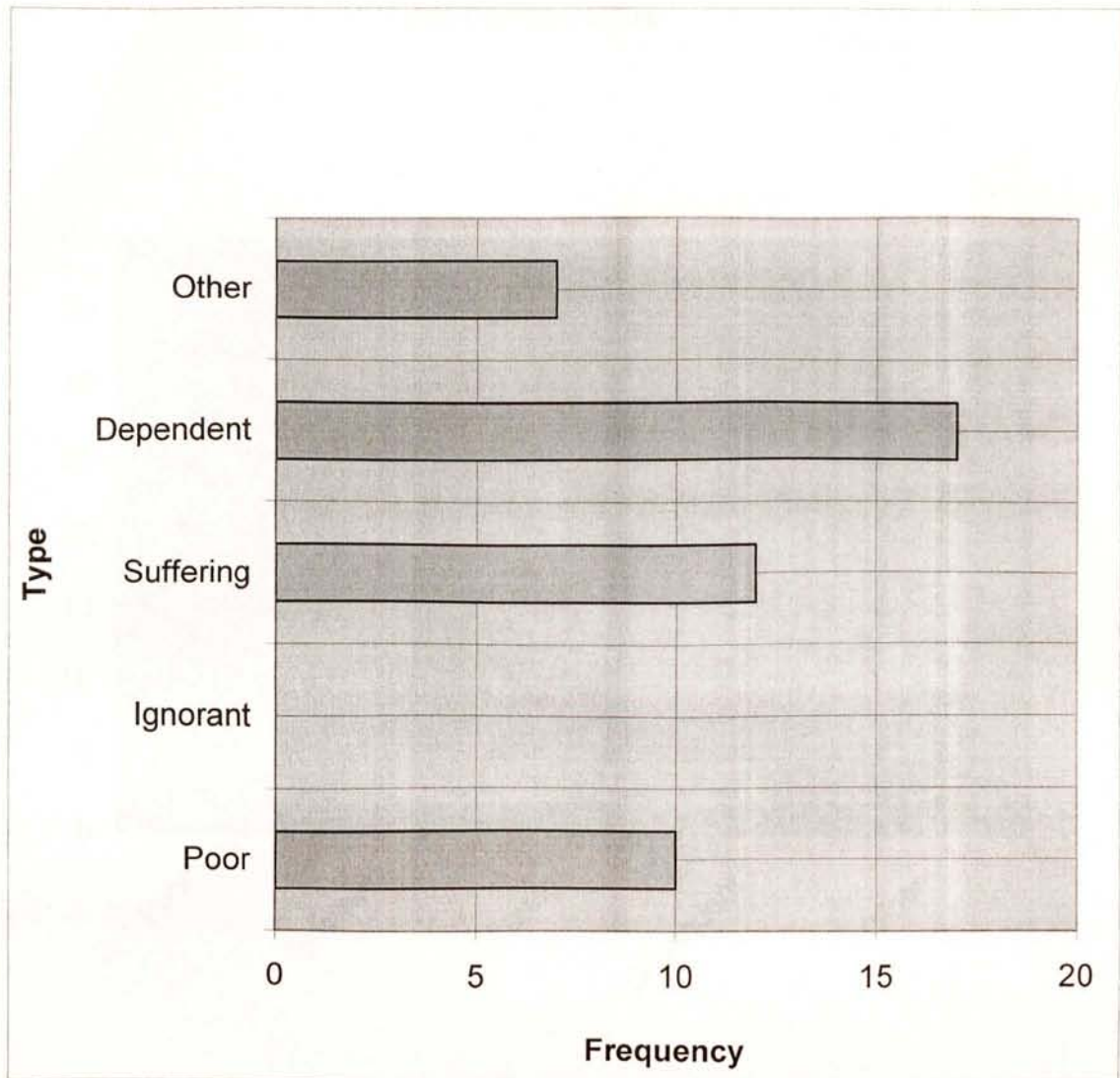


Chart 7: Rural News at 7pm (Portrayal of Rural in Residents)

Last Quarter 2004

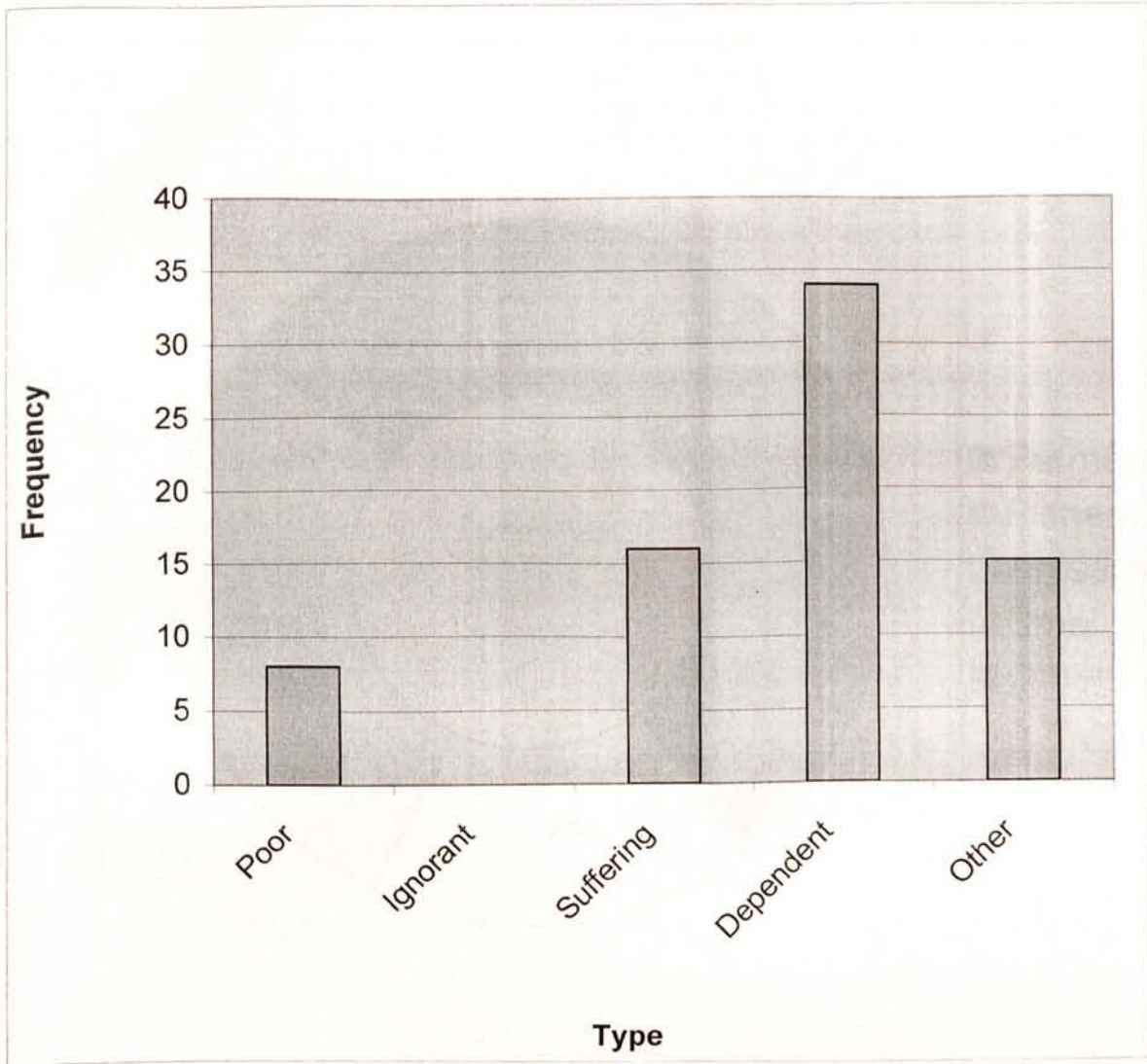


Chart 8: Rural News at 7pm (Occupations in News Item) - 1st Quarter 2004

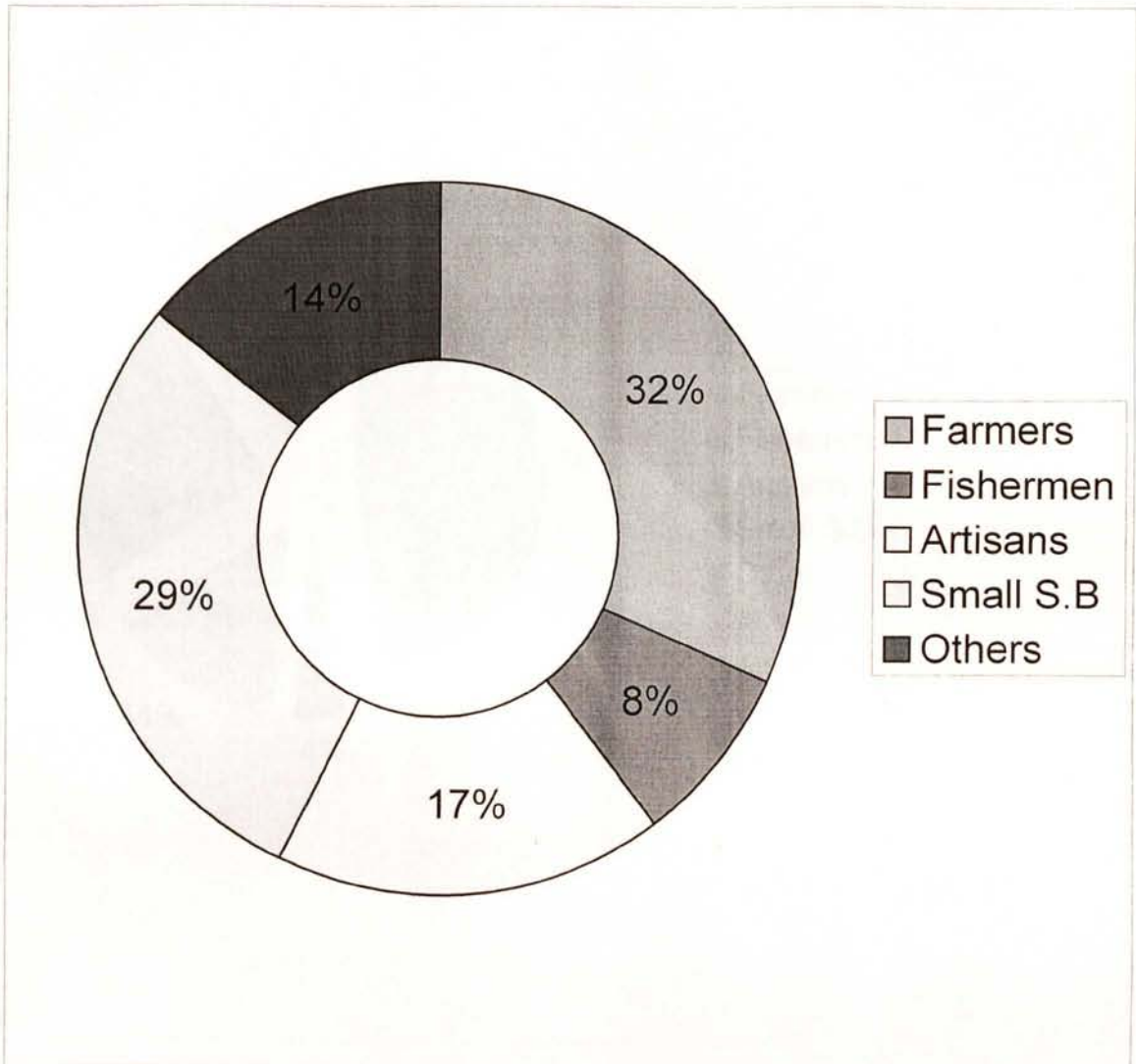


Chart 9: Rural News at 7pm (Occupations in News Item) Last Quarter 2004

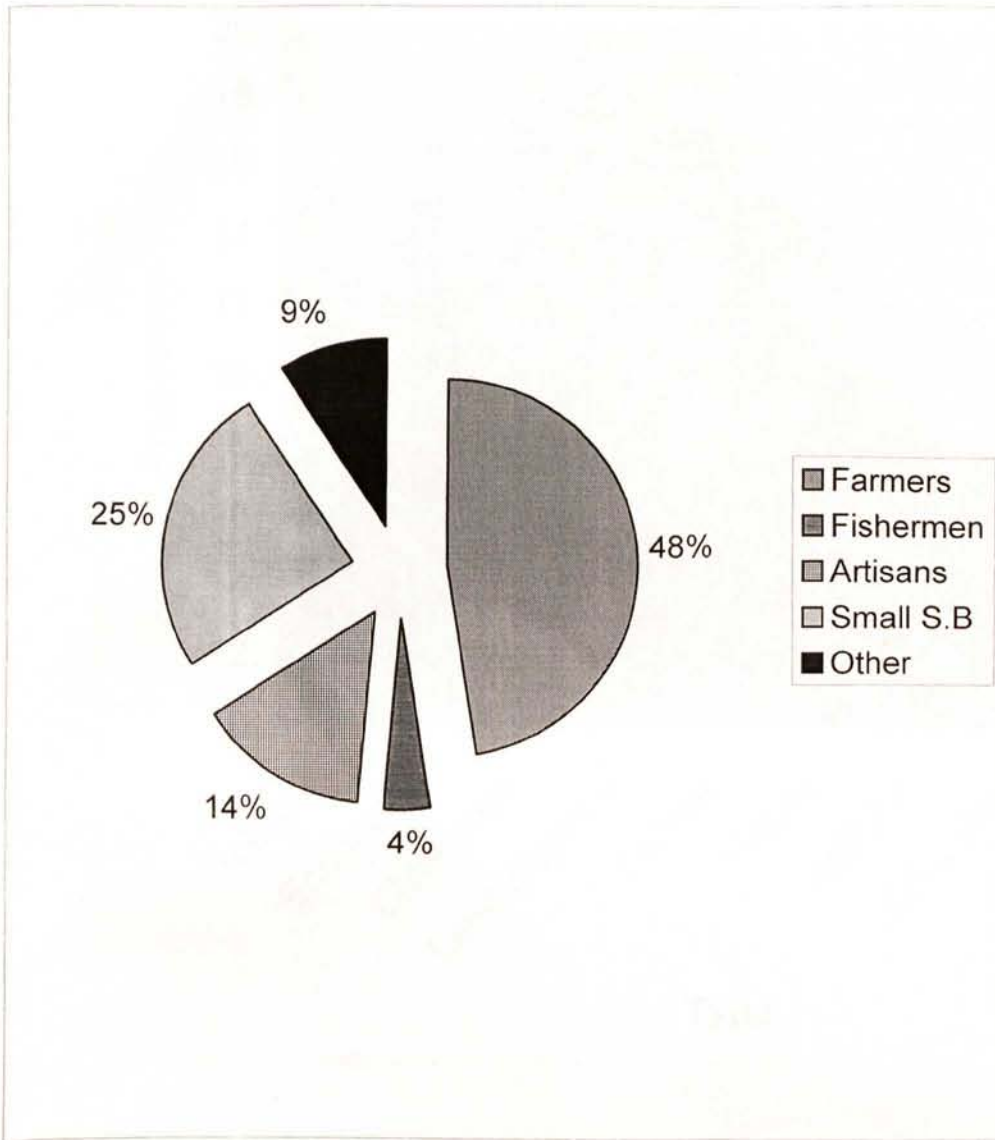


Chart 10: Rural News at 7pm (Subject Matter of Stories) 1st Quarter 2004

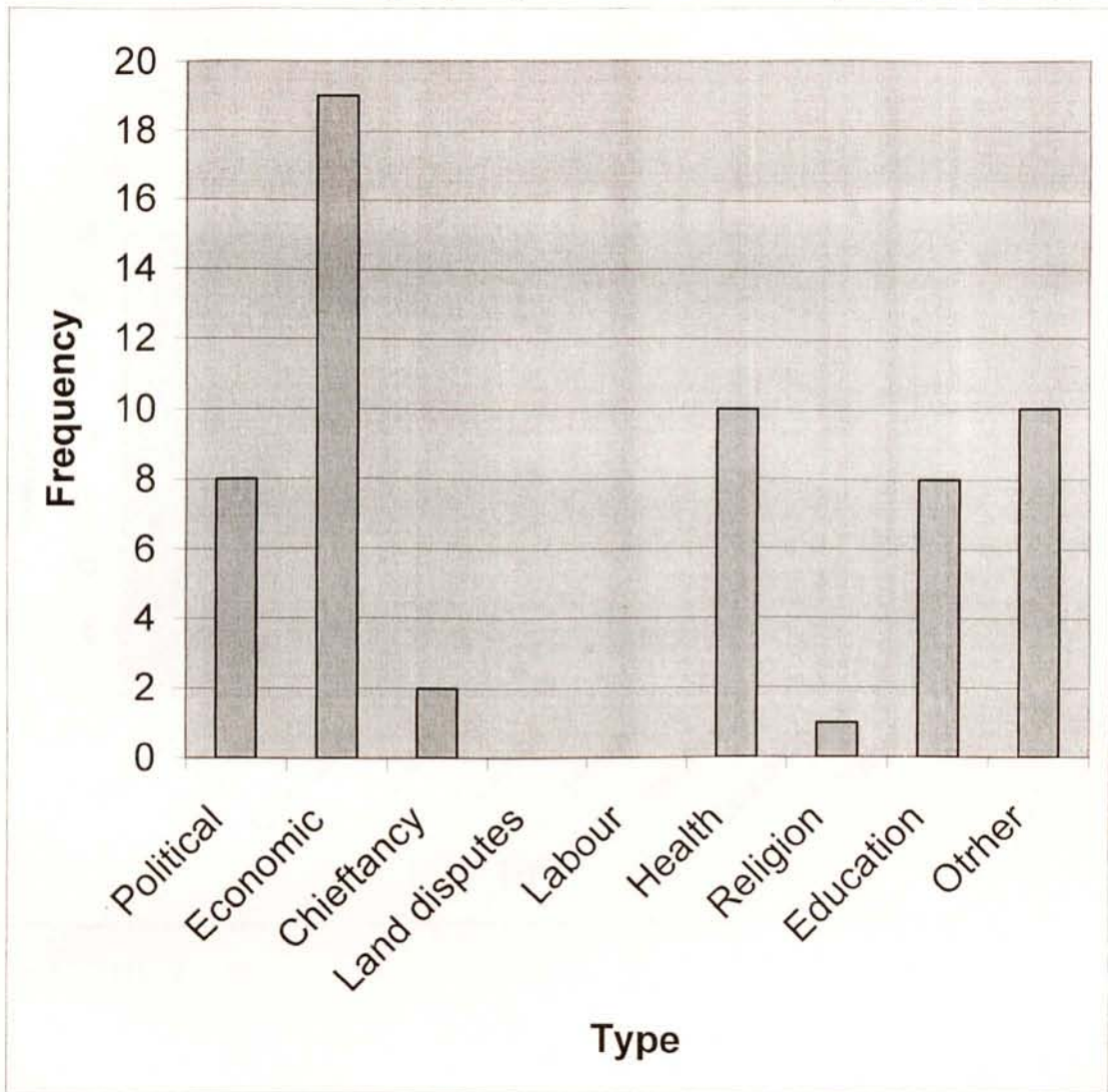


Chart 11: Rural News at 7pm (Subject Matter) Last Quarter 2004

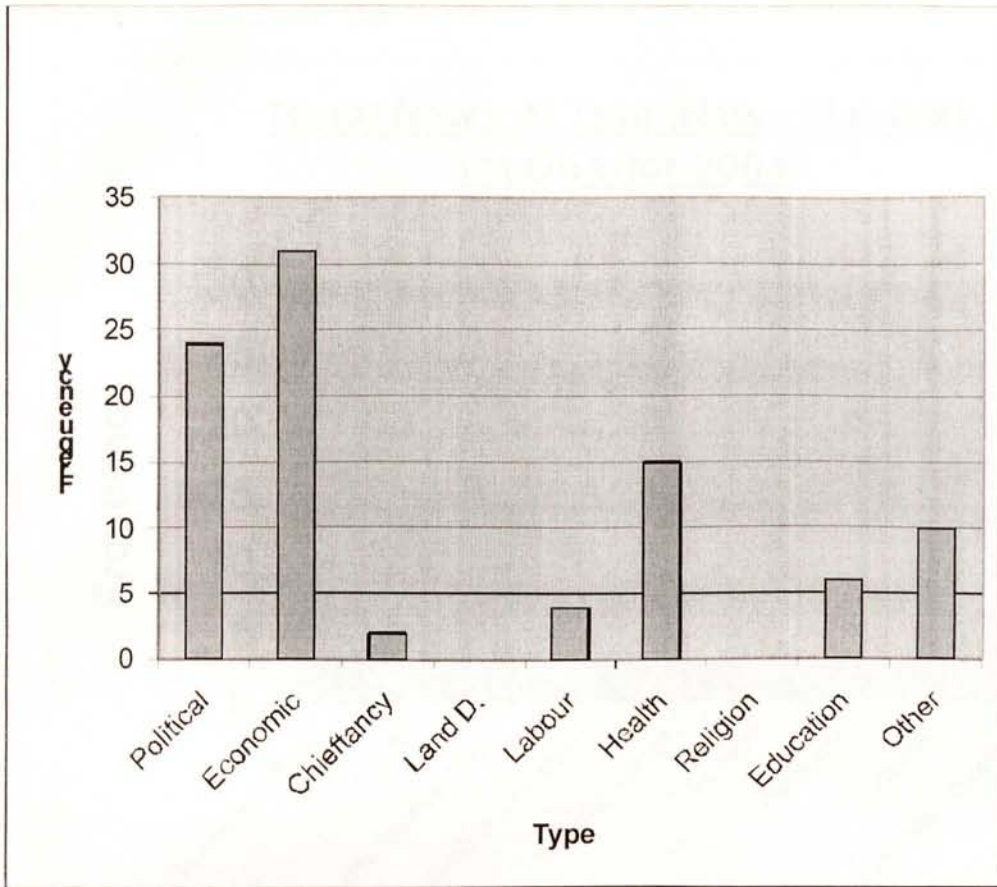


Chart 12

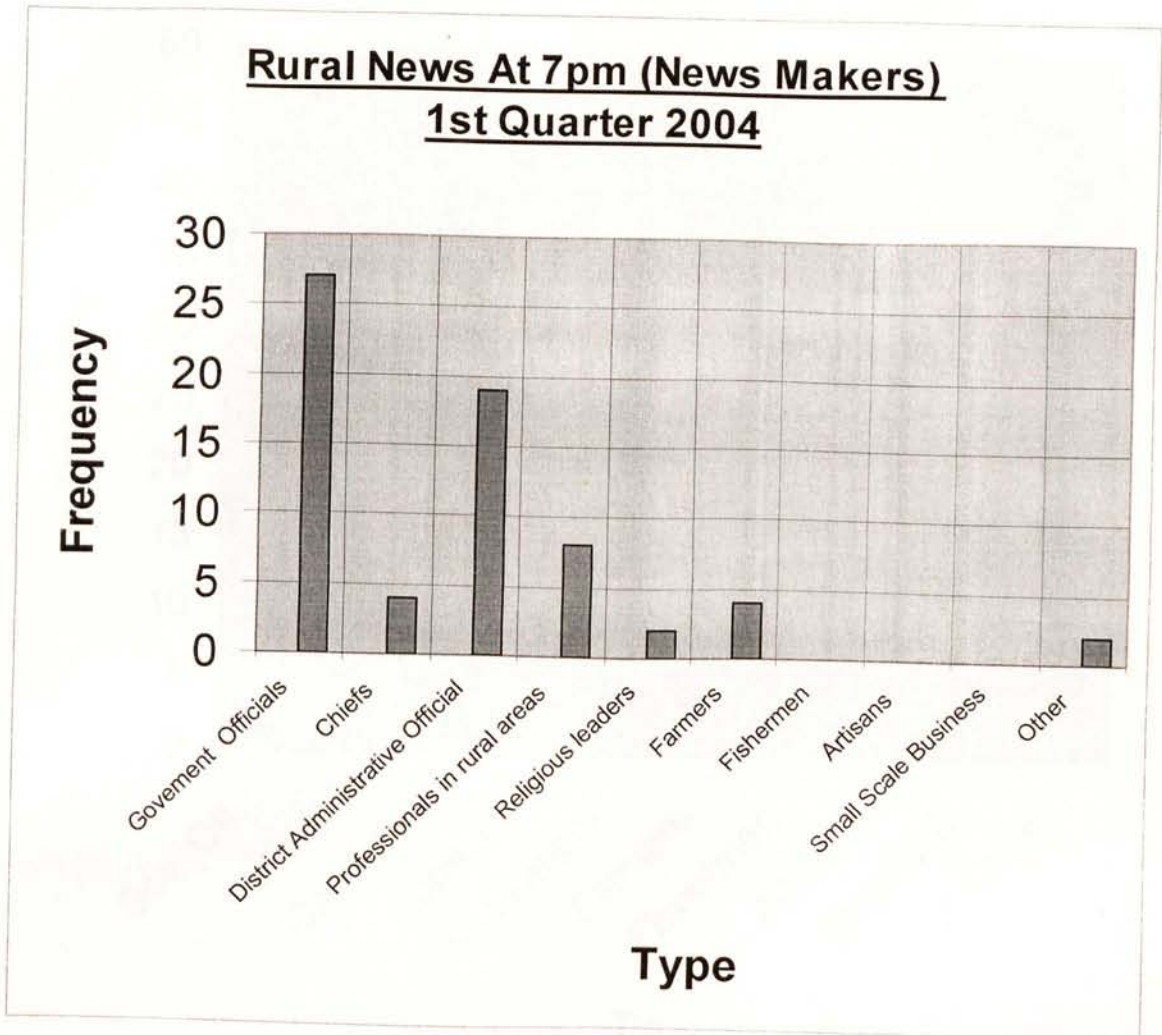


Chart 13: Rural News at 7pm (News Makers)- Last Quarter 2004

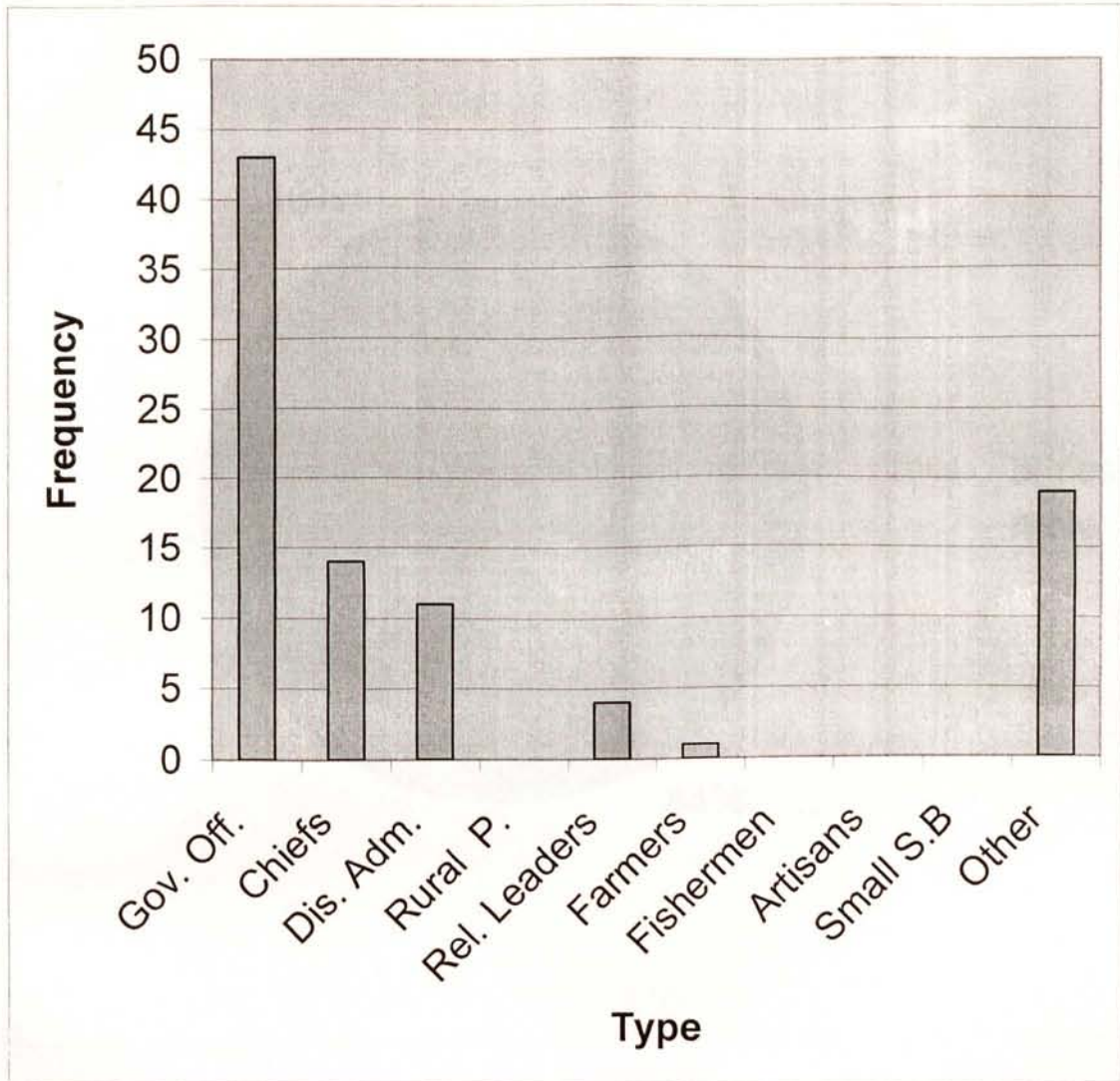


Chart 14: Rural News at 7pm on (Story with Voices) 1st Quarter 2004

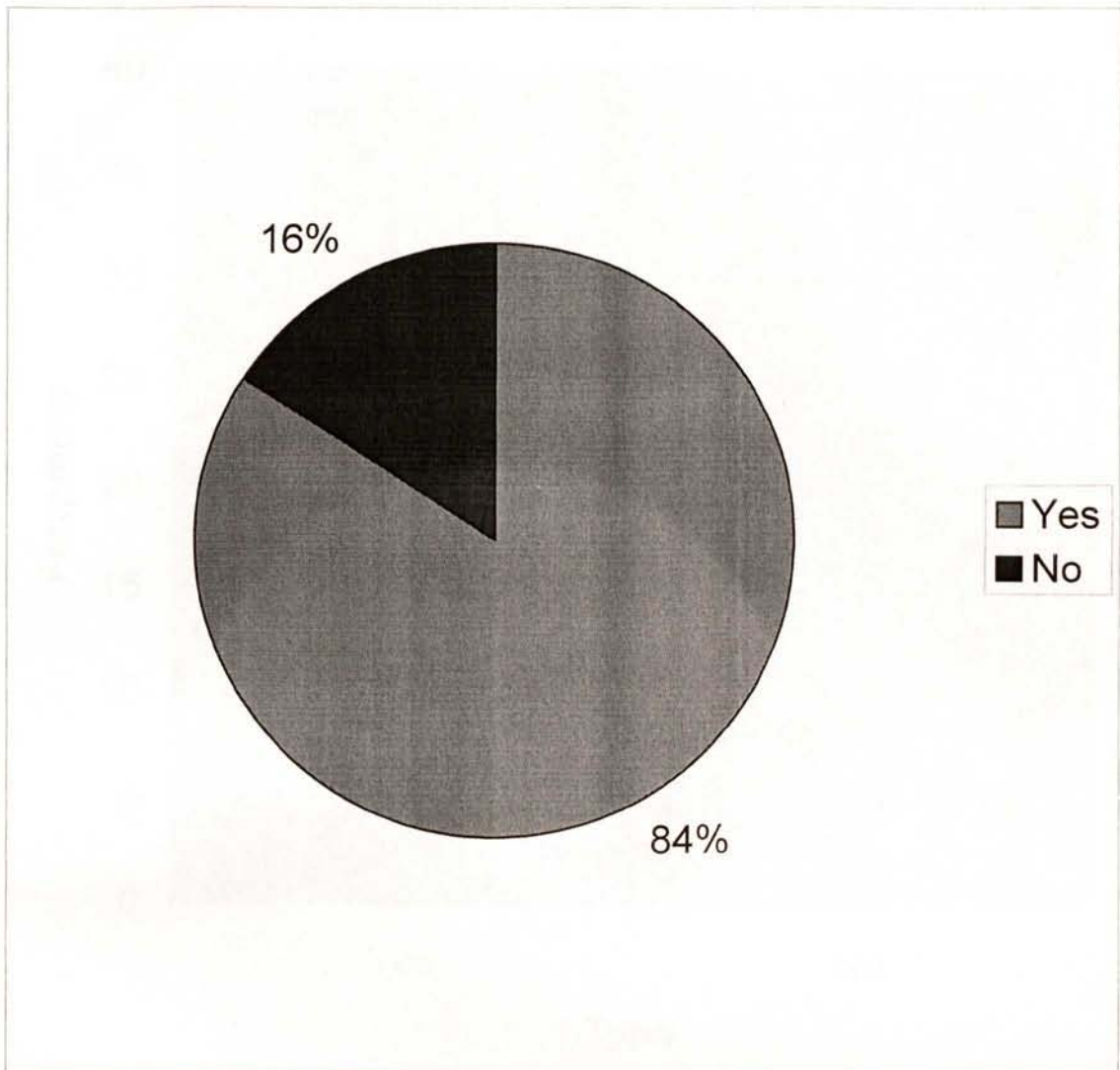


Chart 15: Rural News at 7pm Story with Pictures 1st Quarter 2004

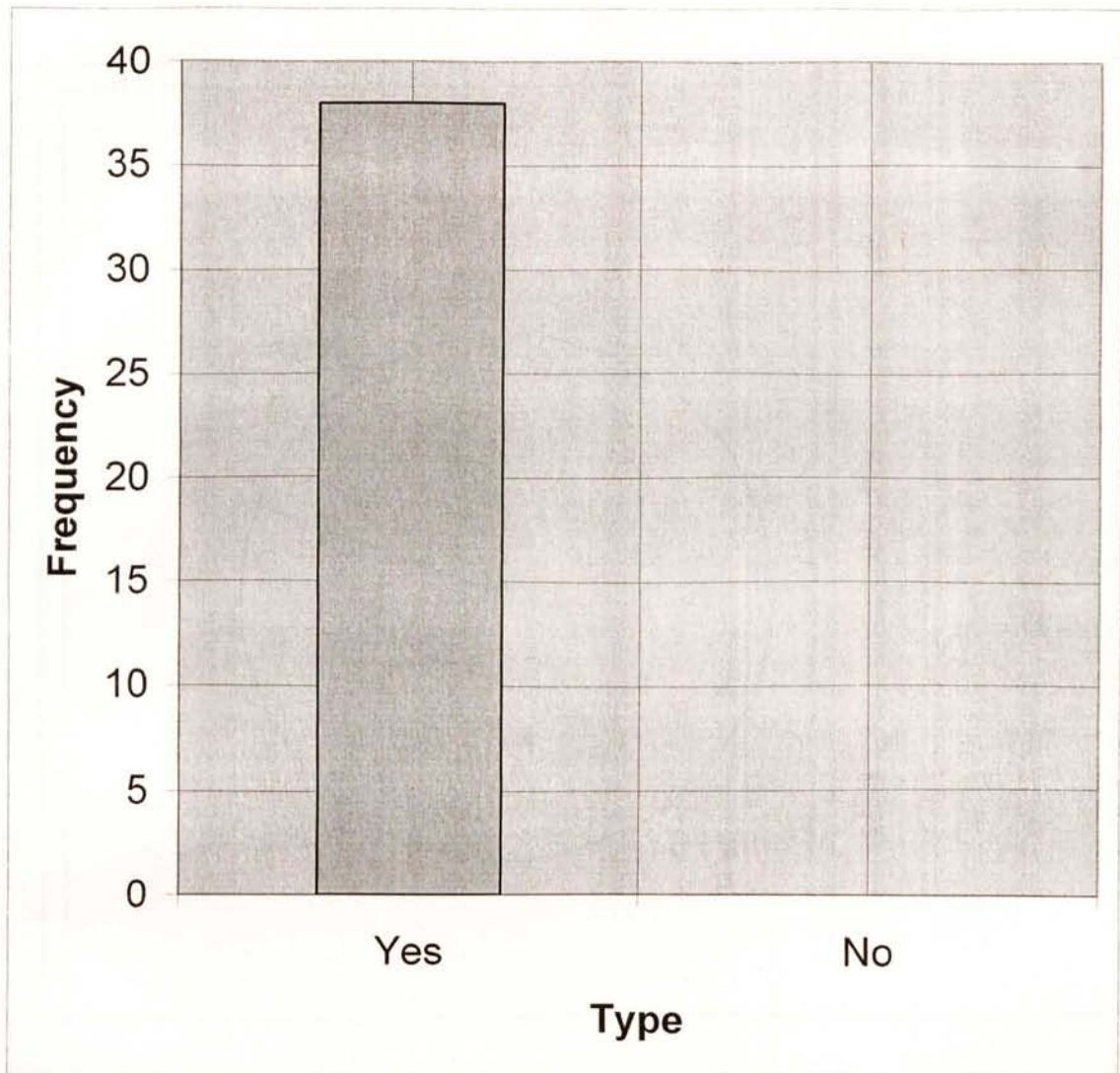


Chart 16: Rural News at 7pm Story with Without Voices – Last Quarter 2004

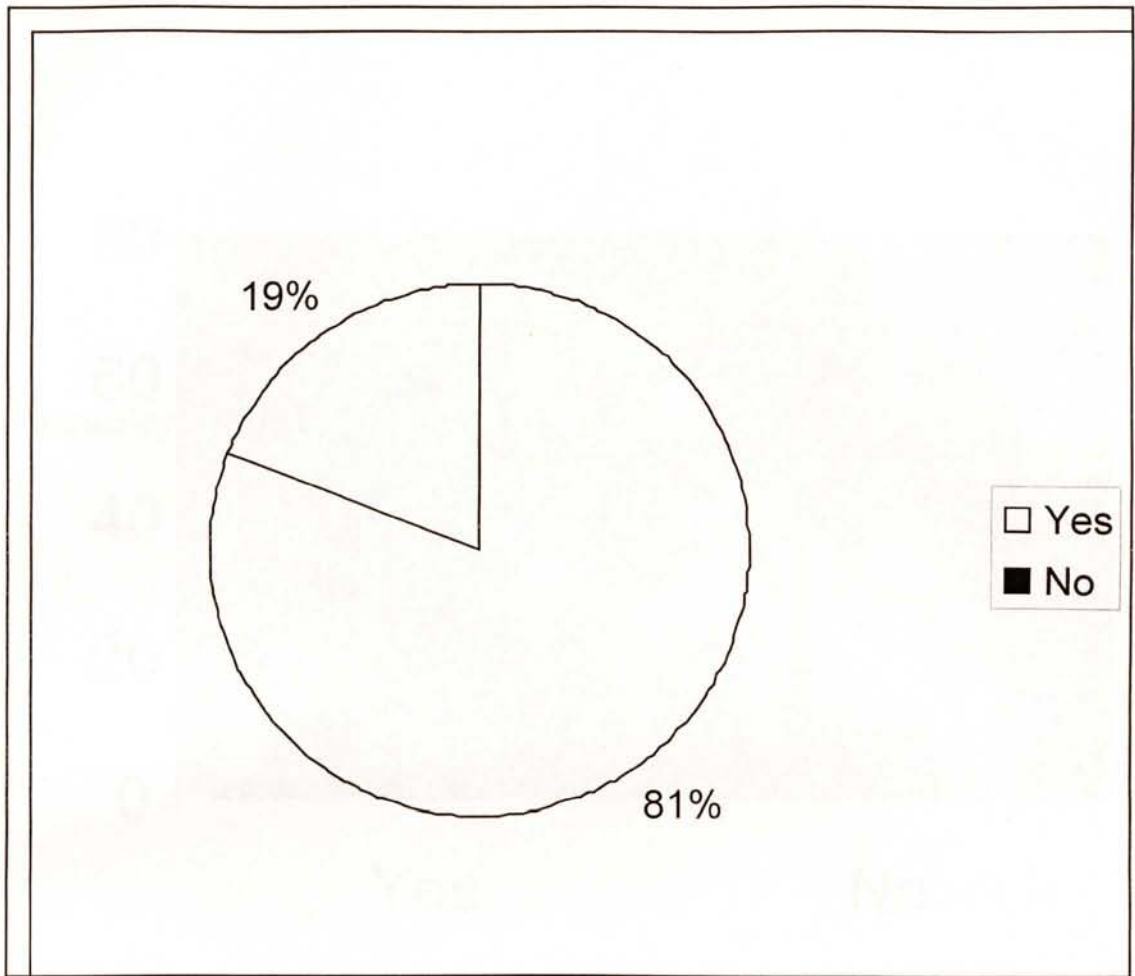


Chart 17: Rural News at 7pm (Story with and without Pictures)
Last Quarter 2004

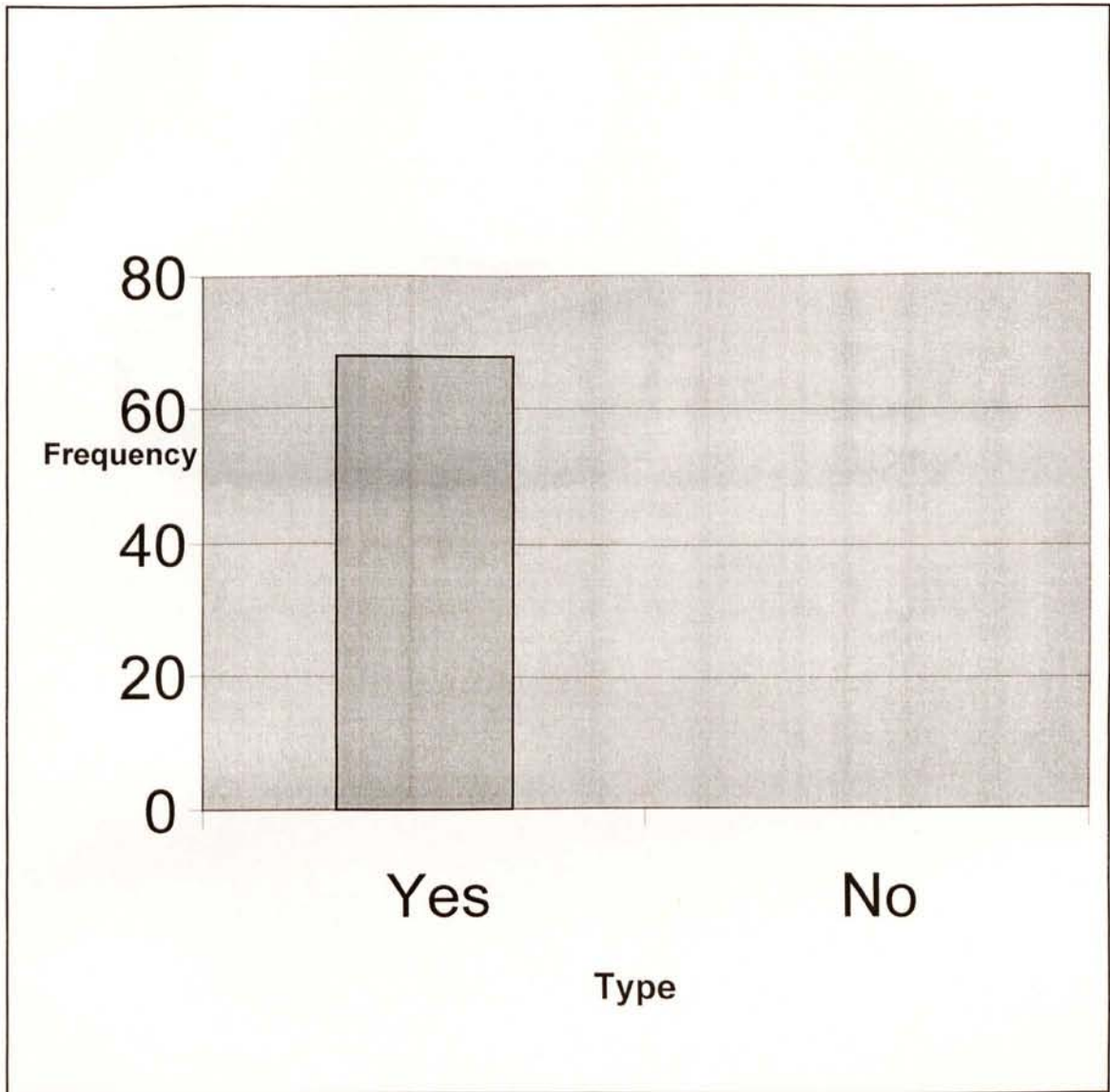


Chart 18: Rural News at 7pm (Placement of Story) 1st Quarter 2004

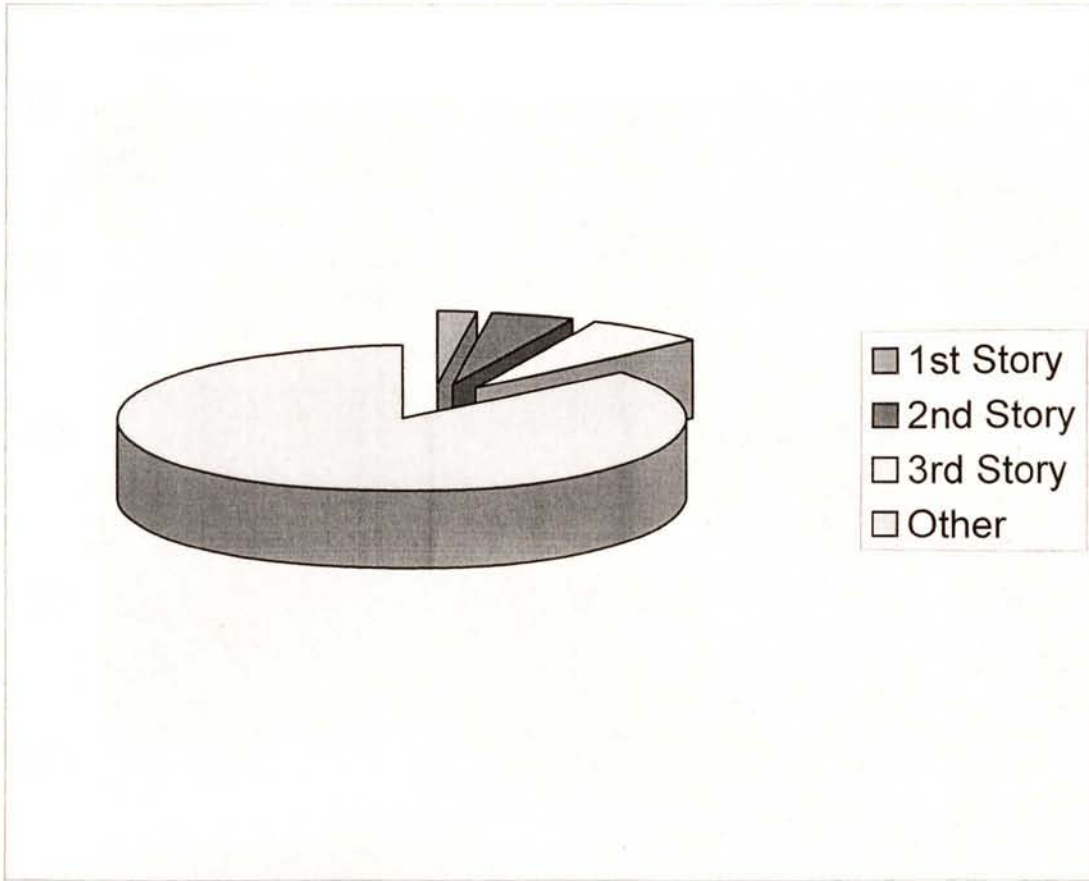


Chart 19: Placement of Story – 4th Quarter 2004

