

CHAPTER 2: GENERAL FINDINGS



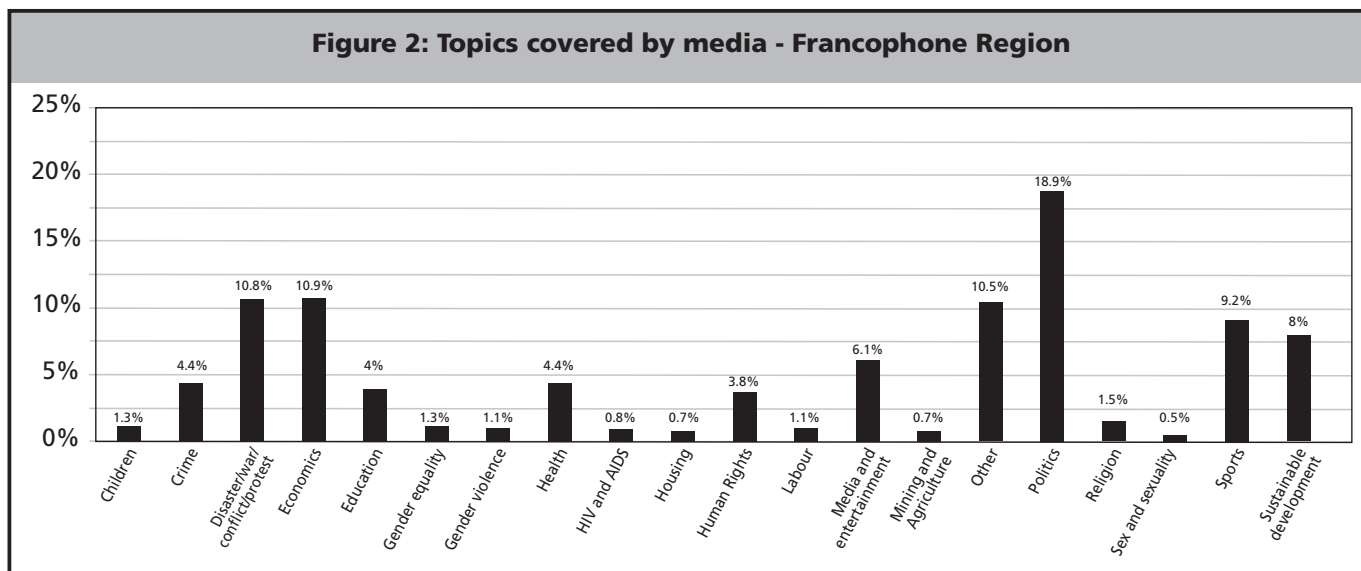
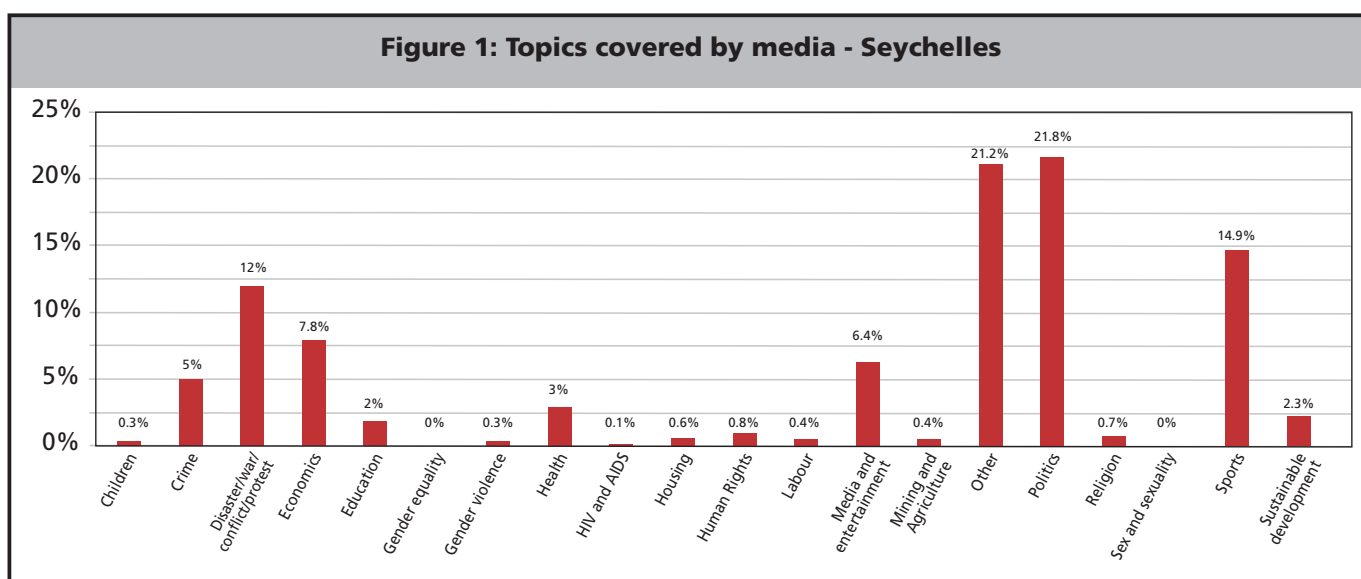
Seychelles research team leader Sharon Thelemaque (left) at a GEMSA strategy meeting Photo: Trevor Davies

GENERAL FINDINGS

Chapter two covers the general findings of the study with regard to topics, genre, origin, and sources. These parameters, included for the first time in this study, provides essential context on media practice in Seychelles.

TOPICS

Figure 1 and 2 below illustrate the breakdown of stories as covered by media houses in the Seychelles and the three countries in this study.



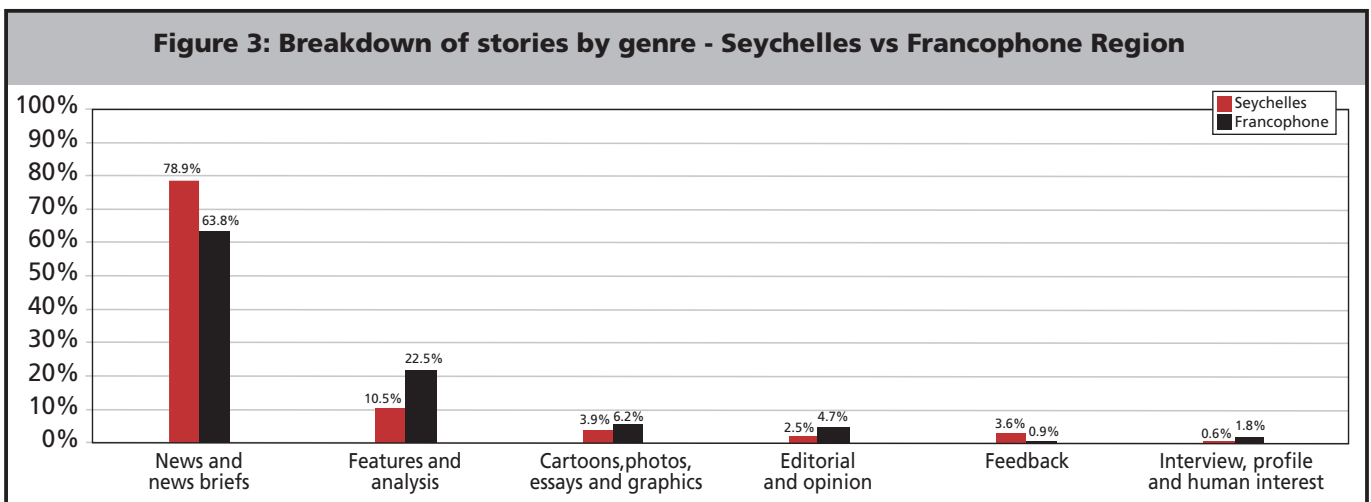
The two graphs show that as in the two Francophone countries, politics (21.8%) and sports (14.9%) dominate coverage in Seychelles. At 12%, disaster/war/conflict/protest came third and economics fourth (7.8%) followed by media and entertainment which constituted (6.4%). While gender as a topic constituted 1.3% and gender violence 1.1% of coverage in the study overall (similar to the GMBS) there were no gender specific stories in Seychelles during the period and gender violence constituted a mere 0.3% of coverage.

HIV and AIDS stories in the Seychelles media constituted a mere 0.1% of the total compared to 0.8% in the study, and 3% in the earlier HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study (2005) covering ten countries in the region.

The low figures on the coverage of topics such as HIV and AIDS and gender equality shows that these issues have not been mainstreamed into coverage in the three countries or more pointedly, that they are not regarded as newsworthy.

TYPES OF STORIES REPORTED

Figure 3 is a comparative breakdown of stories by genre between Seychelles and the two Francophone countries in this study.

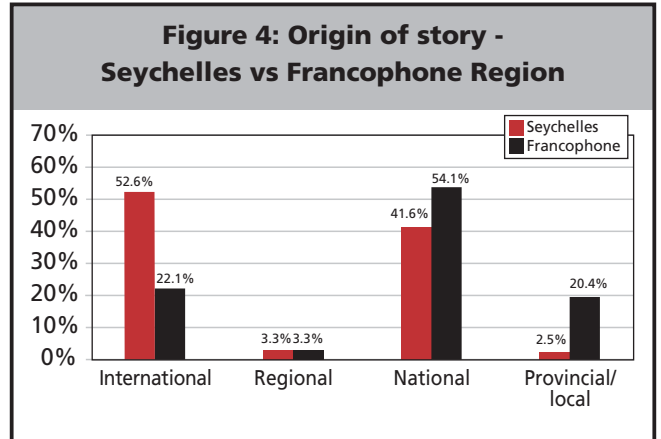


The graph shows similar patterns, with news and news briefs comprising two thirds or more of coverage; followed by features and analysis; cartoons; editorials; news that asks for feedback; interviews; profiles and human interest. However, with features and analysis at 10.5% in Seychelles compared to 22.5% in the rest of the region, it would appear that the media in this country is less analytical than in other countries. On the positive side, Seychelles has a higher proportion of “news that asks for feedback” (3.6% compared to the average in the study of 0.9%). This shows that the media in Seychelles interacts with its audiences (through letters, call-ins etc).

ORIGIN

The origin of stories gives an indication of just how well the media in a specific country covers events and issues within the society in which it operates.

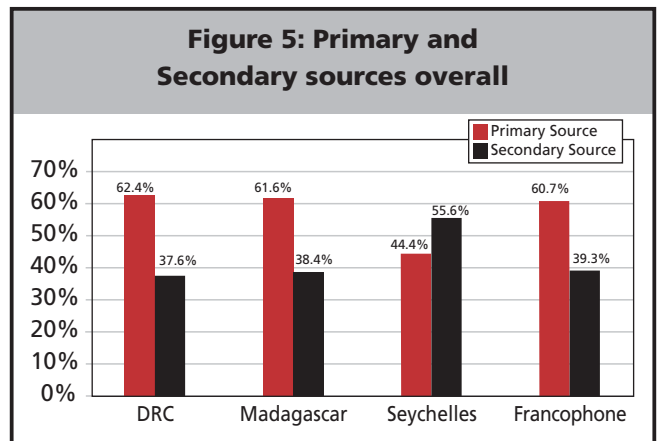
Figure four shows that about half of all coverage in Seychelles concerns international events compared to less than a quarter in the study overall. While it is important for citizens to know what is going on elsewhere in the world, these findings suggest that the Seychelles media is not investing much in local reporting, preferring instead to get its news from international wire services.



PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

The study divided sources into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those who are directly accessed for information and secondary sources comprise reports or other written material quoted in stories. Good journalistic practice combines both kinds of sources, but with a much heavier reliance on primary sources. The latter reflect the real work of the media: to probe official statements and reports; interpret them; get reaction and amplify them with views and voices from the ground.

Figure 5 shows that Seychelles is the only country in the study in which secondary sources exceeded primary sources (55.6% primary sources compared to 44.4% secondary sources). The overall average for the study is 60.7% primary sources compared to 39.3% secondary sources. These trends suggest a higher degree of “arm chair” journalism within media houses in Seychelles than elsewhere.



Better Living

Ansanm Pour Lanmour Sesel

Reducing the odds of breast cancer

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, and Seychelles has not been spared by this disease.

Cancer data from the National Clinical Laboratory (see table below) indicates an increase in the number of cancers diagnosed in Seychelles over the recent years. Breast cancer remains the leading cancer among women worldwide and also in Seychelles.

Cancer statistics from the Health Department in Seychelles indicate a gradual increase in the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer. Twenty three women were diagnosed with breast cancer in Seychelles in 2005 compared to ten cases in 2004; an increase of over 100%. In 2006, 16 women were diagnosed with breast cancer. Although it is more prevalent among women, breast cancer also occurs in men.

October 22nd has been dedicated "Wear Pink Day for Breast Cancer". Everyone in Seychelles was encouraged to wear something pink to support this initiative and breast cancer cause. The principal aims of this activity were:

- To raise awareness on breast cancer;
- As a sign of solidarity for living with and affected by breast cancer; and
- In remembrance of those who have succumbed to the disease

Research suggests that a woman's risk of developing breast cancer over her lifetime is about 1 in 8 (13%), and her chance of dying from the disease is about 1 in 33 (3%). Men are as vulnerable to breast cancer as women. According to the American Cancer Society, about 2,030 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed among men in America this year.

Early detection of breast cancer leads to better survival outcomes. Therefore, in its efforts to promote early detection of the disease, the Ministry of Health and Social Development is appealing to both men and women to do the following:

- Be more "breast aware"
- Practise monthly breast self-examination (best time is one week after each menstrual period, or a fixed date in the month if no longer menstruating);
- Schedule a clinical breast examination at their clinic at least once a year; and
- Seek prompt medical assistance if they notice any changes or abnormalities in their breasts

While breast cancer can't always be prevented, there are lifestyle choices that can significantly reduce our risk. Here are four:

1. Keep physically active. Studies suggest that exercising three to four hours per week at moderate or vigorous levels reduces your risk of breast cancer by 30 to 40 percent. You don't need to be an athlete. Activities like brisk walking or biking are sufficient.
2. Keep your weight in the normal range for your height. That means keeping to a body mass index of 25 or less. (There are several BMI calculators online.) Women who are overweight or obese have a 30 to 50 percent increased risk of developing the most common breast cancer, that which occurs after menopause. Also, keep your weight steady; don't gain pounds over time. A woman should try to stay within 5 to 10 pounds of what she weighed at age 18. The best way to avoid weight gain and avoid overweight or obesity is to eat a diet high in vegetables and fresh fruit, and low in high-calorie foods like sugared drinks, refined carbohydrates and fatty foods.
3. Limit your intake of alcohol to two drinks per day or fewer. Women who drink more than this increase their risk of breast cancer with each additional drink they consume.
4. If you have menopausal symptoms, try to handle them without hormone therapy. If you need to take hormones, limit their use to under five years.

Thumbs UP Thumbs DOWN

THUMBS UP

To the staff of Takamaka clinic and Victoria hospital who took good care of the Seychelles Consul in Luxemburg after he had an accident and injured his head. The Consul has expressed his gratitude at the professional way he was treated and the empathy of the personnel. Well done!



THUMBS DOWN

For those responsible for circulating a vicious letter in all government Ministries threatening staff in all means possible. The letter is aimed at creating low morale at a time when all Ministries are putting in the extra mile to make things happen.

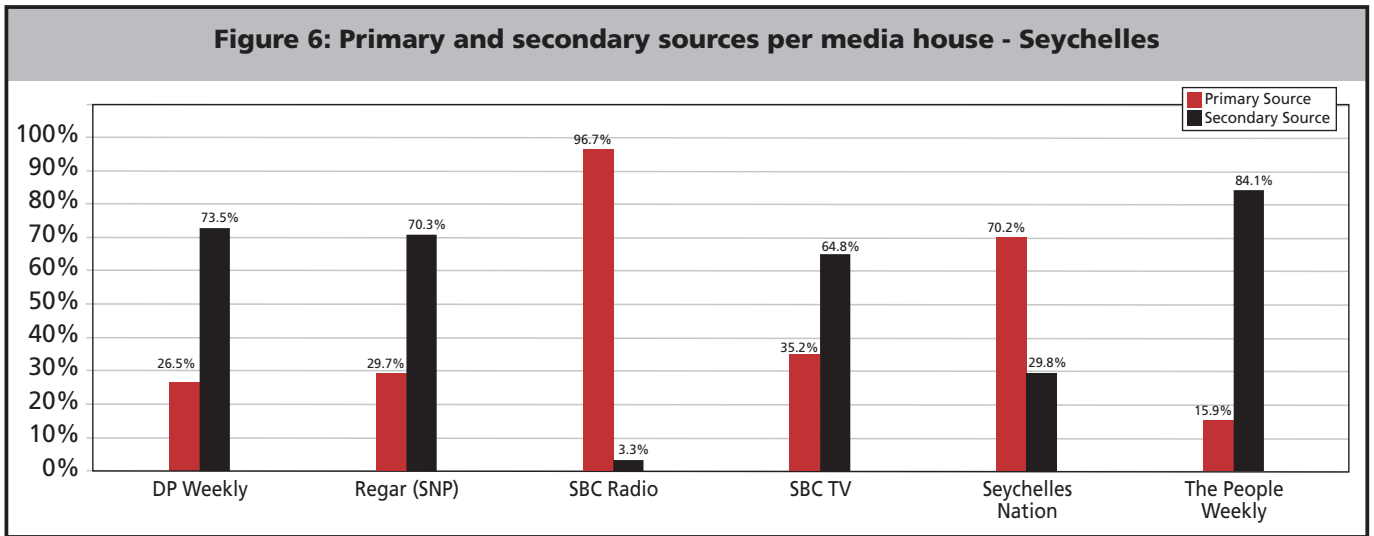


Dry reports

A story entitled "Reducing the odds of breast cancer" in *The People Weekly* newspaper of 25 October is an example of a secondary source story. The story is about the increase in the incidence of cancer in Seychelles particularly among women. The story also gives tips on lifestyle choices to help reduce the risk of being affected by the disease.

The basis of the report is a cancer report from the National Clinical Laboratory, Victoria Hospital. The story itself is a voiceless piece that reports on the report without consulting other experts on the subject, let alone giving the views of women and men, including the most authoritative voices of those actually suffering from cancer.

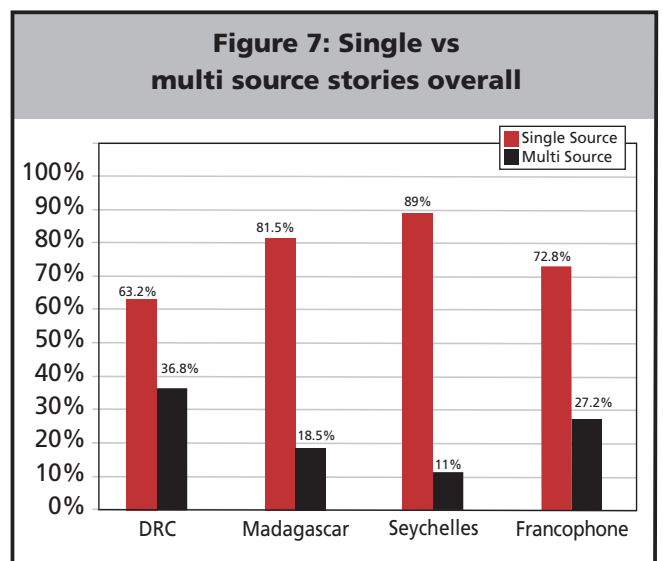
Variations for individual media houses



This pattern is not, however, necessarily the same for all media houses. Figure six shows that both *SBC Radio* and the *Seychelles Nation* have a higher proportion of primary than secondary sources. The reliance on secondary sources by the three weekly political party papers – *DP Weekly*, *Regar* and *The People Weekly* show that these rely more on speeches and reports than on original reporting.

SINGLE VERSUS MULTIPLE SOURCES

The baseline study also sought to compare how media performed with regard to soliciting different view points within each story. This is both an indicator of journalistic rigour and good media ethics as it is unlikely that single source stories can reflect a balanced view on any one issue. As a rule of thumb, every story should have more than one source.



Against this backdrop, the findings in the study reveal weak journalistic practice in all the countries studied. The average proportion of single source to multiple sources stories is 72.8% to 27.2%. This means that on average in the three countries, only three out of every ten stories have more than one source.

In Seychelles, the proportion of single source stories (89%) to multiple source stories (11%) is even higher.

These general findings are important in understanding some of the later findings in this study, like why the views and voices of certain types of people are hardly heard. Single source stories invariably consist of the voice of authority. In most societies voices of authority are those in power or experts and these are invariably men.

Variation by media house

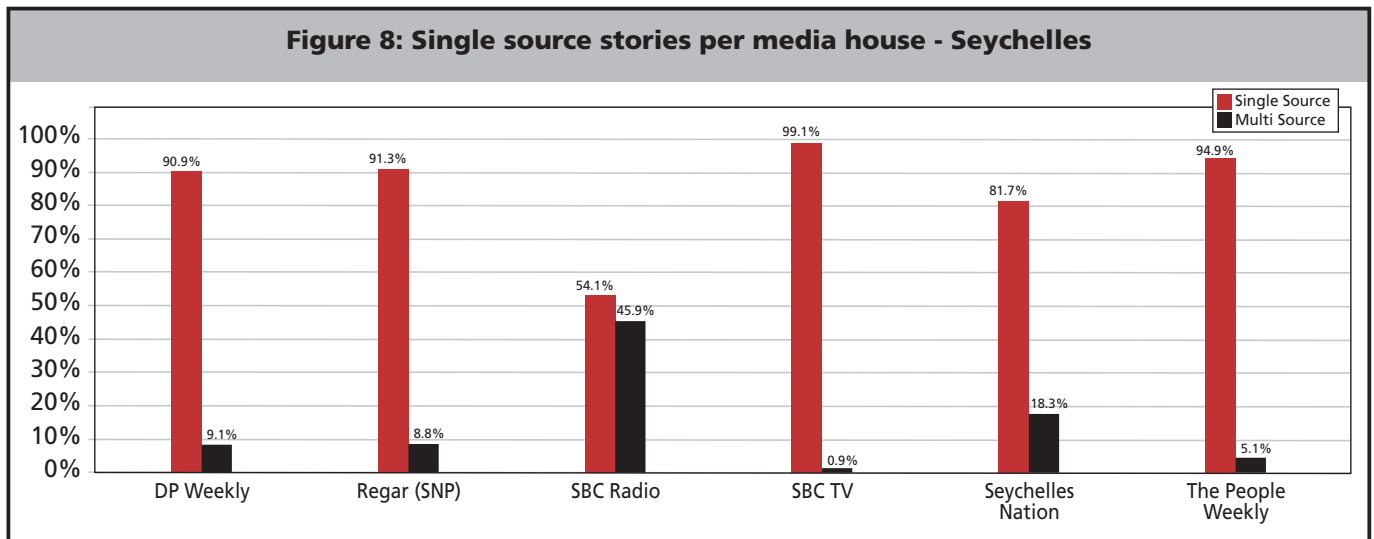
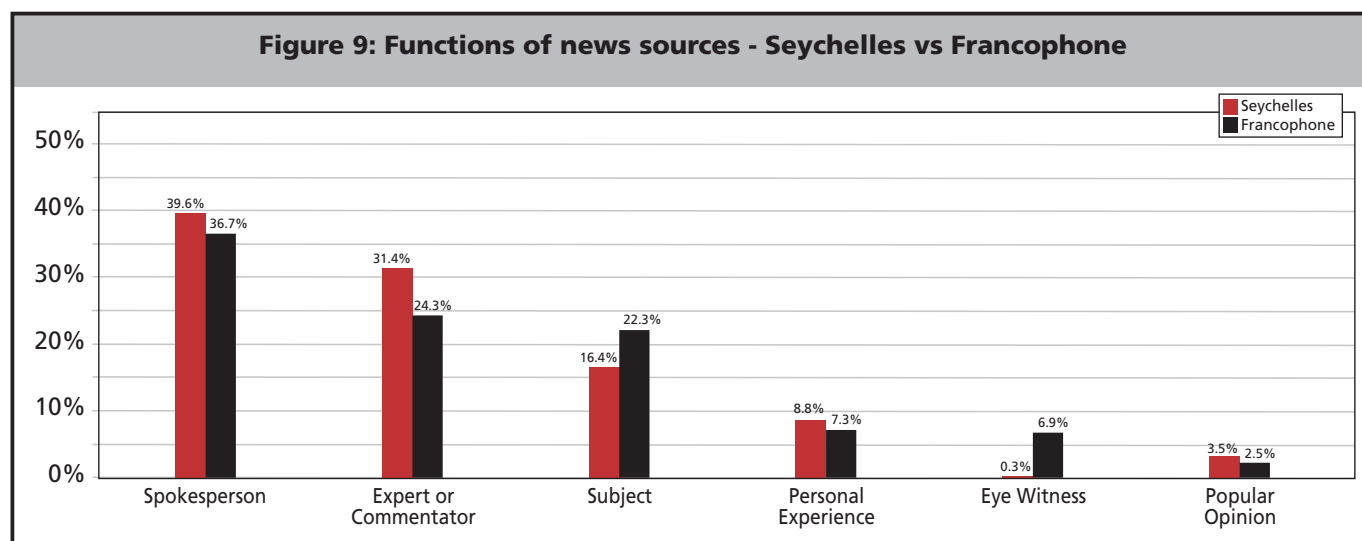


Figure 8 shows that the pattern is similar across all media houses except the SBC Radio that had 45.9% multiple source stories.

FUNCTIONS OF SOURCES

This study also sought to find out what type of people dominated as sources of news in the Seychelles media. This is also an important indicator of media practice as it reflects the extent to which the media in any given country can claim to be “the voice of the voiceless”.



As shown in Figure 9, in all countries official spokespersons constituted the bulk of sources (39.6% in the case of Seychelles compared to 36.7% in the study overall). Expert/commentators came second (31.4% in Seychelles, and 24.3% in the study overall). Sources as direct subjects came third (16.4% times in Seychelles compared to the overall average of 22.3%). The kinds of sources that are most likely to be those most affected by official policies (personal experience; eyewitness and popular opinion) are those least represented in all instances.

These findings resonate with those on the predominance of secondary and single source stories and are an important clue as to why certain kinds of views and voices are marginalised in the mainstream media.