

# Changes in Media Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Community Media

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# Changes in Media Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Community Media

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## **Abstract**

This thesis considers the role of community media in contemporary media policy developments of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. The study is broadly located within the discourse on ‘shapers’ of media policy developments. The empirical materials draw upon various case studies of media regulation and community press and broadcasting media campaigns in South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria. The case studies were conducted using mixed methods approach in a qualitative way. The methodological logics underpinning data presentation and analysis are explanation building and cross-case synthesis.

The thesis shows that there have been substantial media policy changes with progressive effects across Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades. Enabled by the growing deregulation of media environments, there is a robust and complex culture of community media in the region. Community media institutions, working alongside a plethora of allies and drawing on a range of communication and participatory platforms, are exerting significant impacts on media policy decisions. The degree of their effectiveness, however, is affected by political, legislative, and economic processes, as well as by differences in technology, business philosophies, available funding regimes, and structures for audience participation. The engagements of community media with governments in media deregulations have established a new model for understanding media policy and for media deregulations. But, regardless of the changes in media policy, there are still specific policy concerns that underline what brings additional pressures to community media.

The study concludes, firstly, that the contribution of community media to policy making still requires greater public recognition. Secondly, that there is need for the pressures on community media to be quickly redressed in order to improve their effectiveness as policy activists. This could be achieved through: a new understanding of media policy as advanced by alternative media organizations; an ‘open’ administrative approach to inform participatory policy decision-making; the expansion of protective frameworks for small media in a bid to preserve their emancipatory potency; and the use of social and digital media to strengthen campaigns for policy reforms.

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## **Abbreviations**

Africast - International Conference of Africa Broadcasters

AGN - Actors Guild of Nigeria

AID - Agency for International Development

AIT – African Independent Television (Nigeria)

AMARC – Association Mondiale des Radio Diffuseurs Communautaires (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters)

AMG – Annual General Meeting

ANC – African National Congress (South Africa)

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BPP – Bureau for Public Procurement (Nigeria)

CASET – Cassette Educational Trust (Bush Radio founder)

CCB - The Code of Conduct Bureau (Nigeria)

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CFS - Centre for Free Speech (Nigeria)

CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency (a humanitarian agency of the government of Canada)

CIDA – Cultural Industries Development Agency (the leading Supporter of creative and cultural sector)

CLO - Civil Liberties Organization (Nigeria)

CODESA – Convention for a Democratic South Africa

COTA – Coalition for the Transparency of the Airwaves (advocacy body for a more transparent licensing process in Ghana)

CTCTV – Cape Town Community Television (based in Western Cape, South Africa)

CTV – Community Television

DAC - Department of Arts and Culture (South Africa)

DC - Department of Communications (South Africa)

DED - Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (A German development agency)

DTI - Department of Trade and Industry (South Africa)

DTT - Digital Terrestrial Transmission

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EFCC - Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Nigeria)

FCJ - Forum for Community Journalists (South Africa)

FESPACO – PanAfrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou

FFWA - Ford Foundation of West Africa

FIPAG – Federation of Independent Film Producers’ Association of Ghana

FOI Act – Freedom of Information Act (Nigeria)

FOI Bill – Freedom of Information Bill (Nigeria)

GAFTA – The Ghana Academy of Film and Television Art

GCIS - Government Communication and Information System (South Africa)

GDP – Gross Domestic Products

GES - Ghana Educational Services

GFIC – Ghana Film Industry Corporation

GFVCB – Ghana Film and Video Censors Board

GIBA – Ghana Independent Broadcast Association

GJA - Ghana Journalist Association

HSRC - Human Science Resource Centre

ICASA –The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa

IDC – Industry Development Corporation (South Africa)

IG – Internet Governance

IIPA – International Intellectual Property Alliance

IMM – Individual Membership-based Model (South Africa)

IMS – Institute for Media and Society (Nigeria)

IPO – Independent Producers’ Organization (South Africa)

LINK - Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre (Wits University, Johannesburg)

LINP - League of Independent Newspaper Publishers (Nigeria)

LRC - Legal Resource Centre (Ghana)

MDDA – Media Development and Diversity Agency (South Africa)

MFWA – Media Foundation of West Africa (Ghana)

MRA - Media Rights Agenda (Nigeria)

NAFTI – National Film and Television Institute (Ghana)

NBC – National Broadcasting Commission (Nigeria)

NCC – National Communications Commission (Nigeria)

NCRC - Nigerian Community Radio Coalition

NCRF – National Community Radio Forum (South Africa)

NDC - National Democratic Congress (a political party in Ghana)

NDEF - New Distribution and Exhibition Framework (Nigeria)

NFC - Nigerian Film Corporation

NFVCB – National Film and Video Censors Board (Nigeria)

NFVF – National Film and Video Foundation (South Africa)

NGE - Nigeria Guild of Editors

NGOs – Non-governmental Organizations

NHRC – National Human Rights Commission (Nigeria)

NMC – National Media Commission (Ghana)

NPAN - Newspaper Proprietor Association of Nigeria

NPC - Nigeria Press Council

NPO – Nigeria Press Organization (made up of various industry organizations - NUJ, NGE & NPAN)

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

OMM – Organizational Membership-based model (South Africa)

Ofcom – Independent Regulator and Competition Authority (United Kingdom)

OSIWA – Open Society Initiative for West Africa

PCC - Portfolio Committee on Communications (South African parliamentary committee on public communications)

PCSA - The Press Council of South Africa

PIWA - Panos Institute of West Africa

PMSA – The Print Media South Africa

PPDC - Public and Private Development Centre (Nigeria)

SABC – South African Broadcasting Corporation

SANPARK - South African National Park

SAPAP - South African Press Appeal Panel

SAPC - The South African Press Code

SASFED - The South African Screen Federation (the industry organization for the independent audio-visual sector).

SIGNIS – World Catholic Association for Communication

SOS – Supporting Public Broadcasting (South Africa)

SRS - Shared Responsibility System (Nigeria)

TUC – Trade Union Congress (Ghana)

UHF – Ultra-high Frequency

UNDP – United Nations Development Programmes

UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund

UNODAC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (Nigeria)

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

USIA - United States Information Agency

VAT – Value Added Tax

VHF – Very High Frequency

WIN - Women Information Network (Nigeria)

WSIS – World Summit on the Information Society

## Chapter One

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 The Aim of the Research**

This thesis examines the activist and the interventionist role of community media in contemporary media policy changes in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are significant developments taking place across the African Sub-Saharan region; ranging from political to socio-cultural and to economic developments. One other area of growing changes is that of media policy. While a number of factors have been highlighted by scholars and political institutions as ‘shapers’ of media policy developments across the Sub-Saharan region, the crucial role of community media and activist media coalitions has not been given strong academic and public recognition. This work considers their contributions and the various platforms under which such contributions have been made. The thesis considers more specifically the developments over the last two decades (1990-2010).

#### **1.2 The Research Argument**

More recently, there has been a growing concern on how citizens, local communities, and civil societies of respective nation-states partner with their State governments in the constitutions of national policies to regulate the media. The underlying assumption is that governments and their policy departments should no longer become the exclusive players in media policy developments across different world regions. Other significant actors, such as academics, media professionals, grassroots communities, ethnic and cultural groups, media activist associations, just to mention a few, should become increasingly involved in this process. Their participatory role should also be given greater public acknowledgement. The problem of citizenship activism and the participatory approach to media management have, therefore, remained part and parcel

of the wider scholarly investigations on postmodernism and on media democratization of the most recent centuries.

Some scholars who studied the social welfare States' linear style of public service provision, the reformed processes for the redefinition of citizenship, and of citizens' activism for inclusivity in response to the perceived marginalizing nature of governments' top-bottom media management approach, admit a growing and significant shifts in the distribution of power from the center to local communities, neighbourhoods, small cultural groups, and civil societies in recognition of the potential responsive contribution of otherwise disenfranchised groups and communities towards participatory media planning and a more effective shared political administration of public communication systems and institutions across world regions.

This first school of thought is represented, for example, by such critical media and social theorists as Peter J. Humphreys (1994), Robert Hertz (2001), Robert Moore and Tamara Gillis (2005), John Gaventa and Rosemary McGee (2010), and Teer-Tomaselli (1993). These authors, among others, are in agreement that the rationale for the shift towards a shared management agenda rests, fundamentally, on the recognition that localism in media ownership and public policy management can empower, not only the growth of local communities, but also the advancement of regional and global national families.

While investigations on the growing positive shifts in power distribution and on the tensions generated by this process is an ongoing project, how local communities and activist media organizations have actually been enabled by national legislations to exercise that power remains contestable. Paula Chakravarty and Katharine Sarikakis

(2006) and Des Freedman (2008), for example, argue that the processes for media policy formation across most world regions are still linear and marginalizing.

Freedman's (2008) consideration of the different ramifications of the politics of liberalism and neo-liberalism that underpin media policy formations across Western Europe and Chakravartty and Sarikakis's (2006) comprehensive account of issues relating to media policy (especially the role of the state, technology, market, civil society, and of the existing gaps in communication policy debates across Europe and North America), all admit, firstly, that while media policy actors in the era of globalization are now widely located, grassroots communities and radical media groups are still relatively neglected by the states in the constructions of hegemonic policy discourses, precisely because of the states' preoccupations with the prominence of political bureaucracy, technology, and free market. Secondly, while 'the politics of everyday life, cultural expression and intentional as well as informal dissent' (Chakravartty, 2006: 5) now constitute the structuring component of the field of global communications policy, the formal participation of local and grassroots policy actors in the official policy-making processes take place only within informal settings that are difficult to document and map.

While the argument of this second school of thought is theoretically plausible, their concrete applicability to the African Sub-Saharan region remains questionable. Motivated by this existing gap in scholarship and on the basis of contextual evidence (whereby civil societies and Non-governmental organizations have actually partnered with the national government in Nigeria in the 90s to revise the National Communication Policy), this work examines whether community media and small media coalitions of Sub-Saharan Africa are 'active' (or passive) participants in the

social and political processes of media deregulations. Through this investigation and analyses, this work makes contribution into knowledge.

Drawing interpretative insights from numerous scholars and from field data in relation to media policy-making and community media practices in Sub-Saharan Africa, I argue that: (i) assisted by pluralist populism and increasing media activisms, there are significant media policy changes across the Sub-Saharan African region over the last two decades; (ii) enabled by the growing deregulations of media environments to strengthen media pluralism, there is currently a robust culture of alternative and community media, democratic structures for community media organizations, as well as a transition from social democratic to mixed funding model for small media management across Sub-Saharan Africa; (iii) community media journalists and coalitions, working alongside plethora of allies, are increasingly impacting on the social and political processes of media policy developments; (iv) the mediated participatory and social processes (programming, capacity-building, deliberative forums, and linkages) adopted by community media institutions are invariably reinforcing the ability of community media to impact on media policy changes, through debates and opinion formations and through shared decisions in relation to media policy; and, (v) the engagements of community media journalists and institutions with national governments in media deregulatory processes have established and strengthened progressive visions in media policy conception and for media deregulations. These arguments have, however, emerged in relation to specific research questions.

### **1.3 The Research Questions**

The prima facie questions that shaped and guided the investigation included the following: What is media policy? Are there substantial media policy changes across the



countries of Sub-Saharan Africa? What is alternative and community media? What is the current state of community media development in Sub-Saharan Africa? What are the constellations of influences (or interests) on community media? Are community media journalists and media activist groups really active participants in media policy developments or are they simply passive consumers of dominant media policy agendas formulated and handed on to them by political authorities, policy experts, and mainstream media professionals? If they are active participants in media deregulations, what are the specific strategies adopted by community-based journalists to engage with the States and mainstream professionals in media policy changes? What policy concerns motivate and shape their participation? How do the various participatory structures and alternative economic models available to community media impact on their ability to engage with governments in media policy-making? And what new communication policy model does their participation in deregulation processes offer to government, policy-makers, and the generality of society?

Some of the questions express direct links with the theory and the empirical data captured in the rest of the chapters, others very indirectly. Some elicit over-arching answers, others sub-answers. But, generally, the central ‘indicators’ of my responses to these questions are tied around the dimensions of issues addressed in relation to the two propositional variables that ground this study, namely, community media and media policy developments.

#### **1.4 The Scope of the Research**

Geographically, this study does not focus on the whole of Africa. The specific focus is the Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. The experiences of the Francophone or the Lucophone areas are not considered. My choice of the Anglophone region is informed,

firstly, by my familiarity with media-related developments of this area; and secondly, by the belief that focusing on this familiar region will produce better research capability. Again, within the Anglophone Sub-Saharan region, the loci of study are not all the countries of the region. The specific national contexts are South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria.

These three countries are selected, firstly, because of their big media markets, the active presence of different formats of community media, and various historical experiences at citizenship activism and campaigns. Secondly, the selection is informed by the availability of good contacts and the belief that such contacts will open up better opportunities for closer links with social actors for the purpose of wider and richer data access and analysis. Thirdly, the three countries have some similarities in terms of transitions from dictatorial political organization to democratic politics. While the transitions from military dictatorship to democratic governance in the early-1990s provides the historical and political contexts for deregulations for media pluralism and diversity in Ghana and Nigeria, the transition from Apartheid political dictatorship to democratic governance in the early-1990s, in turn, provides the historical and political contexts for media democratization in South Africa. And because of their shared colonial history, past experiences of political dictatorship, and their recent consistent efforts at democratic governance, the three countries are considered together to enable data comparison in terms of the reciprocal causal relationship between community media activism and media policy developments. Additionally, the choice of the three countries (as against a single country) is valuable for the presentation of valid arguments that could be regionalized or universalized (Hallin & Mancini, 2010).

Thematically, this study is grounded on two propositional variables, namely, the argument that there are substantial media policy changes (statutory and non-statutory)

and that community media are playing (or have played) significant interventionist role in media policy developments. While media policy change is the dependent variable, the interventionist role of community media in the reform process is the independent variable. And within the framework of the relationship between the two thematic variables, this thesis operates at the philosophical and sociological levels to resolve a combination of four ‘intellectual puzzles’ in relation to the research questions. These comprise the ‘developmental’, ‘mechanical’, ‘comparative’, and ‘causal/predictive’ puzzles (Mason, 2002).

Firstly, I have explained how the concepts of ‘media policy’ and ‘community media’ have been articulated over the years. Attention is given to the political, social, and institutional processes that have enabled meaningful conceptualizations of the relationship between mainstream and alternative media policy frameworks. Drawing insights from different scholars, I have also reconceptualized media policy in terms of an integrative ‘ethical-political’ framework and in line with the policy visions of community media. Additionally, I have considered community media within the broader theoretical frameworks of ‘alternative journalism’ and the ‘public sphere’ model of democratic-participatory communication theory, highlighting how community media’s political, social, and economic processes can assist participatory media policy-making.

Much of the ‘developmental’ debates about ‘community media’ in Africa have been handled from the perspective of development communication. This approach has tended to emphasize the value of community media in national development, without a concomitant strong emphasis on their potency to affect political changes in favour of participatory media organizations. The field of ‘alternative journalism’ does provide a broader theoretical framework for articulating the activist and interventionist potencies

of community media and their implications for participatory media planning and regulations. Though there is a close conceptual relationship between community media and alternative journalism, the use of ‘community media’ (against alternative media) in the title of this study is informed by contextual exigency and the specific focus of the research design. The design of this study is meant to focus, not on the ‘individual’ dimension of journalistic practice, but on the ‘community’ aspect of alternative journalism.

Secondly, I have provided an overview of the media policy environments of South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria to offer a ‘context’ for understanding how the official political and regulatory environments operate to enable or constrain the development of community media within their distinctive contexts. The assumption here is that there is a reciprocal causal relationship between community media and media deregulations. Within this ‘mechanical’ category, I have outlined the ‘drivers’ of media policy debates and formations, arguing for the inclusion of community media within that framework. I have also highlighted how the official media regulatory processes of the three countries have been constituted over the last two decades to enable broader participation in the policy-making arrangements of governments. The overall goal of this category of arguments is to provide contextual frameworks for the analysis and interpretations, at the empirical data stage, of the relationship between community media activism and the dynamic processes of participatory media regulations of the most recent years.

Thirdly, I have provided comparative arguments at the theoretical and empirical stages to enable concepts clarifications in relation to community media and media policy, as well as to draw out a ‘causal inference’ between the two variables. The ‘comparative’ category is particularly necessary for explaining variations and similarities in the various processes of community media across different contexts, providing frameworks

for a comparative interpretation of the ability of community media to impact on media policy changes. It is also relevant for avoiding false generalizations by moving arguments from particular explanations to general conclusions in relation to the two thematic variables (Hallin & Mancini, 2010). Here, the sensitivity of this study to context and typology ‘maximizes the chances of developing fully meaningful points of comparison’ (Mason, 2002: 175).

Fourthly, I have provided ‘causal/predictive’ arguments that describe in details, at the theoretical and empirical data stages, the complex and contextual processes of community media that enable opinion-formations and the participation of private citizens and local communities in national or regional media regulations. Here the emphasis is not on the ‘cause and effect’ relationship between community media and media policy. Rather it is on identifying, pulling together, and explaining the mediatory, social, and political processes that condition the active role of community media. The ‘causal’ category enables the explanation of predictions about how community media work to affect media policy changes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this regard, reasonable attention is given to such issues as the political economy of community media, the typology of active audience development, the policy concerns of community media, the platforms of campaigns of community media, the level of participation of community media in media policy reforms, the significant policy inputs of community media groups, the nature of cross-relationships that influence changes, the kind of setbacks recorded by community media in their activism for reforms, and those elements that could possibly expand and strengthen the future activism of community media for media policy reforms.

Thus, the question of media policy changes and the crucial impacts of community media are examined and analyzed both from their theoretical and contextual variables,

bearing in mind their social, cultural, economic, technological, and political value implications. The thesis considers these issues from a Western multimedia perspective of the community press and broadcasting media. Though the study design and focus originally included independent films and videos, for the sake of structural manageability, a conscious decision was made to limit the report scope to the community press and broadcasting media sectors.

### **1.5 Conceptual Clarifications**

In order to avoid any ambiguity that could arise when the phrase ‘media policy’ is placed alongside such other phrases as ‘social policy’ and ‘cultural policy’, it is also important at this stage to indicate that this work is not concerned with the role of community media in ‘social policy’ or in ‘cultural policy’ developments; rather it is concerned with their role in ‘media policy’ developments. ‘Social policy’, on the one hand, is essentially concerned with the politics, policy agendas, and activities of the social welfare States in promoting social benefits and services to improve the welfare and life of their citizens on the basis of available domestic finite resources and of transnational social order (Jordan, 2006; Spicker, 2008). ‘Cultural policy’, on the other hand, is concerned with the specific conditions (historical dynamics, artistic and literary processes, legal and ethical systems, political institutional frameworks, etc.) for the promotion of arts, cultural identities, and cultural diversity, as well as the accessibility of citizens to their distinctive indigenous creative industries (Langsted, 1990; D’Angelo, 1999). And because of the lack of close meaning relationship between the two phrases and ‘media policy’ (outside their shared identity as ‘public policy’ or as set of ‘administrative rules’), the three phrases are not used interchangeably in this work. Providing a clearer distinction among the three conceptual variables in relation to policy

study and why they are not used interchangeably is also helpful in giving a clearer scope and direction to this research.

Another necessary conceptual clarification is in relation to any potential confusions that could arise in the cross-usages of such words as ‘ethics’, ‘law’, ‘regulation’, and ‘policy’ as synonyms of different ranges of ‘media’ management and control. Ronald Dworkin (1977) maintains that there is a blurring distinction among the four words and that the only difference among them is that of logical distinction (something akin to Bentham and Austin’s positivist separation of ‘law’ and ‘morals’ on mere logical grounds). Based on his analyses of these words, it could be deduced that ‘ethics’, when used in relation to the media, connotes what is right or wrong in relation to media behaviour, systems, and institutions and how these affect public affairs and the life of private citizens and institutions and that requires community’s appreciation or criticism (Oosthuizen, 2002). ‘Media ethics’, therefore, is fundamentally concerned with media law, not as it is, but as it should be, critiquing if certain media laws are just or unjust, lenient or harsh. ‘Media ethics’ pertains to issues of justice and fairness, some of which could be imposed by personal, religious, cultural, and normative convictions and imperatives. ‘Media ethics’, as a rule, only provides for guiding principles, but do not lay out consequences or punishments for moral breaches in relation to the media.

The word ‘law’ encapsulates multiple meanings (Dworkin, 1977). But when used in relation to the media, ‘law’ fundamentally connotes official restraints or interferences in the working of the media either through the courts, the legislatures, the Executive arm of governments, regulatory agencies, or occasionally through the police (e.g. constitutional laws, libel laws or copyright laws). The meaning of the word, therefore, touches on legal or legislative rulings with regards to rights and duties imposed by the State as political or administrative decisions and to which communities, groups and

practitioners commit themselves. These propositions are often drawn from social theories (natural or positivist) and from jurisprudence with regards to state-citizens-media relations. Grounded on legal propositions, as defined by legislatures or the courts, they provide sanctions and remedies for private and public breaches of standards for media operations and institutional behaviours.

The word 'regulation', just like law, has complexity of meanings when used in relation to the media. Mike Feintuck and Mike Varney (2006), drawing insights from legal theorists, identify two possible perspectives: the restrictive meaning and the expanded meaning. In its restrictive form, it refers to rules promulgated by the state and managed by a government agency to enforce specific standards and behaviours on the media and to monitor compliance. The authors argue that this definition suggests a 'state-centered' understanding of regulation and places regulatory power on public and political agencies. In its expanded form, regulation connotes '[...] all mechanisms of social control or influence affecting all aspects of behaviour from whatever source, whether they are intentional or not' (Black, 2002). This expanded definition, which has been accepted by Feintuck and Varney as the most sophisticated, takes notice of the importance of 'self-regulation' and of 'courts interventions' on media issues, as well as the multiplicity of potential regulatory bodies. Secondly, 'regulation', just like 'law' defines sanctions for breaches of practice rules. This expanded definition remains, perhaps, the most acceptable understanding of 'regulation' in relation to the media because of its recognition of multi-level regulatory requirement and control source.

The word 'policy', in turn, is very elastic. It encompasses the specificities and the concerns of 'ethics', 'law', and 'regulations'. And when used in relation to the media it connotes either the 'power politics' that impinge on media practice or the legal,



regulatory or ethical standards to be observed and that set out *goals* (positive or negative) to be reached, generally an improvement in some economic, political, or social feature of the media (Humphreys, 1994: 5 & 8). Policy, as standards, is desirable not only for the advancement of economic, political, and social dimensions of the media, but also as specifications for justice, fairness and good practice behaviour (Dworkin, 1977). And, because of its encompassing nature, the word ‘policy’ is deliberately selected as the adjectival word for the media-related regulatory focus of this study.

Though descriptive of the different decision directions with regards to media-state-citizens relationships, Dworkin (1986) maintains that the four words are united in two areas: Firstly, on the moral ground whereby every ethical principle or legal rule can be evaluated and criticized as just or unjust, fair or unfair. Secondly, they are united in what he describes as ‘the puzzle of legitimacy’ (1986: 190ff) which evaluates the inclusive and integrity of legal rulings and moral principles and how these sustain equality, local priority, and fraternity within a political community. Legitimacy is a social and political methodology by which citizens and governments can work together to evaluate the coercive or non-coercive, marginalizing and non-marginalizing nature of administrative principles. Though the four words describe different modes of media management decisions (with only logical distinctions existing among them), but because of their close (and almost blurring) conceptual relationship to one another, shared objectives of advancing equality, justice and fraternity, as well as their shared meeting point around the questions of moral evaluation and legitimacy, they can and are used interchangeably in this work.

## **1.6 The Relevance of the Research**

Primarily, this research is meant to benefit community media institutions and cultural organizations that work closely with grassroots communities, civil societies, social movements, and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This study is undertaken in the hope that it will further strengthen their morale in campaigning for changes, consolidate their gains in the struggles for media liberalization and democratization, and deepen appreciation for the value of community media in the struggles against the contradictions inherent in professionalized and neoliberal approaches to media management across African nation-states. Secondly, the study is meant to benefit state governments, policy-makers, and media professionals in their attempts to balance governmental and civil society elements in media policy debates and decisions. Lastly, it is my hope that researchers and those in consultant services will draw some insights from this work to enrich their discourses and analyses on media policy and community media, as well as their information resources on policy-making within nation-states.

## **1.7 The Methodology of the Research**

The approach adopted for investigation is that of qualitative Case Study; with specific focus on ‘mixed methods’: oral interviews, questionnaires, direct personal observation, documentary study and analysis. The methodology for data presentation and interpretation is the general analytical strategy, with emphasis on ‘explanation building’ and ‘cross-case synthesis’. Case Study approach and mixed methods are selected to enable the generation of substantial and significant amount of empirical data, through close contacts with social actors and community media institutions, for the attainment of general conclusions that could be considered as credible and reliable. Empirical findings from the ‘fields’ are approached, not as representative of national experiences, but simply as illustrative of respondents’ answers to the complexity of thematic issues

raised by way of research questions and as tools for multi-case comparative analysis across South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria.

### **1.8 The Problems Encountered**

A few major problems were encountered in the course of this study, which could have borne negative consequences on the final outcome of the work. The first was the difficulty of getting the needed up-to-date primary texts on alternative media and media regulatory environments in relation to most African countries from Western European educational and archival institutions. Though a good number of up-to-date primary sources were obtained from the British Library, the Scottish National Library, and the near-by Universities libraries (Napier Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Abertay, Dundee, and Edinburgh) in relation to South Africa, there were difficulties obtaining similar sizeable materials from the same sources in relation to Nigeria and Ghana. However, this challenge was mitigated by relying on the information (oral or documentary) obtained from the 'fields'.

The second problem had to do with funding. Due to the difficulty in getting adequate funding, the time frame for 'field' studies was limited to and spread across three months within two years. Constraint was also placed on the number of social units and institutions I could visit within each of the three selected countries. This problem was maximally resolved through the three-term generous offer of funding awards by the Scottish Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (SORSAS), as well as through the kind financial supports I received from Willy Ojukwu Foundation and the Catholic Community in Cupar (Scotland).

The final challenge to this work is the possibility of some of its findings being overrun by national developments after field investigations and data analysis. In view of this

possibility, it is important to note that the empirical data recorded herein are valid as at the time of my visits to the selected countries of study and as at the time of data presentation and analysis. Other challenges encountered in the course of the ‘field’ investigations are documented in chapter four.

### **1.9 The Structure of the Thesis**

This work is divided into nine chapters. The next chapter (chapter two) focuses on literature analysis and on the theoretical fields necessary for the articulations of the concepts of media policy and alternative journalism on their macro level, as well as the participatory processes for progressive media policy inputs of community media. The third chapter provides a micro overview of trends in media policy-making in the three selected countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, with specific focus on the ‘shapers’ of media policy debates and the directions in media deregulations to strengthen the growth of community media within the three countries. This chapter is intended to provide the national legislative contexts for linking the empirical data with the theoretical findings. The fourth chapter outlines the specifics of research methodology and of research design and data analysis. The fifth chapter presents comparative empirical data and analyses on the current state of community media (diversity and political economy) in the three countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the available participatory mechanisms, economic practice pressures and how these elements could possibly influence activism for media policy reforms through community media. Chapter six is designed to present and analyze the comparative empirical data on some of the recent media policy changes across the three countries, as well as indicate the primary media policy concerns and visions expressed by community media groups. Chapter seven examines and analyses the comparative data on media activism, indicating the platforms for activism, the nature and level of

participation of community media institutions and coalitions, and the nature of horizontal and vertical linkages. Chapter eight provides an overview of the achievements and setbacks recorded. The ninth chapter, which is the concluding chapter, synthesizes the whole work, indicating the general conclusions drawn out from data, the study's contribution to knowledge, and the practical recommendations made to enable the future growth of community media activism for the purpose of ongoing media policy reforms. There are also the bibliographical section and three appendices. The appendix sections contain sample copies of letters of introduction, research instruments, a transcript of an oral interview, a sample of a completed questionnaire, and a list of documents obtained in the course of the fieldwork.

## Chapter Two

### **Theoretical Background**

Having outlined the aim, research questions, research argument, the methodology; as well as the scope and the relevance of this research in the preceding chapter, this second chapter focuses more specifically on the macro theoretical analysis of the two themes that are meant to guide this study, namely, the concepts of media policy and alternative media and journalism. Their micro (or contextual) implications will be examined in chapter three. The underlying assumption that informs theoretical analyses is that governments and their political departments are not the exclusive players in media policy developments. There are other significant and sometimes unacknowledged actors that participate in that process (cf. Humphreys, 1994). While this study recognizes the important role of governments and technocrats as key policy players, it gives specific consideration to the active role of community media (in partnership with academics, grassroots communities, cultural interest groups, and media activists) in that process. But before delving into an exploration and analysis of the two concepts and their interrelated themes, I wish to clearly identify and define in the next sub-unit the ‘theoretical field’ (or the ‘key’ theories) that will inform and shape the direction of this study.

#### **2.1 Defining the Research Field**

One of the core assumptions of the field of *Media and Society* is the question of how media institutions (or expressive popular cultures) assist the evolution and organization of human society, culture, and democratic politics or how they enable the promotion of coercive inequality and the stunting of cultural development of economically and technologically disadvantaged nation-states, local communities, and minority groups (Baran & Davis, 2000; Golding & Murdock, 1991; Castells, 2006/2010; Stout, 2010).

Essentially intrinsic to the field of *Media and Society* are the concerns of democratic-participatory communication theories. These theories, regardless of their varying forms, are principally concerned with the critique of democratic 'deficit' in mass media, public communication and in the processes for media deregulations (McQuail, 2000; Hackett & Carroll, 2006). They take cognizance of the increasing concentration and monopoly of public communication by the State and by commercial private sectors (Enzensberger, 1970). Thus, while critiquing a centralized, commercialized, professionalized, and state-controlled approach to the media, they suggest an alternative approach to expressive popular cultures that encourages all-round democratization of media systems and institutions, the realization of citizens' rights to information, and the participation of subgroups and grassroots communities in the debates about media policy.

And because of the specific focus of this work with the relationship between alternative expressive popular cultures (press and broadcast community media) and the democratic structures available for the participation of local communities and ordinary citizens in media policy debates and reforms, I propose to draw on the benefits of the field of *democratic-participatory communication* the theoretical model for shaping the direction of my investigations.

The choice of the field of democratic-participatory communication theories is essentially informed, firstly, by the fact that it can provide a broad theoretical framework for thinking through and conceptualizing the necessary links between alternative communication and normative processes. Secondly, democratic-participatory communication theories are significant because they advocate media support for cultural pluralism at grassroots levels, the development of small-scale media practices by disadvantaged and cultural groups, and the provision of *proactive* policies and subsidies to encourage the establishments of small media outfits that could counter the dominance

of State and commercial corporate institutions in public communication (cf. Baran & Davis, 2000). Thirdly, the significance of the theories also rest on their recognition of democratic frameworks as the necessary mechanisms for effective media normativity and for the promotion of alternative mode of communication that favours horizontal interactivity and the participation of citizens in the construction of social meanings within nation-states.

Though generally useful in understanding and articulating the participatory processes necessary for connecting alternative mode of production and the mechanisms for media policy formations, this work will not focus on all theoretical strands of democratic-participatory communication field. The specific strand that will be valuable for establishing the necessary links between community media and media policy developments in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa is the *public sphere* model. I, therefore, propose to draw, later in the chapter, from three reinterpretations of Jürgen Habermas's traditional notion of the public sphere the essential philosophical framework for capturing the power politics that structure and drive public communication initiatives and the mode of participation of community media organizations (albeit ordinary citizens) in media deregulation and democratization in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. This now leads to the next sub-sections, where I articulate the concepts and approaches to 'media policy' and 'alternative journalism', so as to understand later the reciprocal causal relationship between community media and media policy-making.

## **2.2 Concept and Approaches to Media Policy**

Media policy is a very broad and complex concept. That is because it reflects a wide range of public communication issues, ranging from the structural to the ethical and to the political, as well as the socio-cultural and economic principles employed to organize



media systems and institutions within national and transnational contexts. While the concept touches on the positive ideological concerns of *normative theories* of public communication (regulations, professional ethics, and media laws), it also examines the limitations of journalistic professionalism and how expressive popular cultures affect the life and rights of persons and of social institutions (Dworkin, 1977; Baran & Davis, 2000; McQuail, 1992/2000; Feintuck & Varney, 2006; Hutchison, 1999/2004; Hartley, 2004).

A holistic understanding of its meaning entails, firstly, the deployment of ideas drawn from diverse disciplines, including policy studies, sociology, political philosophy, industrial and technological studies, futurology, economics, culture, and a host of other disciplines (Papathanassopoulos & Negrine, 2010; Duff, 2010; Freedman, 2008); and secondly, the appreciation of the fact that the dynamics of media policy-making that determines patterns in media landscape and policy developments worldwide has now moved beyond a mere 'legal dynamics' (courts and legislative decisions) to a 'public relation dynamics' (with plurality of actors and settings). In other words, media policy-making in contemporary times entails advocacy, professional lobbying, and the use of consultant services, liaison offices and damage control mechanisms (Siune & Truetzschler, 1992; Freedman, 2008). The methodological implication of this reality is that the conceptualization of media policy now requires an understanding of the changing interconnections and interdependencies among disciplines, policy themes, and the power processes and institutions (formal and informal) that impinge on media policy-making on the local, national, regional and global levels (Raboy & Padovani, 2010).

Because of its expansive and complex nature, media policy is, therefore, an area of continuing controversy. Hence, there is no generally acceptable definition of the

concept by scholars (Hutchison, 1999; Duff, 2010). Some of the areas of strong agreement, however, are that media policy is part and parcel of *public policy*; that it exists as a correlate of the word *politics*; that it encapsulates issues relating to laws, ethics, censorship, and regulations of the media, as well as rules of effective public relationships; and that in defining it a clear distinction must be made between the phrases ‘media policy’ and ‘media policies’ (Freedman, 2008; McQuail, 2000; Ayto, 1990; Dworkin, 1977; Braman, 2004a/2010).

Des Freedman, for example, notes that while the phrase ‘media policy’ addresses the diversified and multi-layered character of mass media and public communication environments and should be used in a loose sense to serve as a general term for understanding a wide range of administrative methods and regulatory frameworks for assessing media performance and prescribing appropriate behavior in relation to different media forms; the phrase ‘media policies’ may be taken to refer to the specific different ‘modes of structuring media performance and media systems and that also depend on the specific medium under consideration’ (Freedman, 2008: 15), such as the press, terrestrial broadcasting, cinema, and web broadcasting, just to mention a few.

But for Alistair Duff (2010), the explanations of media policy either as an umbrella word that provides the ‘window on broader questions of power’ (Freedman, 2008: 23) or as a specific term meant to explain different policy formats of diverse media forms, should be grounded in a broader view of the general determinants of State and corporate action and how these affect the packaging of information ‘with alternative labels’ (Duff, 2010: 49).

It is in this regard that scholars, drawing on diverse theoretical traditions and on different contextual experiences, further differentiate between two models of media

policy, namely, *mainstream industrial media policy* and *small-scale alternative media policy* (Sholle, 1995). Both are, however, impacted by the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment political thought of the seventeenth through mid-twentieth centuries (Garnham, 2000; Hackett & Carroll, 2006).

Within these two perspectives, scholars further distinguish between *external* and *internal* institutional policy frameworks. While the *external* policy framework refers to the set of official rules (constitutional and legislative) imposed by governments on media institutions to guide public communication practices; the *internal* policy framework refers to the set of institutional practice guidelines formulated internally by media proprietors and/or managers (Oosthuizen, 2001b/2001c).

Freedman's investigation of the *dominant media policy paradigm* across the world indicates that it is largely grounded on two value strands: the *liberal* and the *neo-liberal* economic ideologies. Both value strands, according to Freedman, are 'the products of systematic interventions into media systems based on a complex range of political values and objectives' (Freedman, 2008: 24). They can also serve as frameworks for comparative analysis of the reciprocal causal relationship between dominant media systems and political processes within nation-states or across world regions. Both the *liberal* and *neo-liberal* strands of dominant media policy are, however, united by their shared features of classical liberalism: 'commitments to the democracy of the marketplace, freedom from the state and the fruits of competition' (Freedman, 2008: 37).

Freedman notes that the *liberal vision*, on the one hand, is drawn from the North American political sub-systems of policy-making and governance. It is generally characterized, among others, by a commitment to promote a decentralized, transparent,

and participatory policy decision-making system; facilitation of competitive media environment; stimulation of public opinion formation through the expression of a wide range of voices; fidelity to the objectivity policy of professionalized journalism; relatively limited role of the State in media ownership and organization; low state subsidies for media institutions, and the promotion of the principles of individual and press freedom (p. 30-36).

The *neo-liberal vision*, on the other hand, has its source from the Anglo-American political system of media governance. It is characterized, among others, by free markets political project, media concentration and monopolization, the control of popular consciousness through advertising, co-existence of commercial media with media tied to organized politics, the encouragement of limited regulations by the State, the formal organization of practice through Press Councils and self-regulations, and the promotion of media deregulations along the logics of strong liberalization (p. 47-52).

His analysis, however, admits that the two frames are not the only ideological frames for contextualizing mainstream media policy. Daniel Hallin and Paulo Mancini (2004/2010), for example, had earlier developed a typology that contrasts the workings of liberal versus welfare state democracies, majoritarian versus consensus processes, individual versus organized pluralism, bureaucratic versus clientelist administrations, and moderate versus polarized pluralism in relation to the organization of different types of dominant media systems (Freedman, 2008).

While Hallin and Mancini's typology, tied around three dominant media models - the 'liberal', the 'democratic-corporatist', and the 'popular-pluralist', can offer adaptable comparative reference to justify the relationships between media systems and political systems across world regions (cf. Hallin & Mancini, 2012) and can assist the

explanation of the different dimensions of dominant media political systems - the emergence of the mass press, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and the interventionist role of the State, I agree with Freedman that it lacks the analytical power that can explain the politics of 'pluralism' (with emphasis on transparency, accessibility, public participation, and expert advice in decisions about the media) and 'free markets' (with emphasis on new economic structures and regimes) that are sweeping the world and affecting regulatory decisions about the media in contemporary times (p. 25).

Unlike the mainstream policy paradigm, the *small-scale alternative policy model* is rooted in the emancipatory or socialist ideologies of citizenship. It often finds public expression through the instrumentality of radical practices and citizenship social movements. But just like the *dominant media policy model*, it also has two value strands: the *ideologically and culturally radical strand* that advocates a complete over-riding and democratization of the mainstream media policy sector and the *not too ideologically and culturally radical perspective* that advances a minimal reform within the mainstream media policy sector (Atton & Hamilton, 2008). The two strands of *alternative policy framework* are, however, united in the common critique of the dominant media institutions and their restrictive policy visions. They see the emancipatory project of *classical liberalism*, along which media policy reforms has historically been grounded, as an unfinished project and as requiring a greater commitment by liberalists, the States, and policy experts towards the democratization of national media structures (Garnham, 2000; Hackett & Carroll, 2006).

According to Hackett and Carroll, the *radical alternative perspective* offers to the politics of media policy reforms some sets of benchmarks that transcend that of *liberal pluralists*. Among them are the demands for the expansion of direct and equitable *participation* in decision-making through which existing media systems as well as

representative democratic systems could be rejuvenated; the prioritization of *equality* (in terms of *voice* and access to resources) as the central principle of democracy; and the demands for the adoption of a *self-reflexive* approach to all forms of injustices imbedded in national social order (p. 73). For Hackett and Carroll, the core values of media activism that are pursued in varying degree and contexts, therefore, rest on ‘social solidarity and community, egalitarian social change, (and) individual freedom from state or corporate power’ (p. 86).

### 2.2.1 Three Approaches to Media Policy Conception

While scholars are in agreement that different ideological, technological, and economic value systems provides the necessary contexts for media policy articulation and realization, the specific definition of the concept, however, differs according to the approach adopted by each scholar. Denis McQuail (2000) and Freedman (2008), for example, identify three of such fundamental approaches: ‘end-driven’; ‘instrumental’ (or administrative); and ‘venue-based’ (or actors-driven) approach. One will briefly outline the key elements of each approach with specific emphasis on the ‘venue-based’ approach on which one’s own definition will be primarily rooted.

Explaining each stage, Freedman and McQuail agree that the ‘end-driven’ approach understands media policy primarily in terms of ‘results’ (structural, ethical, political, and socio-cultural goals) to be achieved in the constitution of policy frameworks. This approach that was prevalent in the last period of the nineteenth century when newspapers and periodicals served as the primary means of public communication, has been crystallized in what is generally referred to as the ‘four theories of the press’ (Siebert et al., 1963; McQuail, 2000; Hallin & Mancini, 2010). The approach has also been firmly recognized in the First Amendment to the United States’ Constitution and in the United Nation’s Declarations on Human Rights in terms of the liberty and social

responsibilities of the press. Freedman and McQuail also agree that the early classical philosophical traditions that informed the end-driven policy contents, however, places strong emphasis on the principles of objectivity, social justice, good conscience, and respect for ethical codes of professionalism. The primary objective of the end-driven approach, therefore, is to establish a relation between the press and society on normative, moral, and social justice grounds.

The major problem with this approach is that, in focusing on achievable objectives such as the protection of the interest of the state, the promotion of national cultures, or the prevention of harm to citizens, it ignores the tendency of State governments and big corporate institutions to dominate the policy-making process, the existence of lack of sufficient transparency in the policy-making process, or the need for diversification of policy decision-making venues. Hallin and Mancini (2010) also identify the inadequacies of the end-driven approach. They argue that, because of its restrictive focus on the Anglo-American and Sovietized media systems and the limitations it places on the capacity of experts and scholars to explore other media and media policy models, this approach cannot provide in the twenty-first century the needed sophisticated framework for comparative media policy analysis worldwide. For them, what is required today is a policy model that enables the articulation, at least on the empirical level, of how different democratic media systems actually interact with other institutions, groups, and interests in a given society (p.103).

The 'instrumental' approach, as the second regulatory strategy, emerged with the beginning of electronic broadcasting and has been adopted by such critical thinkers as Nicholas Garnham (1998), Rod Rhodes (1990), and Denis McQuail (2000) to define media policy in terms of the actions of the State and its legal institutions in developing legally enforceable rules to govern public communication initiatives and activities. The

emphasis is generally on the public administrative mechanisms of government - the technical and regulatory actions of relevant ministries or departments, the legislatures, the courts, and inter-governmental committees.

Some of the problems of instrumental approach are: Firstly, it is too formal and highly prohibitive. And secondly, because it focuses primarily on official policy actors and emphasizes the need to legislate on electronic media in order to prevent harm to individuals and the disintegration of societies and cultures, it tends to ignore the valid inputs of a wide range of civil society organizations in the policy-making processes (Braman, 2004a/b; McChesney, 2003; Freedman, 2008).

The 'venue-based' approach, in turn, constitutes a departure from earlier widely conception of media policy as end-driven or as State-oriented. Venue-based approach, on the contrary, considers media policy, not just in administrative terms; but in terms of the diversity of policy actors and of decision-making venues. Here emphasis is placed on the activities of government as the most influential actor in the process and of a growing number of other stakeholders (Freedman, 2008). This approach to media policy conceptualization is, however, still at a developing stage. It is a strategy characterized and impacted by the politics of globalization, decentralization, and convergence. In other words, it is a phase when economic as well as social goals reshape the understanding and approach to media policy-making. The emphasis on media policy conception and formation rests, therefore, on the questions of social, geographic, and political diversity.

Freedman's conception of media policy in terms of 'the diversity of ways in which interested participants seek to develop both formal and informal mechanisms to shape the conduct of media systems' (Freedman, 2008: 13), for example, recognizes the



importance of diversification of groupings, resources, and venues for policy deliberations and decisions. His definition emphasizes the vital role of shared ideas and of the principles of contention, compromises, and consensus in policy-making.

Within the frame of venue-based model, media policy decisions are approached as highly political, subject to manipulations, display of partisanship and to clandestine lobbying by representatives of multinational corporations and local communities. As a process that concerns the interaction between different actors and institutions, media policy-making, therefore, becomes a systematic attempt to problematize certain types of media structures and behaviors and to normalize alternative structures and behavior patterns (Freedman, 2008).

Policy process within the context of venue-based approach therefore places emphasis on diversity of voices, arguments, actors, arenas and conflict-points. And because the process is subject to competitiveness and diverse political interests, it is not always an ideal tidy process, as it is always conflict-oriented and actors-driven in pursuit of different goals and norms. The very competitive and untidy nature of the process in itself requires that policy-makers remain open and sensitive to political consensus mechanisms available to them in order to resolve differences and reach political hegemony (Freedman, 2008).

However, comparing Freedman's approach to the conception of media policy with that of McQuail (1992), it is clear that for McQuail, the *entry-point* to a meaningful policy decision ought to be a good media performance analysis; but for Freedman, the *entry-point* is a consideration of the potentiality the process holds for shared ideas and consensus-reaching. Yet, regardless of the differences in entry perspective, both scholars are later in agreement that the horizon for media policy formation within

nation-states should be broad. While the process should take cognizance of the multiplicity of alliances and counter-alliances, the policy-making process should be seen, not simply as a technical thing, but as one often conditioned by ‘the limits of a national political system’ (McQuail, 1992: 30). Above all, the policy-making process should be founded on the “politics of truth” and of “diversity of communal experiences” (Habermas, 1984/87/98; Negt & Kluge, 1983/93; Sholle, 1995).

It is in this regard that I wish to propose an ‘ethical-political’ approach to media policy conception. This proposal is made in the belief that this approach would be more in consonance with the yearnings of alternative media groups. Ethical-political model is a vision that recognizes the need to balance “politics” with “actuality”. This approach draws primarily on the resources of ‘venue-based’ approach that recognizes the importance of diversifications of social actors, venues, and politics or communal experiences in the constitutions of public (albeit media) policies. The approach draws only secondarily on the benefits of ‘end-driven’ and ‘instrumental’ approaches that respectively place emphases on the specificities of social responsibilities of the media and on the role of the State (or official experts) as a key player in media policy formations. While recognizing the importance of normative approach to policy issues, it seeks to integrate normativity with everyday media culture and citizens experiences.

This approach is selected against the backdrop of the increasing emphasis for media policy discourse to move beyond normative approaches to everyday media cultures. My argument is that, just like “life context” and “socialist realities” are important, “normative issues” are still essential. When they are entirely removed from political processes, the process and its constitution could become highly volatile and sometimes lacking in moral and legal foundations.

### 2.2.2 The ‘Ethical-Political’ Approach

Apart from the fact that the ‘ethical-political’ policy vision aims to connect politics with normative ethics, it also intends to link alternative media policy visions with mainstream media policy models. The ethical-political vision draws from David Hutchison’s (1999) understanding of media policy as interplay between politics and ethics (p.3). His conception draws on what he describes as ‘sceptical liberalism’ (1999: 4); that is, a mitigated humanist and right-based theoretical framework that questions the “neutrality” politics of professionalized media and seeks a balance among community, private citizens, and government’s rights to determine legal truths. Ethical-political vision also draws resources from David Hume (2000 Reprint) and Immanuel Kant’s (1985 trans.) respective recognition of the importance of “affective” and “critical-rational” contents to the conception of the field of normative ethics.

The demands of the ethical-political vision, therefore, requires the need to integrate the administrative technicality of governments, the objective policy vision of professionalized media institutions, and the politicized interests of civil society groups (or *affective* policy vision of oppositional media institutions). The three elements of the integrative media policy conception must, however, find their crystallization within the ideological and the narrative/production fields. But more than that the goal of the ethical-political approach is to appeal to policy makers, governments, and media professionals to continue to recognize the need to form a ‘policy community’ (Humphreys, 1994) that is capable of providing the necessary participatory platform for stakeholders to draw on the multiple benefits of end-driven, instrumental-oriented, and venue-based approaches to media policy formation. Such an approach will enable the conception of the interests of governments and of the life context of disadvantaged

cultural and ethnic groups, not just as possibilities but as rights and as legitimate ends (Negt & Kluge, 1983).

The need for the formation of an effective policy community for the purpose of inclusive negotiations and of care for one another is also recognized by Robert White (1999a/b). In his conceptualization of media policy negotiation processes in Sub-Saharan Africa, White argues that an effective process of media policy objective conception and negotiation should not be conceived in terms of ‘trying to get more for one’s constituency’ (1999b: 491-92); but rather in terms of maximizing the potentials and contributions of the various policy actors, on the basis of the principles of contributive and distributive justice. For him, amidst the diversification of regulatory visions, media models and services, regulatory agencies should aim, above all, to ‘find ways of encouraging and supporting different groups and of bringing them together to discover mutual interests’ (White, 1999b: 481) and to constitute a community of care for one another. He maintains that a balanced national policy objective should aim, above all else, to institutionalize this communal and empathetic objective in order to promote greater responsibility among all citizens.

Seen from the point of view of these arguments, I wish to define media policy, not only in terms of normative principles, but as the mechanisms (ethical, political, economic & legal) through which expressive cultural activities and institutions are regulated and funded against the backdrop of the mundane and rational politics of bureaucratic and corporate life (cf. Moran, 1996).

In suggesting an ‘ethical-political’ orientation, I am however conscious of the diversified nature of the field of *ethics* (Fieser, 2003) and of the increasing rejection of *ethical relativism* (individual and cultural) as a resource for moral certainty and for the

definition of moral obligations geared towards the promotion of public good (Glissant, 1997; Seewald, 2010; Allen Jr., 2010; Dionne Jr., 2005). While the field of *ethics* in itself does not offer anyone at any time a claim to a total certainty, it is important to note here that the value of ethical-political approach does not draw on any weaknesses associated with *ethical relativism*. The relevance of the ethical-political approach rests rather on the increasing lack of *affective* and *moral* contents in contemporary communication politics and in the persistent global suppression of alternative voices by national governments or their regulatory agencies through ‘closed’ policymaking mechanisms or through opaque media licensing processes.

Another point that may be used to justify the ‘ethical-political’ framework may be located in Carter and Allan’s (2000: 132-53) arguments with regards to the changing nature of news culture. For them, some of the specific aspects of contemporary trends in news journalism have to do with the *dumping down* of news contents by corporate and public news media in pursuits of speed and larger size in news audiences and the increasing confusion of *truth* with *trivialities* by tabloid newspapers. For Carter and Allan, this *dumping down* and conflations have serious consequences for the future of journalism. They have consequences, not only in the shrinking in authentic information sources, but also in the inability of journalists to provide the kind of information that could bring about the continuing education of citizens to imbibe civic and positive cultural values.

What then is the way forward amidst the changing nature of news culture? Carter and Allan (2000) suggest some steps: firstly, a reconsideration of the politics of press freedom along the logic of ethical requirements and what it could mean for today’s news culture and news media ownership. For the authors, the freedom of the press should no longer be conceived only in terms of market-driven journalism; but rather in

terms of commitments to inculcate in people democratic and affective values. Secondly, they suggest the need to reawaken a sense of public trust in journalism, through a return to the ethical goals of self-censorship and social responsibilities of early media policy frameworks; thirdly, they suggest the need for journalists to eschew relativism (exemplified in the productions of stereotypes, exaggerations, and rumours) in matters of objective journalism and to balance the pursuits for truths and facts with a ‘journalism that cares as well as knows’ (2000: 145) - a journalism that is willing to stand by the side of the oppressed against the oppressor in the lifeworld. In this regard, they suggest that journalism should not only be approached as a profession; but both as a profession and a craft, to make it more socially responsible and genuinely committed to inform the public (p.148).

The authority and credibility of alternative media is often premised on its flexibility and openness towards both the professional and the creative orientations of the journalistic practice (Atton, 2002). In the next sub-section, I examine, from a macro scholarly perspective, the meaning of alternative journalism and how community media fits into that broader theoretical framework, explore media policy processes from the point of view of alternative media, as well as the interventions of alternative media groups in media policy developments worldwide.

### **2.3 Alternative Journalism: Conceptual & Model Analysis**

Alternative journalism, just like media policy, is an elastic and complex concept. The concept is, however, drawn from Chris Atton and James Hamilton’s co-authored book, *Alternative Journalism* (2008). There are three reasons for the selection of “alternative journalism” as an overarching phrase for understanding community media practices. Firstly, alternative media practice embraces a wide-range of experimental communication and representational *forms* and *formats*. As indicated by Atton (2010),

alternative journalism provides a comparative conceptual framework, not only for critiquing the reality, ideology, and discourses of professionalized dominant media, but also for articulating the variations in the reality, ideology, and discourses of countercultural media productions. Secondly, alternative journalism takes notice of the value of alternative media, not only in reportage, but as platforms in which ordinary citizens can engage in the affairs of the State through debates and discussions. Thirdly, the term recognizes the significance of both the professionals and non-professionals or sophisticated and less sophisticated equipment in the construction of alternative cultures and meanings to strengthen democracy and developments within nation-states (Bailey et al, 2008). Fourthly, the term is able to encompass the increasing international co-production dimension of this special category of media practice, where there is an interplay in terms of artistic visions and politics, funding, and distribution styles among local, regional as well as foreign community and activists media organizations in the representations of global memories of injustices and underdevelopments, in the empowerment of alternative voices, and in the advocacy for the universality of human rights (D'Lugo, 2003).

For Atton and Hamilton, the concept of alternative journalism is significant because it indicates that what is centrally at stake in the practice of community media is the 'politics of communication power' and of 'imbalances in power distribution' within societies; and that the phrase works on the epistemological level to critique 'the ethics, norms, and routines of professionalized journalism' (Atton & Hamilton, 2008: 2) through its critical appeal to technical values of objectivity and impartiality in the pursuit of truth and humanistic values, for the purpose of credibility and reliability in news production and dissemination. Additionally, the phrase is elastic enough to take notice of the global internet-based news and networks and how these offer in the

twentieth and twenty-first centuries a better expression of alternative journalism in its diversity of forms, formats and structural organizations (pp. 122-23 & 135).

Alternative journalism can, therefore, be used to cover a broad spectrum of interrelated radical and experimental communication phenomena coined in different conceptual frames, such as alternative media (Atton, 2002; Coyer et al., 2007); community media (Fuller, 2007; Howley, 2005; Jankowski & Prehn, 2002); radical media (Downing, 2001); activist media (Waltz, 2005); citizenship media (Waltz, 2005); civil society media (Bailey et al., 2008); guerrilla media (Rodriguez, 2001); and independent media ([independentmedia.org](http://independentmedia.org)). Others are ethnic minority media (Brown, 2005); small media (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994); media justice ([Centerformediajustice.org](http://Centerformediajustice.org)), and democratic media (Hackett & Carroll, 2006), just to mention a few. Mitzi Waltz (2005), however, identifies two broad dimensions of contemporary experimental media phenomena: the individually-centered and the community-centered. This work is concerned with the community-centered format (print and broadcast) of the alternative media sector.

John Downing's (1984) earliest conceptualization of alternative journalism in terms of anarchist and radical media practices, however, placed radical alternative media strictly in opposition to mainstream media. Admitting later the weakness of his early anti-binarist model (placed against Sovietized/Leninist and Westernized/Liberal models of the 80s), Downing made a cautious shift towards a democratizing approach to alternative journalism (Downing, 2001). For him, because radical alternative media is an ambiguous term, it is only the "context" and "consequences" (not even the intentions of the communicators, adopted technologies, or aesthetical outlook of each media) that can determine what should be properly designated as alternative media and journalism.



Downing, however, disqualifies the following from the list of what constitutes community media:

- Plethora of niche trade magazines of corporate industry bulletins;
- Extremist, racist or fascist radical media that are pushing for society to move backward;
- Some form of ethnic, religious or community media that generate disruptive social events (Downing, 2001: ix-x).

Advancing a parallel argument with Downing, Hackett and Carroll (2006) also caution against the conceptualization of democratic media activism as a single entity. For them, a clear distinction must be made between alternative political movement that is *counter hegemonic* and the one that is *anti-hegemonic*. The former is *emancipatory* and the latter is *reactionary*. One builds coalitions in pursuit of political projects that are genuinely collective and transformative; the other builds coalition to promote endless micro-politics and differentiation. For example, while reactionary media activism are exemplified in the kind of nationalisms that seek the colonization or ethnic cleansing of other peoples ( e.g. Rwandan hate radio movement), emancipatory alternative media are exemplified in those pursuing self-determination against historically repressive state (e.g. the Kurds in Iraq).

For the two scholars, 'progressive media activism is not monolithic' (Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 68). While it is ideologically diverse, it is strategically horizontal, dialogical, cohesive, and transformative. Building on their recognition of existing *deficit* in the democratization of mainstream media practices and structural organizations of media institutions, Hackett and Carroll present true alternative journalism as a field of critical media practice that seeks to redress the imbalances in media democratization

worldwide. Their distinction of different types of alternative media, alongside that of Downing, will be useful for clarifying the fluid nature of the field of community media and journalism in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa.

Acknowledging the competing meanings of alternative journalism, Bailey et al. (2008) are in agreement with Atton and Hamilton (2008) that this concept should be expanded beyond its traditionally established borders of oppositionality, to embrace ‘a wider spectrum of media generally working to democratize information/communication’ (Bailey et al., 2008: xi). For Bailey et al., on the one hand, alternative journalism should be concerned, not only with the traditional distinctions between *mainstream commercial* and *oppositional non-commercial media*, but rather with the plethora of alternative *spaces* and various *transit modes* existing between public media spaces that enable communities and subgroups to engage in counter-hegemonic discourses in the public sphere.

For Atton & Hamilton, on the other hand, the concept of alternative journalism is ‘pushing the theory of liberal pluralism to its limits’ (2008: 88); and its objective is not only to combat the hegemony of state-owned or privately owned commercial media, but to engage in dialogue with them. Thus, drawing from the arguments of Foucault, Spivak, and Bakhtin, Atton expands the conceptual horizon of alternative media beyond the traditional ‘political and resistant media’ model to that of ‘multiple-voice texts’ that give ‘heterogeneous voice’ to all those “Others” (2002: 9); enabling “the Other” to represent itself from the perspective of his/her historical and socio-cultural experiences. For Atton (2002), therefore, a realistic conception of alternative media and journalism rests, fundamentally, on the notions of heterogeneity of voices, of experimentation, and of transformation in terms of structural organization, processes of production and of social relations.

### 2.3.1 The Models of Alternative Media Practice

The identification and schematic description of the *models* of alternative media system are aimed to give a clearer picture of their identities, known properties, and mission objectives. Scholars are in agreement that there are two dominant paradigms to the *field* of alternative media, namely, alternative journalism as *a political field* (Hackett & Carroll, 2006) and radical journalism as *a production field* (Atton, 2002). While the *political* dimension examines the capability of alternative media to promote democratic values and empower citizens, the *production* paradigm considers the significance of structural organization and production processes to alternative journalism. However, the two frames recognize the importance of *social relations* and *participatory processes* to citizens' counter-hegemonic discourses. Scholars are undeniably in agreement that these two paradigms are essential for the construction of any meaningful *model* for alternative media (Atton, 2002; Downing, 2001).

However, early alternative media theories placed greater emphases on the *ideological* over the *production* paradigm (Downing, 1984/2001). As an attempt to counteract early overreliance on the ideological paradigm, Atton (2002) for example, proposes a *production* approach that is process, content, relational, and role-centered. For Atton (2002), the significance of the *production* paradigm rests, among others, on the flexibility and overlapping nature of role distributions; engendered by alterations in the earlier fixed notions of professionalism, competence, and expertise. Based therefore on the distinction between the *political* and the *practical*, contending model divisions have been proffered by different scholars that draw from liberal democratic, media justice, and radical emancipatory values, as well as from cultural environmental and from Paulo Freire's pedagogical theories and others (Downing, 2001; Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Hackett & Carroll, 2008).

Bailey et al.'s (2008) model consideration, drawn from AMARC-Europe's working definition of community broadcasting, however makes a distinction among alternative media as *Serving a community*; as *Opposition media to mainstream media*; as *Civil Society media*; and as *Rhizome media* (pp. 1-30). Though each model, as explained by the authors, is flawed in some form, each is essentially useful for the conception of the value and property of community media in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

However, the most essential explicit element of the four models is how they connect with the understanding of community media in terms of 'public spheres' – diversified democratic mediated platforms where communities, neighborhoods, and civil societies could engage with governments in the affairs of the States, through debates, discussions, negotiation, and consensus-building for the attainment of hegemony and legitimacy (Dahlgren, 1995). In this regard and for the purpose of this work, I propose to draw from the *public sphere* concept of democratic-participatory communication theory an overarching model for the articulation of the necessary link between alternative journalism and citizens' role in the legitimization of the media policy initiatives of their nation-states.

The public sphere model is important, firstly, because it locates the different formats of community media within the framework of media activism and of the global movements to transform communications, so that communications and representations can be less constrained by bureaucracy or commercial interest and remain increasingly open to positive social values and to public good. Secondly, it provides a space for the articulation of media deregulation in terms of state-citizens relationships and offers prospects for understanding the interactive and consultative platforms necessary for public policy formations within nation-states. Thirdly, the concept is relevant because it offers the theoretical parameter for critiquing how the development of contemporary

media institutions and media policy agendas have been destroyed by large-scale commercial organizations that are primarily concerned with fragmentation and commodification, rather than with stimulating rational and candid debates among citizens or enabling the realization of the everyday life concerns (political, cultural and social) of citizens of a political community (Crowley & Mitchell, 1994). And fourthly, a reinterpretation of the public sphere concept in line with the communication policy vision of alternative media will be effective for understanding the need to integrate the *critical-rational* with the *affective* concerns of citizenship; as well as the integration of *practical productions* of alternative meanings with *practical strong policy interventions*.

### 2.3.2 Alternative Media as Public Spheres

The understanding of alternative media as ‘public spheres’ explores how these media forms, in their journalistic and discursive role, can assist citizens gain knowledge about their society, engage with the State in debates and reach informed decisions about media policy (Dahlgren, 1991; Curran, 1991). Habermas’s (1962) traditional configuration of this notion within the framework of the rise and fall of the liberal *bourgeois public spheres* of the social welfare States of the seventeenth through late twentieth century (especially France, Britain and Germany) has continued to provide a unique paradigm for scholarly debates on its value for contemporary media discourses. His configuration understands ‘public spheres’ in terms of the imaginary arenas of social and political life where citizens, subgroups, associations, and social institutions interact to create social meanings, acquire information, form public opinion, and engender true social democracy (Crossley & Robert, 2004).

Habermasian conceptualization, therefore, problematizes the *democratic deficit* that was the hallmark of the Western democratic and capitalist societies’ interventions in political and economic administrations; as well as the contradictions that shaped the

materiality of operation of the liberal *bourgeois public spheres* (coffee houses, salons, table societies, etc.) that emerged as socio-economic structures of *critical-rational* deliberations on affairs of the States between the *bourgeoisie* and the ruling *aristocrats* and as centers for the education of ordinary citizens (Habermas, 1962; Calhoun, 1992; Edgar, 2005).

While the positive logic of Habermasian public spheres ‘seeks to move social realities beyond the flawed realities of history to recover something of continuing importance to progressive and participatory democracy’ (Calhoun, 1992:4), some of the pitfalls inherent in his conception of the *bourgeois public sphere* has over the years brought about a tradition of revisionist approaches that aims to make the concept more relevant to the needs of contemporary scholarship (Garnham, 1986; Calhoun, 1992; Boyd-Barrett, 1995; Fraser, 1992; Spivak, 1988/2007a; Shohat & Stam, 1994, Cunningham, 2004; Sparks, 2004; Crossley & Roberts, 2004). The reworking of the ‘public sphere’ concept, within the context of the postcolonial discourses on national and transnational communication initiatives, are generally rooted in their shared recognition with Habermas of the need for a continuing critique of dictatorship, the limits of liberal democracy, corporately-controlled approach to public communication as practiced within Western and non-Western capitalist societies, and of the importance of the public sphere model for the attainments of social equality and the decentralization of venues for communication policy debates.

Three of the revisionist approaches that are very significant for the articulation of the value of community media as public spheres (or as platforms for the legitimization of media deregulations) are those provided by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1983), David Sholle (1995), and Hackett & Carroll (2006). Their analysis of the ‘public sphere’ in relation to the *proletarian* publics and to alternative media indicate how the

concept of 'public sphere' relates to the practice of media activism, for the purpose of the attainment of widespread democratization of public communications outfits, participatory policy decisions, and for nation-building.

Negt and Kluge's (1983) revisionism, on the one hand, places emphasis on the importance of the *proletarian* (or subaltern) *public sphere* as the historical counter-concept to the *bourgeois public sphere*. Their arguments provide the intellectual framework for understanding the modalities adopted by disadvantaged groups in self-organization, in order to participate in social and economic productions.

According to Negt and Kluge, unlike the *bourgeois* class, the interest of the *proletarian* can only be realized when they are enabled to form and engage in a *life context* (or experiences) that is peculiarly their own by means of the formation of politicized movements that is specific to them (e.g. trade unions, workers clubs, and community media). For the two scholars, it is only when poor working class citizens are able to organize themselves 'in the form of a public sphere, do they develop at all as interests and are no longer merely possibilities' (Negt & Kluge, 1983: 92).

Negt and Kluge maintain that the life world and experiences of the *proletarian*, often neglected within *bourgeois* social gatherings, requires that they deploy two qualities at the preliminary phase of their social movements: that of *defensiveness* against all forms of social exploitation and conservatism and that of *self-conscious participation* in sub-cultural expression for the purpose of self-determination. It is these two elements that basically characterize the *proletarian* life experience, and which also find expression in the modalities of their engagements with public authorities.

Negt and Kluge further admit that while these qualities could enable the *proletarian*, as a distinctive group with separate identity and political interest, to stand against the

repressive processes engendered by capitalist interests, they cannot help them check against the colonization and domination of the society as a whole by diverse repressive forces. For the two authors, to be able to attain a wider level of success in social transformation, the workers' consciousness would need to attain a higher level of organization, whereby some form of integration is reached between *workers' liberation movements* and *bourgeois consciousness*, by means of the adoption of a common emancipatory ideals, use of similar progressive institutions and social coalition networks, all approached on the basis of overall public interest and the attainment of common needs (p. 93).

They, however, warn against the danger of *proletarian* identity, consciousness, and movement being substantially subsumed into the *bourgeois social totality*. Negt and Kluge maintain that the *proletarian consciousness* still needs to retain some form of counter-power relationship to enable it confront the political and economic excesses of the *bourgeois social totality*, often constructed as a relation of capital or in association with state power of monopoly, in order to prevent members of the *proletarian camp* from deviating from the earlier humanistic vision of their struggles.

While Negt and Kluge's reworking of the *public sphere* concept applies more specifically to the participatory roles of 'ordinary' citizens in the struggles for fair labour-power relations and for the destruction of the repressive tendencies inherent in Western capitalism, it also remains significant for understanding the social consciousness and group activism generated by other economically and intellectually disadvantaged groups worldwide. However, their reduction of working class social movement only to the realm of economic production is less helpful.



On the other hand, drawing on Negt and Kluge's arguments to establish a value relationship between *proletarian public sphere* and the constitution of *alternative media practices* (especially alternative television experiences) in the United States, Sholle (1995) notes that Negt and Kluge's (1983) conceptual analysis prefigures the *counter publics* peculiar to *alternative media groups* in their struggles for public policy reforms and overall social transformation. For him, the core link between the activities of *alternative media* and *proletarian public sphere* rests on what Negt and Kluge refer to as *emancipatory communication* (i.e. 'the objective conditions under which the human being can become more of a subject and can build more autonomous and more comprehensive relationships to reality' - Sholle, 1995: 23) and on the *utopianism* advanced by Enzensberger and Brecht, 'who both critique the one-way functioning of dominant media' and see the potential of media technology (especially radio and television) 'to be transformed from a mechanism of distribution into one of communication' (Sholle, 1995: 23).

Thus, for Sholle, the distinctive quality of alternative media as *counter publics* could be seen when the aspirations of alternative media groups are placed in comparison to some of the specific traits of the dominant media and institutions. His core argument is that 'alternative forms of media can serve as models for more expanded strategies for developing democratic modes of communication, but they cannot in themselves bring about the media utopia they sometimes espouse' (1995: 34).

Sholle further notes that, 'Negt and Kluge's work suggests that, if alternative media practitioners are to have a significant role in transforming public sphere activity, they will have to think through a number of theoretical and practical issues:

- What are the strategies by which meaning is created by dominant media, and how many alternatives work to disrupt this process?
- Who is included or excluded from participation in the attempt by media activists to design their own programmes and distribution networks to avoid infiltrating dominant exhibition systems?
- How should audiences for alternative media be conceived? Is the audience universalisable, enclaved, diverse, etc?
- How should access be conceptualized – as access to technology, audiences, political impact, etc?’ (Sholle, 1995: 23).

Sholle further argues that, the articulation and attainment of these objectives further requires that alternative media practices move beyond the mere realm of Habermasian *critical-rational* argument that are structured primarily on set of rules (or beyond the field of *practical production* implied in Negt and Kluge’s analysis of *proletarian public sphere*) to that of recognizing the value of *affective experiences* to citizens’ engagements and of *strong media policy interventions* by media activist organizations for the purpose of social and communication reforms (pp. 26 & 30).

The value of Sholle’s reinterpretation of Habermas’s public sphere concept to this work, therefore, rests on four things: the links he makes between the public sphere concept and community media practices; his emphasis that the use of the concept should recognize not only the value of candid and rational arguments but also the significance of affective historical experiences; his strong advocacy that radical alternative engagements should move beyond mere information production concerns to the field of strong and pro-active policy interventions; and his recognition of the limitations inherent in community media’s policy interventions caused by the small-scale nature of

the practice. Besides, his observation with regards to the need for strong interventionist role by alternative journalists agrees with the primary objective of this study.

However, Hackett and Carroll (2006), just like Curran (1991), identify three contending models of alternative media public spheres, which intrinsic characteristics can invariably impact on their ability to intervene in public policy through deliberations and critical engagements of citizens, namely, ‘public sphere radical liberalism’; ‘public sphere market liberalism’; and ‘public sphere radical democracy’.

While the three models critique the elitist and bureaucratic model of democracy, the authors admit that the ‘radical liberal public spheres’ can strongly critique the democratic deficit in media reportage; but it is less likely to critique the commercial, social and political basis of media policy. Also while the ‘market liberal public spheres’ are likely to advocate less regulatory constraint from government in favour of media concentration and provide a benchmark for the criticism of “negative” exercise of individual freedom and how community media can function, through growing information gap, to undermine citizens’ capacity for informed civic engagements, the ‘radical democratic public spheres’ will ‘offer a more robust set of benchmarks for evaluating media performance’ (2006: 73) and for highlighting the importance of democratic media frameworks, as the necessary social environment for the promotion of developmental objectives of governments and for the realization of the equal rights and participatory capability of every citizen in public deliberation about policy.

Hackett and Carroll’s typology places greater emphasis on what their three models can enable (or not enable) in terms of media policy-making and from the point of view of democratic media activism. Their typology of alternative media, though framed only from Western democratic perspective, will be valuable, not only in offering adaptable

conceptual frameworks to empirically investigate and compare the diversified nature of community media in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, but also in the clarification of the capacity of each community media model to intervene in media policy developments.

Regardless of the distinctions among alternative media public spheres, however, there are some essential qualities that unit them, as well as distinguish them from dominant media public spheres. The next sub-unit provides a brief analysis of the essential characteristics of the alternative media public spheres in the hope that it will assist a better appreciation of the potentials of alternative media for media activism and media democratization.

### **2.3.3 The Qualities of Alternative Media**

Charles Fairchild's (2001) assessment of the essential characteristics of alternative media is very much in agreement with the findings of other scholars (Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Fuller, 2007). I therefore wish to draw from his intellectual resources to understand this issue. For Fairchild, the essential elements of alternative media public spheres are defined by some key concepts, such as *localism*, *democratization*, *accessibility*, *participation*, *advocacy*, and *independence*.

*Localism* presupposes that alternative media is owned, not by big companies or national governments, but by local communities, subgroups, and private citizens for the purpose of self-definition, the development of local talents, the packaging of variety of programmes that satisfy local needs and strengthen the level of grassroots participation in public life. Local communities and private citizens remain the major stakeholders in this regard.

*Democratization* is rooted in the recognition of media *as specific sites of struggles* for ideological hegemony. It has two perspectives: democratization *through* the media and

of the media (cf. Hackett & Carroll, 2006). It presupposes, firstly, a heightened level of broad-based participation in the exercise of *media power*, in terms of reasonable *access* to technologies of communication and of freedom to use available communication channels for various programming, in order to encourage competitive environment. Secondly, it presupposes the democratization of the media system itself (against the backdrop of suppressive external and internal influences), in terms of reorganization of production systems and management structures to ensure accountability and transparency. For Fairchild, community media should serve as popular and strategic interventions into contemporary media culture; with commitment to the democratization of media structures, forms, and practices (cf. Fuller, 2007). However, the drive for *democratization* should be conditioned by the specific political and economic context within which the practice is undertaken; whereby community media may operate either as alternative to or in mutual respect with existing political powers and national dominant media setups.

*Participation*, Fairchild notes, provides the concrete framework for the attainment of the communication and development goals of alternative journalism. Within the participatory model, cultural and information producers enjoy a certain level of freedom from State censorship and from corporate commercial constraints, especially in the selection of a wide range of communication materials available to them, in their choice of content and mode of presentation and representation. This element also encourages alternative media audiences to become *active* partners in the cultural production business, through timely feedbacks, direct involvements in the management of alternative outfits and public policy decisions that may affect production resources. Thus, participation model demands solidarity, broad-based networking, and regular consultations with all stakeholders across local, national and global communities.

*Advocacy* policy, in turn, according to Fairchild, requires that alternative journalism affects public opinion, political decision-makers, and help bring about meaningful social and policy changes. It is in this regard that alternative journalism could be seen as a radical tool for the liberation of people and as platforms where ordinary citizens and media activists can engage with governments in the affairs of the States, through discussions, negotiations, and consensus-reaching.

The implications of *advocacy* quality to alternative journalism are very clear from the argument of Fairchild which one also wishes to adopt into this work: that in the selection of topics for advocacy the historical experiences of a people, community, and organizations must be taken into consideration; and that there must be a sustained partnership with NGOs, campaign and lobby groups with shared interests and vision, in order to fashion out common symbols of the problems that require changes, create together some level of public political awareness and mobilize the citizens for a collective action for change. One agrees with Fairchild that such broad-based partnership can also help redefine the pattern of relationship among activist and civil society groups, for a collective attainment of local, national and global developmental goals.

Finally, the notion of *independence*, the author argues, recognizes the need for community media practice to remain autonomous, free and resolute in its struggles against marginalization. *Independence* enables radical cultural producers to freely articulate and intensify, as they deem fit, their experiences, critiques of issues, and the alternative courses of action to be undertaken to redress imbalances.

## 2.4 Alternative Journalism and Progressive Media Policy Developments

A consideration of the policy trends of alternative journalists which result from the basic policy challenges facing alternative media practices in contemporary times, of the participatory processes adopted by them to engage with governments in policy decisions, and of the elements that define the relationship between alternative and mainstream media policy frameworks constitute part of the expansive vision of alternative media and journalism.

While some scholars maintain that the level of participation of *civil society* (and invariably community media) in national media policy development is comparatively marginal (Freedman, 2008; Chakravartty & Sarikakis, 2006), others such as McCauley et al. (2003), Hackett and Carroll (2006), and Atton and Hamilton (2008) recognize and highlight specific policy challenges, policy trends, and the institutional strategies that inform and shape the engagements of media activists in the struggles for dominant media policy reforms worldwide.

### 2.4.1 Policy Issues and Challenges

Hackett and Carroll, for example, maintain that the relationship between the policy approach of alternative journalists and mainstream professional policy concerns rests on the *shortfalls* in the ‘elitist process of communication (and) policymaking’ (Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 9). These *deficits*, the authors indicate, may be explained in terms of the ‘closed’ approach governments (or their regulatory agencies) still adopt to shape the processes of media deregulation in contemporary times. The assumption of the two authors is that the States, in setting fiscal and legal frameworks, are no longer seriously being guided by genuine public interests logic; rather they now react to the demands of the economy and to the political intrigues of elitist entrepreneurs, lobbyists, and corporate media organizations.

For Hackett and Carroll, it is this *shortfall* in approach and the consequent erosion in the communication rights of citizens, with consequences in the reduction of diversity of viewpoints, which best explains the *politics of resistance* of alternative journalists, activist groups, and NGOs in relation to mainstream media deregulations in most democratic societies. Again, media activists' shared concern for the democratization of national media institutions and policymaking frameworks, Hackett and Carroll further note, is not necessarily *defensive* of the liberal values of alternative journalism; it is primarily *pro-active*, for the purpose of the formation of meaningful policy proposals and the attainment of a just, good, and progressive socio-political order.

#### **2.4.2 The Policy Trends of Alternative Journalists**

Atton and Hamilton (2008) identify two broad media policy directions of alternative journalists, namely, the *explicit and substantive policy trends of alternative journalism* itself and their *specific alternative policy proposals* for the reform of dominant media policy frameworks. While the two factors may be seen to be in some ways interrelated, the basic distinguishing frame is that the first is of a general nature and the second is often expressed within policy proposals for handling specific practice dilemmas resulting from the impact of global economic politics.

Within the framework of the *substantive general policy trends*, there are four basic sets of policy visions: the policy positions that aim to *absorb and incorporate* radical-popular journalism into commercial-popular journalism; the policy visions that are strategically structured to *supplement* the efforts of and/or produce a *parallel system* to commercial-popular media systems; the policy goals that aim to reform dominant media systems; and the policy intentions that attempt to *subvert* the principles of *bourgeois journalism* as practiced within dominant commercial journalism of capitalist societies.



Explaining each position further, Atton and Hamilton indicate that the goal of *absorption* and *incorporation* is to integrate the professionalism of commercial-popular journalism (*news-room* journalism) with the personal-testimonial quality of alternative journalism (*comment-room* journalism). In other words, the primary aims are to encourage collaborative partnership between professionals and socialist groups in order to secure popular participation in the production of stories, through the use of video footages, testimonies, and experience-based narratives; and to blur the distinction between *investigative reporting* and reporting geared towards commercial purposes, through the strategic introduction of advertising into social groups' internet sites. The *absorption* trend is largely internet, print, and cable media-based.

A *parallel* policy vision, unlike the *absorption* system, the authors note, is open to the policy visions of *bourgeois journalism* and has two strands: the first strand attempts to build policy strategies that could enable alternative journalists gain support from existing dominant media systems rather than seek to reform the mainstream systems; and the second perspective seeks to form alternative-news system that counter-balances but operates in tandem with commercial-popular news systems. This, they argue, is best exemplified in the policy activities of associations of American Alternative Newsweeklies (now known as the "Association of Alternative Newsmedia").

The *reform* of dominant media policy direction, Atton and Hamilton note, also has a double perspective: the advocacy for drastic and substantial reform of public commercial media and the calls for reduced and reasonable restructuring of dominant media systems. The overall objectives of the proponents of this third policy position is to canvass for regulatory frameworks within nation-states that encourage a more participatory style of journalism; that reduce the harmful effects of concentration of media ownership; and that strengthen competition and pluralism of viewpoints in public

communication systems. This third policy position, Atton and Hamilton indicate, is best exemplified in the policy activities of the American Free Press and of Media Philanthropic Foundations worldwide.

A *subversive* policy agenda, as the fourth general policy paradigm, rejects industrial or professional form of reportage of events that was peculiar to *bourgeois journalism* and that now serves as the foundation of modern commercial-popular journalism. It also rejects the notion of private ownership and control of information by commercial media institutions, guided by *private property law*. Atton and Hamilton further indicate that there are two principal methods by which *subversive* policy agenda are carried out by radical practitioners: through *hoax* practices that makes caricatures of commercial-popular stories in a way that offers alternative truth to the one presented by dominant media institutions; and through *online websites* where personal commentaries *and* criticisms on commercially produced news are posted by individuals or organizations.

For Atton and Hamilton, this last policy paradigm is often less formalized and institutionalized. Rather it is often detected by cultural critics and analyst from diverse radical cultural forms and aesthetics that are expressive of specific philosophical convictions. Being less logically expressed in a documentary or manifesto form, its subverting elements lie more specifically in its very lack of explicitly quotable policy position and also in its practice of counteracting commercially produced meanings. For the authors, this policy position is best exemplified in the 1976 Joey Skaggs' *Village Voice*, a New York entertainment artist.

However, as insightful as these analyses on general policy trends might be, it is fitting to note that some of the manifest elements of the general policy trends, as enumerated, may also be detected in the way alternative media groups generally react to the negative

impacts of global market politics on alternative media and also in the specific proposals they make towards the resolutions of practice dilemmas.

#### **2.4.3 Resolving Dilemmas through Progressive Policy Resources**

McQuail (1994a), Atton and Hamilton (2008), and McCauley et al. (2003) are in agreement that the core dilemmas of community media are tied around the subjects of institutionalization, capitalization, the encroachment of political economy into media contents, and the problems resulting from the spread in digitalization and the explosion of multi-channel satellite systems. Bailey et al. (2008) add one more challenge to these, namely, pressures arising from exilic experiences of alternative journalists. Theorists are in agreement that these dilemmas are multi-dimensional; and that they are offshoots of globalization politics.

Addressing the impact of political economy (classical or critical) on alternative journalism, Atton and Hamilton (2008) note that political economic approach to communication proffers a purely commercial frameworks that is devoid of the basic issues of justice, equity, and public good for the survival of political as well as communication projects. The fundamental dangers within *classical* political economy as it relates to alternative practices are, firstly, that it makes the pursuit of capitalism in itself a moral imperative; and secondly, it tolerates various levels of social imbalances and economic exploitations produced by capitalism as something inevitable. Besides, as observed by its critiques, it takes for granted the fact that capitalism is sometimes intentionally pursued to serve the interests of a specific class of people – the elites, the rich and the powerful; their multinational corporations; and their local and international partners (McCauley et al., 2003; Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

With regards to the challenge of digitalization and the explosion of multi-channel satellite systems, McCauley et al. (2003) admit that the widespread use of new digital communications technologies and the introduction of multiple channels into various national public communication environments make it possible today for communication firms to become big players in the global markets. For McCauley et al., digitalization is vigorously pursued today because it ‘offers a lucrative and cost-effective means of growing a business’ (McCauley et al., 2003: xvi), through transnational corporation between national/local governments and international commercial mega-firms. While this explosion on digitalization and satellite systems works well for the dominant media sector, alternative media theorists maintain that it works against the community media sector that lacks large capitals to engage in such ventures, both in terms of loss of funding opportunities to the bigger corporations and in terms of the fact that the cultural interest of alternative journalism may never be adequately served during national deregulation processes (cf. Herman & McChesney, 1999).

Evidently, contemporary emphasis on commercialization from its multidimensional perspectives does raise serious concerns about the prospect for the continued survival of community media (a non-profit making cultural practice) within the context of free market economies. However, the concerns for the negative impact of commercialism on alternative media practices in contemporary times tend to apply more seriously to those in the print and broadcasting sectors (Atton & Hamilton, 2008). The difficulty of their survival borders around the financial crises these sectors continue to experience in recent times. How community media sectors draw on its general explicit policy visions (absorption, parallel, reform or subversive visions) to respond to these crises depends on the particular difficult situations they find themselves. But generally they tend most of

the time to turn to ‘patronage’ (political, philanthropic, or ecclesiastical) and to ‘advertising’ for rescue (McCauley et al., 2003; Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

The primary policy concerns among contemporary alternative journalists, therefore, are on how community media practices of the print and broadcasting media can be helped, through policy initiatives and through governments’ political and economic agendas, to adjust to accommodate these challenges and stay afloat and to avoid the dangers of subjecting themselves to and working in concert with the personal interest of powerful benefactors (Okon, 2006).

To address this problem, diverse policy solutions that are sometimes contradictory are often proffered by intellectuals and media activist organizations. These include the need for community media to either be incorporated into the political-economic system it finds itself or they operate to neutralize (or reform) the system. But for Curran and Seaton (2003), the solution rests primarily on regulation of community print and broadcasting media as a *third tier* of public service communication. The assumption here is that in making legal provisions that aim to protect all public service systems and strengthen their commitment to quality cultural narratives, the interests of alternative media systems would also likely be served. Curran and Seaton’s logic suggests an *integrative* approach to media deregulation.

Some other scholars are, however, convinced that the solution lies also in an on-going review of the funding systems available to alternative journalists. McCauley et al. (2003) highlight two perspectives to this recommendation: there are those that are of the view that alternative media practitioners should ‘find ways to enter into limited commercial endeavors, so long as the proceeds from those ventures are used to support their original emancipatory objectives. Against this perspective are those that offer the

view that commercial media owners should be made to contribute a portion of their profits into trust funds for the support of community media services. These positions, put together, tend to reflect an *incorporation* (or parallel) approach to alternative media policy formation.

However, while all these proffered solutions suggest in differing degrees a positive way forward, the most unacceptable position still remains the one that proposes direct and complete support for radical journalists from the States. This position is generally rejected because of the way it could be easily abused to protect State's orthodoxy (cf. Atton & Hamilton, 2008). In contrast, the dominant and most acceptable position is the need for national governments to provide partial (and sometimes indirect) financial support to community media and to embark on on-going drastic reforms in the imperatives of national constitutions and legislative laws to protect and promote community media and journalism in democratic societies.

However, as noted by Hitchens (2006), it is important that in canvassing for constitutional and legislative protection for alternative journalism in developing societies a few grey areas are straightened out within national legislative frameworks. For example, it is good to be clear about the nature of constitutional and legislative protection being canvassed for. Is it about laws that enable attainment of *fairness* through avoidance of prejudicial thinking on the part of political authorities about the social and critical objectives of alternative journalism? Or is it a call for the institutionalization of a *new model* of commercial support for alternative journalism that is similar to what is obtainable in Western capitalist societies, whereby internal revenues of community media institutions are being supplemented by revenues generated from minimal advertising?

Regardless of the kind of advocacy for constitutional reforms, it is important to bear in mind that alternative journalism constitutes small-scale cultural productions that cannot compete with commercial-popular journalism on any level-playing-field. It is therefore necessary to protect it constitutionally in a way that prevents its *personal* and *imaginative* mode of practice from being compromised by governments or their regulatory agencies and that reinforces its role in democratization and in response to every situation of dictatorship and marginalization (Atton & Hamilton, 2008; Hitchens, 2006).

Atton & Hamilton (2008) further suggest the need to recognize the importance of *voluntarism* in community media practices and of *Indymedia's* approach to interactive communication in the resolution of some of the legislative questions surrounding the relevance and survival of alternative journalism. For the authors *voluntarism* and *Indymedia's* communication approach are particularly significant in breaking down formalism in public communication and in opening up alternative media projects to diverse public supports, including supports from anyone or donor associations that may wish to contribute towards the survival of community media in contemporary times (pp. 38-40).

For Atton and Hamilton and for McCauley et al (2003), the justifications for urgent interventions for the survival of alternative journalism from either political authorities or from voluntary organizations rests, among others, on the social objectives and cultural values of non-commercial media practices; on their commitment to bring governments to accountability and responsibility; in the broadening of the horizons for citizens' participation in public communication; and, above all, in their on-going promotion of public service values in public communication. This now leads us to a

consideration of the participatory strategies of alternative journalists in media policy debates and reforms worldwide.

#### **2.4.4 Participatory Platforms for Radical Media Policy Inputs**

Apart from the questions of challenges and methods for the resolutions of dilemmas, another means through which community media mediate tensions and make input into mainstream media policy frameworks is through the constitution of *forums* for debates and articulations of shared policy visions, the formation of *coalitions* across national and transnational regions and the constitution of *policy agendas* for collective actions to ensure a meaningful democratization, not only of national public communication systems, but also of national media policy-making processes (Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

The development of deliberative and collaborative strategies is fundamentally informed by scholars' understanding of national public sphere systems (social or media) as sites for struggles and dialogue for the attainment of political hegemony. Secondly, it is informed by their conviction that strong *partnerships* are keys to the future survival of radical alternative media. Thirdly, it is informed by the realization that alternative journalism lacks big industrial basis and because of that it is incapable of engaging directly in formal policy discussions with governments or challenging head-on 'the power of capital' (Hackett & Carroll, 2006: 201). Therefore, it is imperative that most of the policy inputs of radical journalists are made at deliberative forums and in partnership with private sectors, donor agencies, intellectuals, and NGOs, either in the form of paper presentations, workshops or seminars.

Media activists are also known to work in partnership with a host of regional and international bodies, such as the World Association of Community Broadcasters



(AMARC), Community Media Associations of the United Kingdom, the Panos Institute of South (or West) Africa, the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), Agencies for Media Development Initiatives, just to mention a few. According to Hackett and Carroll, the plethora of allies and friends that work with radical journalists are not always from among 'those at the center of the media field' (2006: 201), except for those professionals who have been victimized by the States or their corporate proprietors. The collaborator-organizations are always drawn rather from movements, trade unions, concerned intellectuals, peripheral and semi-peripheral social groups.

Atton and Hamilton (2008), in turn, argue that it is from the scholarly papers that emerge from the conferences organized by alternative journalists and their allies that governments and policy-makers worldwide can draw insights to enrich official policy debates and decisions. List of themes that emerge from such gatherings could be very broad, covering different areas of public communication and of challenges facing alternative journalism. Through these conferences alternative journalists are also able to pressurize governments to recognize their unique identities, style of practice, and freedom of practice. These intellectual conferences and broad-based networking also holds the key for them to demand that some elements of mainstream media practices considered today as inappropriate to the profession and for the promotion of democracy be reformed; including the fact that news reportage need to be citizen-friendly (Okon, 2006).

Thus, apart from the questions of *accessibility* and *participation*, the issue of *audience-relation* in news production is another significant area that has continued to receive attention at various deliberative forums. McCauley et al. (2003) observe that the concern of alternative journalist is that preference should be given to the conception of *audience-as-public* as against *audience-as-market*. While the latter treats media

audiences merely as objects of commodification, the former sees them more as citizens in need of education, of reliable information and entertainment. This now leads us to a consideration of the last issue in this subunit, namely, the key *area* of relationship between alternative and mainstream media policy frameworks.

#### **2.4.5 The Unifying Frames between Alternative and Mainstream Policy Visions**

The principal connecting points between alternative and mainstream media policy visions is located by scholars within the normative field of *objectivity* and *impartiality* and how these impact on the question of audience-relation and representations in news reportage (Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Atton & Hamilton, 2008; McCauley et al., 2003). These principles are important as unifying frames because of the substantial role they play in distinguishing *investigative journalism* from mere *yellow journalism* (Baran & Davis, 2000).

As noted by James Curran in *The Alternative Media Handbook* (2007), the principles of *objectivity* and *impartiality* had their early source from the professional codes of American journalism. They were meant to ‘teach the virtues of neutrality, factuality, dispassion, balance and accuracy, and lay down rules governing how stories should be reported’ (Curran, 2007: xv). They, therefore, remain some of the significant contributions of both *bourgeois journalism* (with its emphasis on detached empiricism) and modern *commercial-popular press* to journalistic practices (Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

But because alternative journalists often see themselves as better placed to live out these ethical goals, they commit themselves to advocating for improvements in the way governments define these principles within mainstream national policy frameworks and in the professionalism of dominant media institutions (Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

Drawing from the arguments of Noam Chomsky (1989) and Edward Said (1981) on how Western capitalist media have often misrepresented disadvantaged people of developing regions of the world, Atton and Hamilton (2008) also indicate how media activism has demystified the *objectivity* commitment of corporate media institutions worldwide (p.85).

According to Atton and Hamilton (2008), the key reform advocated by media activists in relation to the notion of *neutrality* is tied with the subject of *affective human values* and how these are covered or not covered in news reportage that affect the life of citizens (cf. Cunningham, 2004). Alternative and community media are valued more precisely because of the way they attempt to integrate *detached empiricism* with the *existential conditions of human life*. The position of alternative journalists, as expressed through the use of personal testimonies and other strategies of *witnessing*, therefore, is that professionalized commercial journalism should strive to sustain a reasonable balance between *objectivity* and *affectivity* in news reportage, bearing in mind how such balancing could enable media audiences interpret journalistic narratives as *credible* or as socially and culturally unreliable.

## 2.5 Summary

The above theoretical analysis indicates the need for media policy and small media to be understood now, not as static or monolithic fields, but as expansive concepts covering diversity of legislative and experimental media formats, respectively. But media policy conceptualization in contemporary times, on the one hand, requires a shift from the early ‘end-driven’ and ‘normative’ approaches to the proposed ‘venue-based’ and ‘ethical-political’ approach, so as to bring media policy considerations in line with the affective and actuality requirement of alternative journalists. While recognizing the importance of normative ethics, the ‘ethical-political’ approach is exceptionally

valuable because it seeks to integrate positive normative values of social responsibility with everyday media culture and marginalizing experiences of citizenship in the pursuit for truth and information credibility.

The articulation of the effectiveness of community media for media deregulations, on the other hand, requires the adoption of the revisionist configurations of the public sphere model of the field of *democratic-participatory communication theory*, which can provide a useful frame for thinking through the relation between the journalistic and participatory qualities of alternative media and of their value for activism for media policy reforms. The public sphere model of alternative media is particularly significant, firstly, because it locates the value of community media primarily within the context of media activism and of global movements to transform communications. Secondly, while bearing out the disillusionment and dissatisfaction of marginalized communities and groups with the democratic deficits evident in government administrative and mainstream professional media institutions, it emphasizes the significant role that civil society, neighborhoods, and grassroots communities can play in the provision of radical policy visions to ensure the progress of democratic societies. Thirdly, it enables one to think through how the media (dominant and alternative) can play crucial roles in the transition from absolutist to liberal-democratic regimes.

Additionally, theoretical analysis recognizes that both mainstream media policy and alternative media policy visions have undergone substantial developments that are increasingly being impacted by numerous challenges and by actors-driven participatory dynamics. Scholarly investigations further indicate that contemporary alternative journalism (a multidimensional counter-cultural ideological and production project), because of its firm roots in emancipatory policy visions, now makes substantive claims for justice from governments and professional media organizations, for the completion

of the liberal pluralist project of social democracy, through the legislative promotion and protection of the participatory rights of minority groups and peripheral communities in public communications and in the debates about media deregulations.

However, such enthusiastic reforms advocated by alternative journalists will only happen if policy-makers and governments are ready to embrace through constitutional and legislative means democratic and decentralization strategies, not as free standing, but as part of the larger national projects for development.

Having said these, I will now move into chapter three where attention will be given to trends in media policy development in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa; with specific focus on South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria. The aim of the overview is to highlight the various ‘shapers’ of media policy considerations, as well as understand how the national policy environments of the three countries enable or constrain the evolution and growth of diversity of community media practices. The understanding here is that there is a reciprocal causal relationship between community media formations and media policy developments of African nation-states.

## Chapter Three

### **Trends in Media Policy Developments in Anglophone Sub-Sahara**

In the previous chapter, I considered issues relating to media policy and alternative journalism in its macro level. This third chapter focuses more specifically on trends in media policy developments and community-based journalism at a micro level. Although the primary focus of this work is on the crucial role of community media in media policy development, a consideration of this issue also requires an understanding of contemporary trends in the political organization of media systems and institutions and how these impact on the growth of community-based media and journalism in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. As noted by Sholle, ‘what is “alternative” about alternative media [...] can be answered only by describing the structure and operation of the mainstream media’ (1995: 22).

This chapter will, therefore, examine the structures of mainstream media policy landscapes in South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria to provide the contextual backgrounds for the insertion, later in this work, of the empirical data on the growth of community media, substantial media policy changes of recent years, as well as on the campaigning role of alternative media groups for media policy developments of the three countries. These three countries with democratic and capitalist social settings have been selected, firstly, because of their big media markets and because they offer examples of how the public communication rights of minority and disadvantaged groups are respected or not respected by means of adopted media policies and rules. Secondly, the specific focus on the media policy experiences of the three countries, rather than on the entire countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, is also meant to further delimit the fields of this study. I will, however, begin the chapter with a consideration of the main factors outlined by

media theorists as ‘shapers’ of media policy debates and that can also serve as theoretical frameworks for any analysis of the media policy environments of the three African countries.

### **3.1 Drivers of Media Policy Development Debates in Africa**

While an integrative approach to media policy consideration in contemporary times ought to take notice of the life world policy concerns of alternative media groups and of the objectivity normative concerns of mainstream media professionals, scholarly examinations of media and media policy environments across different African regions take cognizance, among others, of the changing directions in technology, political economy, modernization and colonialism, international development initiatives, the concern for national and local political and cultural contexts, the dynamics of democratic politics, and others. African scholars, in particular, have also placed emphasis on the importance of African ethical values and traditional systems. One other ‘shaper’ of media policy considerations that has, however, been given inadequate attention by academics is the presence of community media institutions and how this influences media policy debates and developments. It is particularly this neglected element that this work sets out to investigate and to recognize.

#### **3.1.1 Technological Developments & Transfers**

In their distinctive discussions on the relationship between media policy agendas (global or national) and developments in the technologies of public communications since after the Second World War, Karen Suine and Wolfgang Truetzschler (1992) and Cees Hamelink (1994) are in agreement that technological changes and transfers of the pre- and post-1980s held significant challenges to the institutionalization of media systems and the developments of media policies within nation-states worldwide.

Hamelink (1994), in particular, asserts that growth in communication technologies has generated a double political role: apart from the fact that rapid changes in communication technologies became economically significant and engendered political interest in the protection of national economies and transnational corporations through international *patent* systems, it also brought about the need 'to fill a regulatory vacuum in several areas' (1994: 30) within national and international communication policy programmes. He is emphatic that rapid changes in public communication technologies have over the decades brought about new regulatory controversies in different world regions including Africa; as well as enabled the resolution of different communication problems (p. 31).

Hamelink's core argument is that, given the stark disparity in communication capacity between countries of the North and countries of the South and among diverse cultural groups in non-industrialized societies, the questions of transfer of technology through multilateral corporation, monopolization of technical knowledge through international *patent* system, access to technologies of cross-border information and knowledge movements, as well as expression of independent technological capacity by grassroots communication actors by way of ownership, remain centrally crucial to the participation of developing countries and rural communities in world communication politics and in the strengthening of people's rights to communicate through diverse national media policy arrangements (p. 213).

Though his book fails to recognize the growing influences of miniature technologies (mobile phones, camcorders, fiber optics, etc.) in information productions and streaming as well as the policy gaps these small and sophisticated latest technologies generate, the value of his arguments to this work rests, fundamentally, in the way it ties



growth in regulatory regimes to evolutions and transfers in diversity of communication technologies; in the way it sees the acquisition of communication technologies as an issue of human rights; in the way it considers the political processes that determine and affect global communication environments; and in how NGOs and media foundations across Africa and other developing world regions seek to influence the political basis of national communication exchanges and transnational policy decisions, through multilateral negotiations and agreements with diverse national and transnational communities.

### 3.1.2 Political Economy of Communication

Closely related to the issue of technological changes and their impacts on media deregulations is the question of political economy of communication. Suine and Truetzschler (1992), Lucas Oosthuizen (2001a), and Vincent Mosco (2009) are in agreement that the recent demands for diversification and globalization of communication, through satellite and digital networks, have brought new challenges that are market-oriented to communication policy developments. Political economy, the authors firstly observe, has rendered the attainment of coherent national media policy very difficult; that is because political economy relates to social institutions and social class structures of capitalist democratic societies as business categories (with *commodification*, *spatialization*, and *structuration* as its basic processes and values); rather than as categories of social relationship. Secondly, political economy of communication has brought about, not only the transition from *Old* to *New Media*, but also increases in resistances and activisms within civil societies against dominant media structures and the spread of commercialism in public communications.

Suine and Truetzschler (1992), Oosthuizen (2001a), and Mosco's (2009) observations with regards to the cross-relationships between policy changes and the hegemony of the economy in media organization, of course, draw from a similar earlier argument advanced by Graham Murdock and Peter Golding (1977/95), the founding scholars of political economy in media studies. The two pioneer scholars had concluded in their investigations of media and society that for any discussion on the changes in media and media policy development to be meaningful, there should also be a proper study of the levels of relationship between media ownership, modernization politics, and political economy and how these impact on the freedom of expression of journalists across different world regions, the nature of information contents consumed by citizens, and the creation of alternative symbolic meanings.

### **3.1.3 Modernization & Colonialism**

Outside the issue of political economy, Amin Alhassan (2004), Lyombe Eko (2003), Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (1988), and others also stress the crucial role of colonialism and modernization process in media and media policy developments across African regions. These authors are in agreement that, in order to understand the variations in African modern history, the technological frameworks for knowledge and culture transfers, and of shared demands for reforms in the political processes of media policy formations of the postcolonial periods, one needs to locate these issues within the broader context of the specificities of the colonizing and modernization experiences of Africans, resulting from Europe's conquest of Africa in the eighteenth century and the partitioning of Africa at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference for occupations by various European nations (particularly Portugal, France, and Britain) under the zeal of civilization and evangelization mission.

Their scholarly arguments, grounded principally on Foucault's *theory of diffusionism* (technology, structures, institutions), among others, problematizes the agency and political processes by which the early history of media and media policy developments in Africa and other developing world regions can be constructed and maintained. They enable us see into the fact that many media and media regulatory systems often considered as original to the African societies were in fact introductions by Western colonizers to serve specific political and economic purposes.

But generally the adequacy of colonial and modernization ideals in explaining the growth of media regulatory politics in Africa has been critically examined by scholars from two contradictory positions: while a few admit of the positive impacts of modernization and colonial processes to the evolution and growth of African contemporary political systems, public communication institutions, and early structures of media regulations within the contexts of development communication politics and of standardized global media regulatory traditions (Eko, 2003; Alhassan, 2004); others argue that Western tools of analysis and colonial legacies have been responsible for the institutionalization of conservative, centralized, linear, and elitist values into the policy processes of Africa and other 'Third World' regions (Golding & Harris, 1997; Ake, 1996; Alumuku, 2006; Mamdani, 1996).

#### **3.1.4 Development Initiatives of International Organizations**

Closely linked to the issue of modernization is the question of the collaboration and development activities of international institutions in the areas of communication and media regulations. Most communication policy scholars (Kelly, 1978; Fisher, 1985; Hamelink, 1994; Eko, 2003; Ansah, 1994; Golding & Harris, 1997) are in agreement that early post-independent communication policy frameworks for public service

broadcasting in Africa and other developing societies were set by UNESCO and USAID experts in collaboration with the former colonial authorities (e.g. UNESCO's resolution on information and educational media, passed by the General Assembly in 1962; as well as UNESCO's 1978 Declaration on Mass Media). Such international influences have also come in the form of aids packages – personnel training, technical, legal, and financial assistance - to developing countries of the world or as bilateral government exchanges (Gaventa & McGee, 2010).

While Eko (2003) and Peter Golding & Phil Harris (1997) hold what may be considered as a moderate critical position in favour of international policy interventions, the most negatively critical are the positions of Harold Fisher (1985) and Sean Kelly (1978). In their distinctive appraisal of the value of international interventions in the formation of post-independent public communication regulatory systems across developing societies, these authors generally admit that, though these aids from external sources may have been well-intended and may have yielded some positive developmental benefits, they tended to generate lasting negative consequences, because of the contradictory ideologies (e.g. liberalism, cultural imperialism, and communism) and Schramm's one-way communication concept upon which such policy initiatives were grounded: Firstly, they failed to address adequately the questions of culture, identity, participation, and globalization that had increasingly become major issues within the academia (Eko, 2003; Golding & Harris, 1997). Secondly, they slowed down the upward mobility of media institutions of developing societies by introducing dependency syndrome in relation to media censorship and organization (Fisher, 1985). Thirdly, such strategic interventions, in the long run, enabled the erosion of the rights of ordinary citizens to freedom of information access; as it provided legal openings, through the logic of Information Sovereignty, for authoritarian regimes to find justifications to continue the

suppression of authentic information flow and harassment of journalists who represent dissident voices (Kelly, 1978).

While these critical scholarly views on the value of international interventions in relation to national media policy developments are divergent, they generally suggest, firstly, the need to recognize the rights of national governments of developing nations to design their own communication policy programmes aided by the communication visions of BBC or FCC as a preventive measure against further erosion of human rights (Kelly, 1978); secondly, how national repressive censorship systems can be corrected through bilateral and multilateral agreements (Kelly, 1978); and thirdly, the need for political authorities and media planners to eschew unilateralism in their approach to media policy formation and work rather to institutionalize, through political processes, respect for the participatory, communication, and information rights of all their citizens. Their critical views also indicate the contradictory ideologies that have tended to shape and influence public communication policy developments prior to 1990s and how the marginalization of indigenous policy initiatives created spaces for increasing level of activism within different developing world regions.

### **3.1.5 Indigenous Philosophical Traditions & Social Values**

Providing a counter-discourse to the logic of international aids in media policy organizations across Africa, Frank Ugboajah (1985/80), Francis Nyamnjoh (2003), and Dhyana Zeigler & Molefi Asante (1992) are in agreement that beyond colonial or international legacies, the assessment of influences on media policy developments (or underdevelopments) across Africa and other world regions should also take notice of the impacts of indigenous philosophical orientations and ethical traditions and systems.

The underlying assumptions are that there were political and technical orientations in almost every African community that were purely indigenous prior to the coming of Europeans and that the values of indigenous cultures and politics are functional and widely influential in the selection of a particular model of media regulatory approach by political authorities within most African societies. Thus, rather than concentrate energy solely on the repudiation of the defects in colonial and international legacies that sometimes run contrary to indigenous African values and philosophical traditions, attention should also be given to both the positive values and the biases evident in indigenous cultural policies and histories.

Zeigler & Asante (1992), for example, cite the post-independent cultural and communication policies of Zimbabwe and Togo as examples, whereby internal public communication developments tended to favour *Afrocentric* or *endogenous* style of production and media utilization, while at the same time trying to imitate the technical perspectives of industrialized nations. For them, therefore, a full grasp of media policy frameworks across Africa and other world regions require a critical understanding of the indigenous politics surrounding ‘the uses of modern media and media policies in Africa; uses that are rooted in the historical and cultural foundations of each society’ (1992: 4).

### **3.1.6 Concerns for National & Local Cultures**

Integral to the discourses on indigenous political interventions on media organizations across Africa and other developing regions is the resurgence of concern for national as well as local cultural and political institutional contexts in policy developments (White, 1999a; Gaventa & McGee, 2010; Okigbo, 2002; Golding & Harris, 1997). Generally it is the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) regulatory movement, within the context of how new developments in the globalization of

communication blurs national boundaries and sovereignty and tend to circumvent local and parochial set of images and sound (Golding & Harris, 1997), that has generated the resurgence of emphasis on nationalism and localism.

Robert White (1999a) and Charles Okigbo (2002) are in agreement that, beyond the concern of NWICO regulatory project as expressed at different UNESCO's technical and multilateral arrangements and Non-Aligned countries conferences of the pre-1990s for a reawakening in the recognition of peripheral identities and native cultures in the formation of global communication policies, it is the NWICO regulatory reform movement that provided an initial international platform for addressing the injustices inherent in Western media representations and in the interpretations of sub-cultural identities within the context of development discourses. The project also offered the catalyst for the constitution of national and local cultural industries to cater for the self-determination and communication needs of marginalized communities (rural and urban) and of ethnic groups in developing countries.

For the authors, the significance of NWICO political movements for independence and self-determinism of African nation-states rests, among others, in the integration of all citizens and multiplicity of conflicting linguistic, religious, and cultural traditions into a national cultural tradition and in 'helping a nation distinguish itself from other nations' (White, 1999a: 486) - a factor that had hitherto been lacking in the increasing penetration of transnational considerations into national discourse on economic and political developments. Secondly, the movements have enabled the gradual distancing of contemporary media policy debates from purely foreign models and contexts (e.g. the British *cultural differentiation* policy and the French *cultural assimilation* policy). Additionally, they agree that the conception of media policy within the limits set by

national boundaries and cultures now applies as much to the press as to the broadcasting and audio-visual sectors.

### **3.1.7 Democracy & Popular Participation**

Closely related to the issue of nationalism, regionalism, and localism in engendering popular participation in media organizations within African nation-states is the need for national governments (or their agencies) to provide workable democratic frameworks for the participation of all sectors in political governance and in the formation of public communication policy initiatives.

Optimism for the institutionalization of democratic frameworks across different African regions by African social welfare States, whose performances had generally been perceived as abysmal, emerged in response to the spread of Western liberal philosophy, the collapse of Eastern communism in the 1980s, and the privatization initiatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank that came in the 70s and 80s in the form of economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP).

Since then, the enthusiasm for democratic politics has increasingly expressed itself in citizens' demands for multi-party democratic leadership, as against the culture of military dictatorship and one-party statism that prevailed at different times across different African regions, as well as in the demands for the strengthening of the capacities of private sectors and grassroots communities to make contributions to political and economic developments (Ng'ethe & Kanyinga, 1998). Also, in the clamour for constitutional recognition of people's rights and freedom, there have been increasing demands for a pluralist approach to public policy decisions and to the management of public communication institutions (Karikari, 1994).



Democratic reforms in Africa and other world regions in the 90s, by way of liberalization and privatization of public institutions and through the formation of multi-party representative systems, have generally questioned the culture of undemocratic governance, the monopolistic and top-bottom approach of the state in policy development initiatives, and the entrenchment of personality cult in public communication. The benefits of the increasing decentralization and democratization of public institutions and policy decision mechanisms across African societies are therefore enormous. Among these are the empowerments of citizens to become partners with the States in popular governance, easy access of peripheral communities to decision points, reduction in conflict through dispersion of conflict resolution points, reduction in state patronage, improved service deliveries, as well as improved sense of accountability by the States. The sharing of power and growth in the culture of competition between organs of central governments and other social actors are, therefore, some of the key elements that make democratization politics significant for Africans and for national developments (Ng'ethe & Kanyinga, 1998).

The most fundamental challenges to democratization politics across Africa, however, are the enduring lack of legal frameworks at the local levels to ensure steady movements from institutional monolithism/oligopolitism (and godfatherism) to open and pluralist systems of decision-making, as well as the enduring lack of transparency in 'the elitist process of communication policymaking' (Ansah, 1994: 25). It is in this regard that Kwame Karikari (1994) and Paul Ansah (1994) are in agreement that, beyond mere constitutional reforms, effective liberalization and democratization requires the concrete actualization of minority rights and the rights of local communities to self-determination and to authentic information acquisition, as well as their empowerment to call their leaders to accountability, through participation in policy

debates and legitimization (cf. Hortwiz, 2001). This now leads to the next sub-section where I will provide a brief overview of the media regulatory environments of South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria.

### **3.2 Overview of Media Policy Environments**

While the exploration of the ‘drivers’ of media policy development debates in the previous sub-unit provides the necessary general analytical frameworks for the overview of the media regulatory environments of South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, in this subunit I argue that the dynamism of the media regulatory environments of the three countries in favour of continuing growth in community media practices, have over the years been impacted by these and a host of other factors, including the socio-political expediencies of each country, the personalities of their postcolonial political administrators, the hegemony of the State and corporate institutions in policy-making, as well as the active (or non-active) involvements of civil society organizations (including media activists) in media policy decisions.

#### **3.2.1 South African Media Policy Environment**

Making critical analyses of media policy developments in South Africa, David Wigston (2001), Robert Hortwiz (2001), Eric Louw & Keyan Tomaselli (1991a/b), and Ruth Teer-Tomaselli (1993) are in agreement, firstly, that media and media policy developments in South Africa are manifestations of the existing historical tensions among government, media institutions, and the society; and secondly, that media regulatory environments are never static; they are constantly changing over the years to meet up with the dynamism evident in South African internal social, technological, economic, and political processes; and thirdly, that the dynamic transformations evident in the media policy landscapes are in many ways a reflection of South African colonial and racial past, the centralized tight control of the media industries (especially the

SABC) under various apartheid regimes, and of South African eventual transition from apartheid to democratic regime in 1994. Also contributive are the growth in political economy of communication, engendered by *middle class* citizens' entrepreneurship and corporatism; as well as formidable media activism and political resistances, brought about by decades of trade unionism and grassroots community movements.

But providing the contexts for the evaluation and articulation of South African contemporary media policy experiences are the political and policy formation events of the periods between 1990 and 1994; as well as the periods between 1994 and 2004. While 1990 to 1994 is the period of political transition, the years 1994 to 2004 is that of early attempts at consolidation in order to build on the gains of political, economic and socio-cultural reconstructions ushered in by the first democratic elections. These two periods are significant because of the socio-political and economic processes that emerged to create opportunities and spaces for the engagement of civil societies and media organizations with government in debates and decisions about policies and about the political future of South Africa (Armstrong, 2005; Hadland, 2007). Additionally, the two periods provide the measures by which the balance of power between alternative and activist media organizations and the South African democratic State can be ascertained (Hadland, 2007).

### **3.2.1.1 Developments of the Transition Periods**

The first historical period (1990 to 1994) is marked by the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the return of ANC leadership from exile after the unbanning of radical movements by the apartheid government of Frederik Willem de Klerk on February 2, 1990. The period is also characterized by the growing negotiations between the South African New National Party-led government of De Klerk and ANC-led liberation movements to resolve decades of socio-cultural and political conflicts in the country.

Central to those negotiations was the need to transform the media environment in South Africa in preparation for the first democratic elections. Discussions and negotiations concerning the reforms of the South African media landscape, particularly within ANC circles, apparently was informed by lack of diversity in the control of the print and broadcast media, which led to decades of one-way communication and which made it difficult for ANC to get its political messages across to the wider public (Hadland, 2007).

However, this first period was also particularly marked by the difficulties of placing media issues on the national policy agenda, to fall in line with the planned new democratic culture of South Africa. Even as far back as late 1989, during the national consultations undertaken by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), it was difficult to convince even the ANC-aligned groups that media issues was also an important element of the liberation struggle at that period. That is because the struggle was waged largely along political positioning as enshrined in the ANC's *Freedom Charter*, a policy document first drafted and adopted on behalf of a Congress of the People at Kliptown-Johannesburg in 1955 (Louw, 1993; Teer-Tomaselli, 1993; Hortwiz, 2001). Though the challenges of placing media on the national policy agenda were enormous; but in order to give a prime place to media issues in preparation for the elections, the years beginning with 1990 became the most intensive in the 'debates' and 'campaigns' about the media and the mechanisms for equitable control of media power in South Africa.

Some of the socio-political factors that generated opportunities for the beginning of broad-based media-related debates and for recommendations for the formations of progressive policy frameworks, to provide regulatory bedrocks for the future of South African media, were the setting up of a Viljoen Task Group by De Klerk's government

in March 1990 to investigate and review South African broadcasting policies; the street actions organized by the Campaign for Open Media (COM) in August 25, 1990 around SABC Auckland Park's headquarters that forced the Viljoen Task Group to place within public arenas debates on the structure of SABC, a public service and commercial broadcasting organization; the various policy "conferences" of the early-1990s (e.g. the Rhodes University Media Policy Workshop of 1990; the Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves Conference of August 1991; the ANC's Department of Information Workshop of November 1991 that produced the first draft copies of ANC's *Media Charter*; and the 'Free, Fair and Open Media Conference' of 1992 held in Cape Town where ANC's formal media policy proposal for the CODESA multi-party convention was streamlined); as well as the CODESA multiparty convention (known as 'Convention for a Democratic South Africa') organized to provide a collective platform for a proper articulation and collation of unified policy positions from various stakeholders for government (Louw, 1993; Hortwiz, 2001; Hadland, 2007).

In other words, the socio-political developments of the first three years that preceded the first democratic elections in South Africa are crucially important for understanding the beginning of contemporary media policy landscape in South Africa and the vital role played by alternative and activist media groups in that process. Though these years were particularly marked by policy disagreements, vigorous negotiations, as well as critical and candid discussions, the final policy outcomes placed emphasis on the need to establish an interim independent regulatory authority for broadcast and telecommunication media; the formation of a more diverse Board for SABC; and the establishment of a task force to examine and recommend modalities for diversity in the print media. These factors have been acknowledged by fieldwork respondents as

contributive in laying solid foundations for media liberalization and democratization in South Africa in the early-1990s and beyond.

Again, bearing in mind the bi-polar and the highly politicized nature of the South African society before 1990s, it is clear that the “battle” to reform South African media policy environments in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was informed by a number of policy issues. The entire process was, therefore, a reflection of both the differences in political positioning as well as public communication needs of government and of diverse cultural groups in South Africa (Louw, 1993).

Also, though the reform processes involved a host of players (with the exception of Inkatha Movement), the two dominant policy players from the domestic perspective were the New National party-led government and its political allies (that advanced a *right-central* political orientation and *closed* policy formation strategies) and the ANC that fronted for a number of other media activists organizations (that advocated a *left-central* political orientation and an *inclusive* policy formation approach). These two major camps generally had ‘a loose coalition of different autonomous players who [...] did not necessarily agree with each other on every issue’ (Louw, 1993: 10); but nevertheless worked together to impact on policy debates.

The early-1990s policy debates and activism were also influenced by some international events and indirect foreign interventions (e.g. UNESCO, European Union, World Bank, GATT, and other ‘lobby’ groups from Asian and Western companies that had various business interests in South Africa). This development provides the global dimension to media policy developments in South Africa as also witnessed in the deregulation processes of most other developing parts of the world (Hortwiz, 2001; Raboy & Padovani, 2010).

Though policy debates and negotiations were affected from multiple fronts, it was the strong coalition in citizenship campaigns and the formidable mobilization by media activists that provided the “engine” for the eventual reforms in media policies in the post-apartheid South Africa. Secondly, the ultimate outcome of extensive mobilizations and negotiations of the early-1990s was the adoptions of media policy positions that were largely *leftist-oriented*; impacted by vigorous civil society activism and eventual collaborative partnership of the State (Louw, 1993; Hortwiz, 2001).

Among others, there were two principal policy outcomes of these early collaborative negotiations and agreements. The first was the formation of the *1993 Interim Constitution of South Africa* which was hurriedly put in place to replace the *1983 (Tricameral) Constitution* and to kick-start the political transition programmes. The formation of the core elements of the Interim Constitution on the media (i.e. the ‘Bill of Rights’ and the ‘Freedom of Expression’) were, for example, impacted largely by the provisions of *Article 19* of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration on Human Rights; the UNESCO’s 1989 Resolutions on the free flow of ideas; the Windhoek Declaration on the Promotion of Free and Pluralistic Press of 1991; as well as by ANC positions with regards to “freedom of expression” and “freedom of the media” first formally collated in its *Freedom Charter* of 1955 and later revised and broadened in its *Media Charter* of 1991 (Armstrong, 2005; Hadland, 2007). The *Media Charter*, in particular, called for the democratization of South African media in respect of diversity of ownership, distribution and funding; as well as pluralism in technology and programme contents (Hadland, 2007).

The second primary outcome of the period was the official formation of the *Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 1993*. The significance of the IBA Act rests, among others, on the establishment of an ‘independent regulator’ for the broadcasting media

sector and the identification of three types of broadcasting services for South Africa: public service, commercial, and community. And with the establishment of the Independent Broadcast Authority (IBA), the process for the one-year temporary licensing of community radio began. The licensing of grassroots community televisions was never included in that initial democratization process (Armstrong, 2005). However, the significance of the IBA Act rests, among others, in the fact that it provides enabling environments for much of the preceding broadcast media policy debates and the future legal definitions of media power and roles in South Africa (Hadland, 2007).

Again, though much had been achieved in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors prior to the first democratic elections of 1994, the print media sector remained untouched through legislations directed at the broadcasting sector (Hadland, 2007). It was much later that other policy proposals were developed to relatively reposition the press sector. Corroborating this position, Wigston (2001) maintains that the nature of the regulatory relationship between government and the press industry over those years was very different from that between the State and the broadcasting sector or between government and the film industry.

But by late-1994, series of policies ('statutory' and 'non-statutory') meant to regulate the media in an environment of a new South African democratic culture were already in place or were still at their formulation stages. These established or imminent regulatory policies were to co-exist with over 100 other 'statutory' provisions of the apartheid era that were never abrogated (Hadland, 2007).

### **3.2.1.2 Political Developments of the Consolidation Period**

The second historical period (1994-2004) which political events also helped shape the future of South African media policy environments and the practice of citizenship



journalism was defined by the introduction of a few other progressive media laws and the establishment of new modalities that could ensure the consolidation of the positions of ANC government on the media; as well as strengthen the new South African democratic culture, through ongoing promotion of media pluralism and diversity. ANC government's consolidatory position on media development was encapsulated in the *Reconstruction & Development Programme (RDP) Base Document* (Armstrong, 2005; Hadland, 2007).

The document, among others, recognized the need for open debates, transparency, and democratic processes as crucial factors in the reconstruction and development of South Africa; as well as for the participation of citizens in what Habermas (1962) describes as the public sphere. It also restructures government's public information control agency known as South African Communication Services (SACS), tying its functions with the activities of Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS). But most of the informed decisions and achievements of this second period, just like the ones of the previous period, were also enabled by series of negotiations both at the civil society and parliamentary levels.

The first 'statutory' achievement of this second period was the formation of the *1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* which replaced the *1993 Interim Constitution*. It is the 1996 Constitution that now provides the legal framework under which all other policy-making (media or otherwise) takes place (Hadland et al., 2006). This new Constitution retains most of the core elements of the *Interim Constitution* on the media - the 'Bill of Rights' (Section 7.1); the principles on 'freedom of expression and freedom of the press' (Section 16); as well as on the notion of 'equality' (Section 9.2-4). Another key element of the new Constitution is in Section 32 where provision is made on the right of the media to access, through appropriate mechanisms, information

held by the State or by a third party, if such access is necessary for the protection of the rights of others. Equally important is the provision in Section 192 for the establishment of “an independent authority” to regulate broadcasting in the public interest and to ensure diversity of views in broadcasting for a fair representation of all sectors in South Africa.

These provisions, among others, may be considered as reflecting the ‘core values’ necessary in the fuller realization and protection of the fundamental human rights of South Africans and for the sustainability of a democratic South Africa, through effective media democratization. These provisions are also significant because of the way they have created the enabling environment, not only for the effective implementations of the policies of the early-1990s, but also for the continuing emergence and growth of community media in South Africa.

Thus, the notion and practice of community media in South Africa may be seen to have been founded on a humanistic constitutional propositions ‘that values those mechanisms that promote people’s involvement in public life and in the governance of the nation through open debates and freedom of expression’ (Hadland et al., 2006: 15). It is partly in this regard that the *1996 Constitution* has been acclaimed internationally as one of the most progressive Constitutions in the whole world (Kende, 2003).

The second most significant progressive policy achievements of the second period was the enactment of the *Broadcasting Act of 1999* to offer a new legislative and policy framework on public broadcasting. The Act was partly an outcome of the IBA *Triple Inquiry Report* on public broadcasting and serves as an effective mechanism in the management of cross-media ownership, local contents control, and educational broadcasting (Armstrong, 2005). The Act also retains the three tier broadcasting

division entrenched in the IBA Act. Nonetheless, its provision on community broadcast media was not completely adhered to by IBA in terms of the full licensing of grassroots community televisions. The agency's fears, as expressed in its *Discussion Paper on Private Television*, were rooted on how the sector if licensed would impact on the audience, on the revenue base for private and public televisions and on available scarce frequency.

The formation of the *Broadcasting Act* was followed by a host of other regulations including the creation of the *Independent Communications Authority Act of 2000* that provides for the establishment of a 'single' independent regulator (ICASA) for the broadcasting, post and telecommunication sectors to replace IBA and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA). The creation of ICASA was a direct response to the provisions of *Section 192* of the 1996 Constitution that demands for the establishment of an "independent authority" to regulate broadcasting in the interest of the public.

ICASA's regulatory power, first provided for under the *IBA Act of 1993*, the *Telecommunications Act of 1996* and the *Broadcasting Act of 1999*, has now been guaranteed under the *Electronic Communications Act of 2005* which repeals the other laws, except the *Broadcasting Act of 1999*. Thus, ICASA remains functionally independent in the exercise of its licensing and regulatory powers over the entire electronic communications sector. And after many years of experimenting with "special events" temporary television broadcast licensing, ICASA in November 2004 issued a 'White Paper' on community television in response to the yearnings of civil society and activist organizations.

Following on the establishment of ICASA was the formation of the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in 2002 to oversee the strategic development and support of small broadcasting and print media industries. The establishment of MDDA, in particular, was a direct outcome of the recommendation of a Task Group on Government Communications (Comtask) set up by the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, in 1996. Evidently, the recommendation of *Comtask*, led by Mr. Mandla Langa, was itself informed by two campaign-related events of community media stakeholders. The first was the campaign recommendations made in 1995 at Cape Town by the community media stakeholders under the banner of a conference called “Community Media 2000” for an enabling law that could support the establishment of a “Media Development Agency”. The second was the paper submission of the National Community Media Forum (NCMF) to *Comtask* soliciting for the establishment of a Media Development Agency (MDDA’s Draft Position Paper, Nov., 2000).

Evidently, it was in response to this high-powered civil society activism and recommendations that MDDA was eventually established by government with the sole mission mandate ‘to assist in the building of an environment where a diverse, vibrant and creative media flourishes and reflects the needs of all South Africans’ (Mtimde’s Presentation, Nov., 2006). MDDA’s ‘Position Paper’, published in 2002, also reflects the underlying philosophy and rationale of the institution as well as its sources of funding and the nature of media development and diversity support it can give to the community media, small commercial media and the New Media sectors. The contents of the document were ‘finalized taking into account public comments received in February 2001; the public hearings conducted by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Communication in March 2001; and the consultations with stakeholders throughout 2001’ (Position Paper, p.1).

It is, therefore, these participatory frameworks, policy issues, and recommendations from the broadcasting and the press sectors between 1990 and 2004, among others, that have continued to provide the *baselines* for the developments and refinements of South African future media policies (Louw, 1993). They have also provided the legal frameworks for the ongoing growth and engagements of community media institutions with the State for the purpose of media policy reforms. This now leads us to a consideration of the media policy environments in Ghana.

### **3.2.2 Media Policy Environment in Ghana**

The construction of a coherent contemporary media regulatory environment for Ghana is apparently challenging due to lack of primary literary materials on the field. The most readily available intellectual resources are Kwame Karikari's (1994) edited book *Independent Broadcasting in Ghana: Implications and Challenges*; Karikari and Kumado's (2000) co-edited book *The Law and the Media in Ghana*; and Amin Alhassan's (2004) *Communication Policy and Economic Fundamentalism in Ghana*. However, Ghana's media regulatory environment has been impacted and shaped, among others, by the socio-political and economic experiences of the pre-1992 nationalist and military era, as well as by the socio-political, technological, and economic experiences of the post-1992 constitutional and democratic era.

#### **3.2.2.1 Developments of the Pre-1992 Political Period**

This first era was marked by a shift from the nationalists' egalitarian and indigenization regulatory experiences and attempts by the military to control and remake the media environments for Ghanaians. The principal legitimators of media policy, therefore, were the Supreme Military Liberation Council and the Military Revolutionary Council and their elite advisers. The inclusions of civil society organizations in the policy-making processes of military administrators were largely on ethnic political basis, in an attempt

to minimize counter-coups, social disintegration, and to ensure equitable resource allocations (Gledhill, 2000). And, the postcolonial State's early monopolization of development communication and policy actions, through the adoption of administrative and repressive policy logics was informed largely by the rhetoric and mandate of nation-building (Alhassan, 2004).

The later expansion of the communication policy-making process to include civil society's affective network and strategies that was largely ethnic and culturally-based was informed, not only by the project of State's acquisitions of latest information and communication infrastructures as modernization *status* or as *transmitters* of knowledge and cultures, but also by the interventions of multilateral institutions, especially IMF and the World Bank, through their privatization initiatives that forced the postcolonial State to place greater emphasis on the role of the private sector and minority groups in the provision of communication infrastructures and policy insights (Alhassan, 2004). Alhassan admits that, just as the colonial policy heritage became relevant to postcolonial policy projects so was the postcolonial State's administrative and rationalist policy approaches to the constitution of a democratic policy causality framework for the post-1992 eras.

Examining the press regulations of the pre-1992 eras, Karikari and Kumalo (2000) note that prior to 1992, a substantial part of the press in Ghana was state-owned and that there was a rigid regulation of the press by government by means of the *Newspaper Licensing Law of 1989* (the seventh amended version of the first colonial *Newspaper Registration Ordinance of 1894*) and by the *Criminal Libel and Seditious Laws* that regulated defamation and copyright abuses. Outside the *Newspaper Licensing Law (PNDCL 211) of 1989* as amended by PNDCL 299 that required the registration of

newspaper establishments, between September 21, 1988 and March 23, 1989 there was absolutely no law to regulate the press, except institutional policy visions, judicial adjudications, and political repressive expedencies.

Broadcasting regulation since 1935 (for radio) and 1965 (for television), in turn, was firmly placed under the internal policy visions of the State-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and of the Ministry of Information (formerly known as the Public Relations Department). Government's placement of broadcasting under the internal policy guidelines of GBC and the Ministry was for the purpose of centralization and bureaucratization of media industries (Ansah, 1994). GBC internal policy vision that was originally informed by the specificities of BBC communication model was eventually reshaped by the need to promote political leadership and to heal the wounds of ethnic and political party rivalry that emerged within the national polity as aftermath of post-independent struggles for ethnic recognition in the formation of national governments. The adoption of the American neoliberal policy system at this stage to inform broadcast regulation was viewed only as an exception rather than as a rule (Ansah, 1994).

One of the major policy achievements of the pre-1992 period was the establishment of an independent Press Commission by Article 192 of the *1979 Constitution*; with the mandate to appoint members of the Board of Directors of State-owned media, to regulate professionalism in the press and broadcast media, and to adjudicate complaints against media establishments (Kotey, 2000). The other achievement was the formation of the *1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana* by the military administration of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. The 1992 Constitution drew much from the provisions of the *1979 Constitution of Ghana* on the media.

Chapter 12 of the new Constitution focuses on the independence of the media, ensuring liberalized and pluralistic media culture in Ghana. Section 21 of the Constitution provides for freedom of expression of the citizens and of the press. Section 162-163 enables the establishment of private media; spells out the responsibility of the media; and remains very specific in its provision that “there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information’ (162: 3). Section 162 (4) also prohibits government from interfering with the editorial independence of media institution and demands from State-owned media tolerance towards dissenting voices and divergent views. And Section 162 (5) requires of the media to hold government accountable to the people in the implementation of the “Directive Principles of State Policy”.

The new Constitution also enables the facilitation of dialogue among all communities through a decentralized mode of political administration and communication, under District Assemblies (or People’s Assembly) and community media (cf. ILGS Local Government System Studies, 2006). Through these structures, which establishments were informed by the adoption of liberal and left-winged policies, the centers of decision-making were increasingly being extended to local councils, provincial committees, and community media resource centers in Ghana (Kwesi Gharty-Tagoe, Interview 2012).

Though the new Constitution functions to dismantle structures of dictatorship and of one-way approach to public communication entrenched by the colonialist and the military, I agree with Patrick Alumuku (2006) that it has, however, failed to resolve the ambiguities surrounding broadcasting policy initiatives, especially in the way it still



grants the State unrestrained power of control over the broadcast media spaces in the area of licensing processes and equitable frequency allocations; as well as in the management of broadcast spaces for the avoidance of incitements to hatred and national disunity (p.161).

For Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh and Kwame Karikari (1998), though absolute freedom of the press is never guaranteed in practice in Ghana due to the presence of some statutes of limitations, the present situation of relative freedom, enabled by the Constitution, is in itself an encouraging transformation. Such an environment of relative freedom is a statement of the increasing openness of Ghanaian democratic leadership to embrace, not only Anglo-American logic of liberalism, but also the African philosophy of communitarianism (first integrated into Kwame Nkrumah's logic of *pan-Africanism*) in the regulation of the press and other media sectors.

Based on this insight, I argue that one of the significant values of the growing liberalized and pluralistic media culture in Ghana is how such restructuring enables the development of interpersonal platforms, whereby minority people and professional journalists working at peripheral communities are empowered to engage in political and cultural negotiations with their national government and contribute towards a reduction in national as well as regional crisis. Such interpersonal and participatory potential in media management was particularly displayed, among others, at the NMC-organized National Dialogue on the Developmental Role of the Media in Ghana, held in December 2006. Participants at the conference canvassed, among other things, for more indigenous, inclusive, and innovative media platforms for expression of identities and for the preservation of popular memory and cultural experiences of Ghanaians.

### 3.2.2.2 Developments of the Post-1992 Constitutional Era

The second historical period is marked by Ghana's emergence from the ambivalence of a protracted military dictatorship under which people's rights to freedom of expression had been suppressed and through which instrumentality the current liberalized and pluralist media atmosphere was eventually institutionalized by means of constitutional reforms. The current liberal media atmosphere is evidently an outcome of a long struggle by citizens and civil societies for reforms on the legal rules about the media (Kumado, 2006). The post-1992 era has, therefore, not only been marked by the constitutional provisions to guarantee the freedom of the press in response to the general wish of Ghanaians, but also by the transition to multi-party democratic regime underlined by parliamentary representations.

Again, while the centralized and authoritarian approach adopted by the military government in the management of broadcasting media in the 80s fitted well with the Eastern authoritarian approach to the consolidation of political power (Ansah, 1994), the new democratic culture of the post-1992 periods has engendered legislative environments for consolidation on pluralist policy visions and on deregulation of broadcasting along the logic of neoliberalism (Lahweh, Interview, 2012). Secondly, while the parliamentary approach to policy-making has not completely displaced the long existing 'patron-client' networks and factional political alliances, new radical groups that recruit academics, students, and disadvantaged local communities onto the political stage are increasingly emerging to push to the limits the specificities of liberal democracy and the need for a more integrative realization of constitutional development policy objectives of government. Alhassan (2004) admits that these factors, among others, now remain the crucial parameters for assessing the communication policy concerns of the post-1992 era in Ghana.

Some of the landmark progressive policy decisions of the post-1992 era include: Firstly, the legal recognition of the National Media Commission (NMC) by the *National Media Commissions Act of 1993* as the body with constitutional powers to register newspapers, lay out broadcasting standards, provide guidelines for contents generations, as well as appoint directors of state-owned media institutions. The formation of NMC was in satisfaction of the requirement of Section 166 of the *1992 Constitution* for such a body, to insulate state-owned and private media from government control and to ensure professionalism. Secondly, the formation of the National Communications Authority (NCA) by the *National Communications Authority Act (No. 524) of 1996*, which was replaced by the *National Communications Authority Act (No. 769) of 2008* and by the *Electronic Communications Act (No. 775) of 2008*. NCA was formed to regulate broadcast frequencies and media technical issues.

Other important policy achievements of this era include the repeal of the *Criminal Libel and Seditious Laws* that came into force since colonial times by means of the *Repeal of Criminal Libel and Seditious Laws (Amendment Act No. 602) of 2001*; the current efforts towards the passage of a *Right to Information Bill* and the *Whistleblower Bill*; the establishment of *Media Development Fund (MDF)* in the last quarter of 2011 to support small media developments and which operational modality is yet to be worked out; the establishment of the International Press Center (IPC) in Accra for the organization of the private press to enable it compete more effectively with the State-owned media; and government's efforts to strengthen private and community media institutions by creating study opportunities for media practitioners.

The existence and organization of community media, while being enabled by the relevant sections of the *1992 Constitution*, are also strengthened by means of NCA's *Community Radio Operation Guidelines* and *License Application Guidelines*, as well as

by the relevant provisions of the *National Mass Communications Policy of 1999*, developed through the working partnership of government policy experts, media professionals, and media activist organizations, to guide the development of Ghana's print, broadcast and film services (Afreh, 1994).

While the *Community Radio Operation Guidelines* recognizes a three-tier broadcasting environment, the *License Application Guidelines* requires that applicants for community media licenses complete AP03 Form; pay application fee of \$100 (US Dollars); and provide a feasibility report covering the following: geographic and demographic specifications about the community; justification for seeking frequency; proof of community support for license application; proof of intention of community ownership of the license (e.g. registration certificate & constitution); evidence of funding sources; technical details (studios, STL, transmission system); project timetable; management structure; programming philosophy; and letter of commitment to ITU regulations and national communication laws. The overall coordination of the community broadcasting sector is, however, undertaken on behalf of the official regulators by a coalition group known as Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN), founded in 1999.

Evidently, since late-1990s government-private media power relations have witnessed dramatic improvements in Ghana, providing a model for other West African countries in media pluralism. Secondly, progressive policy outcomes of the period, apart from their having been influenced largely by strong civil society activism and the technical visions of media professionals and policy experts, have also been shaped and informed by prevailing court decisions on the media and the kind of bipartisan political supports generated among the two dominant political groupings (NPP and NDC) within the Ghanaian parliament. Yet, one big weakness in the political economy of Ghanaian contemporary media policy environment is the lack of consistent commitment by the

postcolonial government and professionalized journalists to develop Ghanaian local languages, which bears serious implications for the erosion of indigenous cultural values and the socialization of young adults in cultural tolerance (Obeng-Quaidoo, 1985; Ansu-Kyeremeh & Karikari, 1998). Apparently, it is in relation to local language development, among other areas, that the formation of community media institutions in Ghana tends to offer an alternative value orientation.

### **3.2.3 Nigerian Media Policy Environment**

Some of the forces that have continued to drive media policy developments in Nigeria, just like in Ghana, include rapid changes in communication technologies, regionalization, politics of new states creations, the shift from military to democratic governance, privatization, globalization, and a robust civil society activism (Atoyebi, 2002; Olukotun, 2005). However, there are two main socio-political trends that provide the contexts for the evaluation of contemporary media regulatory experiences in Nigeria. These are the political and social events of the period before 1990 and the events of the period after 1990s.

#### **3.2.3.1 Developments of the Pre-1990 Political Period**

The pre-1990 period was marked by post-nationalist indigenization policy experiences that brought about various constitutional changes and by irregular shifts between military and democratic governance. The principal media policy legitimators at this stage were the Supreme Military Ruling Councils (intertwined by short-term parliamentary regimes). Under the administrative mechanisms adopted by the military to inform media policy decisions, the personal power of the military leader and of his close elite advisers remained prominent. Just like in Ghana, media policy actions of the Councils were informed by the rhetoric of nation-building and national unity. And regulatory concerns of government placed greater emphasis on centralization,

regionalization, and bureaucratization of public communication institutions and processes.

The inclusive nature of the policy-making process at this stage came through a number of ways, including regional representations in the Military Ruling Councils, premised on the logic of equitable allocation of public resources to different interest groups (Gledhill, 2000) and through the incorporatist strategy and the internal policy visions of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and of the Nigerian Television Authority. While inclusion in media policy decisions was not entirely lacking under the military, this was, however, balanced by repressions directed against those that opposed the policy will of the political leader and his council. As a result of incessant repressions, Nigeria faced continuing problems of civil unrest and low-powered regional insurgency with concomitant consequences for personal securities.

The management of broadcasting systems in the pre-1990s, therefore, remained a prerogative of Federal, regional, and later state governments. Only the press sector was managed, right from inception, with a combination of government and private policy initiatives. As a result, the mainstream press over the years was guided by multiple internal policy visions put in place by proprietors and editors and by the external 'non-statutory' regulations of the Nigerian Press Council, established by *Decree No. 85 of 1982* (as amended by the *Nigerian Press Council Decree (No. 85) of 1992* and the controversial *Nigerian Press Council Decree No. 60 of 1999*) to maintain professionalism in partnership with the Nigerian Press Organization (NUJ, NGE, NPAN).

The eventual adoption of media policies that encouraged growth in regional (or state) media systems and institutions in the 70s and 80s, were particularly informed by the

need to address the problem of imbalances in the power of information production and circulation between Federal and regional (or state) governments. However, where state policies tended to contradict Federal laws, regulatory considerations were often decided by the courts in favour of Federal laws. But generally the recognition of regional or state communication policies by the Federal government between the said periods was informed by political and cultural, rather than by commercial processes (Mytton, 1983).

One of the socio-political events that created opportunities for media policy-related reforms in the pre-1990s was the Badagrey (Lagos) multiparty conference of 1989, organized by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida. This conference was particularly expressive of how the military and civil society organizations could work together to develop progressive media policy directions for Nigeria. The conference raised, among others, questions about how communication policies of the twenty-first century could be well managed to reduce propaganda politics and sycophancy, to strengthen a two-way communication processes, and to minimize the marginalization of illiterate audiences, disadvantaged communities, and cultural groups in information productions and circulations.

The regulatory outcomes of that conference were the formation of the *National Mass Communication Policy of 1990* which was reviewed in November 2004 to address how technologically-based media can meaningfully respond to national values and aspirations and to the challenges emerging from ‘the dynamism in global information management’ (Report of the Core Working Group, 2004: 2); the establishment of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) by the *National Broadcasting Commission Decree (No. 38) of 1992*, now an Act of the National Assembly; and the liberalization of the Airwaves to take notice of private ownership and management of commercial broadcast and print media. These developments were particularly propelled by

citizenship activism against dictatorship, the emerging global economic politics, and by the decentralization and privatization conditions of IMF and the World Bank.

The process of media deregulations in Nigeria, after the 1989 conference, is ongoing. The 2004 revised *National Communication Policy* recognizes the importance of popular participation in public communication in terms of the potential contributions of government, private sector, and disenfranchised communities to media democratization and to national development. It also reflects the various regulatory laws (those repealed and those proposed for amendments) and the principles to guide funding arrangements for different categories of broadcasting licenses, such as public service and private commercial stations (The Core Working Group Report, 2004). The evaluation of the press and broadcasting policy initiatives of the post-1990 periods generally take notice of these core mass communication objectives of government.

#### **3.2.3.2 Developments of the Post-1990 Political Period**

While the deregulations of early-1990s that enabled the involvement of private citizens in broadcast media ownership and management holds the key to the emergence of new communication objectives aimed to grant media power to disenfranchised communities and sub-groups, it is the formulations of the *1999 Federal Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* by the military to enable a long-term transition to democracy and of the *Nigeria Broadcasting Code* (first issued in 1993) that now holds the key to the growth of community media in the country in the post-1990 periods.

However, media policy legitimization after 1999 has gone beyond military administrative approaches to embrace the constitutional logic of “separation of powers” within the context of pluralist regimes. While the principal policy legitimators of this second period still remains the Federal and the state governments (or their agencies),



media policy-making of governments have tended to incorporate more and more the valuable contributions of other political and social constituencies, such as the local governments, professional media groups, academics, coalition and activist groups, cultural organizations, just to mention a few (NBC, Interview, 2011).

Some of the policy outcomes of this period can be found in the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Section 39(1) of the Constitution guarantees the independence of the media and the freedom of expression of citizens. Section 22 empowers journalists to hold governments and all public institutions accountable to the citizens in their administration of the ‘fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy’ (p.16). However, Section 39 (2) still places restraints on the ownership and management of broadcast media by political parties and religious groups. The only other restraints on the freedom of expression, as first articulated in Section 25 of the *1963 Constitution* and later reaffirmed in Chapter IV of the *1999 Constitution*, are generally aim to protect the rights and reputation of private citizens, public safety and order, public morality, and the authority and independence of the courts. Thus, though the freedom of expression of journalists is constitutionally guaranteed in Nigeria, it is never absolute; it is subject to some statutes of limitation and to internal institutional policies (Ugboajah, 1980; *The Press*, No.6, 2010).

Other policy outcomes specific to the broadcasting sector can be found in the *Nigeria Broadcasting Code*. The Code lays out programme standards and the rules for the regulation of broadcasting in the country in line with professional ideals for broadcasting. The 2010 edition of the industrial ‘Code’ updates the rules contained in the 2006 edition to make them more relevant to the demands for democratization of the media; for more responsive broadcast operations; and for global digital transmission. Chapter two of the ‘Code’ identifies three-tier broadcasting for the country: public,

commercial, and community; as well as three types of broadcast services: national, regional, and local. Chapter nine also incorporates aspects of *Community Radio Policy* document developed in 2006 in partnership with stakeholders from the civil societies and NGOs (in terms of clearer definition of ‘community’; funding sources; methods for participation and ownership of community media; broadcast language; campus radio operations, etc.).

Just like the press, the broadcasting sector is increasingly being deregulated for optimal performance and for pluralism. The official document issued by NBC in September, 2009, however, does provide the best parameter for evaluating the regulatory reforms of the post-1990 periods in the broadcasting industry. According to NBC’s *Information Memorandum* (2009), the Nigerian broadcasting industry that began in Lagos in 1932 and in 1962 respectively with the introduction of BCC overseas radio rediffusion system and with the establishment of the first Federal television service station (after the beginning of the first regional television broadcasting in Ibadan in 1959), is being increasingly deregulated to meet up to the challenges of the twenty-first century and for the attainment of the Millennium Developmental Objectives of government, in the areas of cultural promotion, information provision, education, entertainment, and the development of social infrastructures.

The NBC’s official document (2009) further indicates that apart from licensing, NBC has also been empowered to regulate for standard in quality and content of broadcasting materials; to regulate on technical issues in the areas of spectrum allocation, location of a broadcasting station, specification of transmitter power, definition of safety in the handling of broadcasting equipment, and definition of procedures for reporting abuses as well as enforcing sanctions for any breach of a section of the NBC Code by broadcasters. The document further notes that new policies on digital broadcasting will

be in place soon, based on the recommendations submitted in June 29, 2009 by the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) to the Presidency.

While the NBC's document recognizes the importance of regulating for pluralism in content & infrastructure and the need to sustain a communication balance among social groups, it fails to explicitly acknowledge how the NBC 'Code' has been adjudged by experts as deeply flawed in various fronts, including its inability to provide for public service broadcasting and to separate public service from state-owned broadcasting (Uche, 1999). The document also fails to indicate how administrative bottlenecks continue to derail deregulations of the broadcasting sector for the increasing benefits of social groups and grassroots communities.

By failing to acknowledge some of the current bad broadcast practices in the country, the NBC document has implicitly registered government's inability to fully satisfy the objectives of the current *National Mass Communication Policy*, particularly in the areas of respect for the communication rights of grassroots communities; democratization of state-owned mass media for popular participation in national dialogue; equity and access of all social sectors to information technologies; and in the control of the dominance of evangelical programming in state-owned broadcasting stations for the purpose of higher commercial benefits and that derail the attainment of cultural diversity in broadcasting contents and programming.

These unacknowledged defects, among others, now justify the ongoing advocacy undertaken through the joint efforts of the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC), the Open Society for West Africa (OSIWA), the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC, African Region), the Panos Institute West Africa

(PIWA), and others for expansion in community media and citizenship journalism in the country.

In his critique of the mere formal approach to media deregulation and the policy of corporate journalism in Nigeria, Ayobami Ojebode (2006) identifies five stages in community radio advocacy in Nigeria. This include academic agitation stage, the birth of a coalition group stage (NCRC), the phase of emergence of hopes in the horizon, the stage of development of manpower for the possible take-off of community broadcasting, and the stage of denouement, whereby citizens' hopes are continually being dashed by government and its regulatory agencies.

For him, in the struggles for media democratization in Nigeria, what must not be compromised should include a community-friendly licensing regime for community radio; a clear delineation between community radio and campus radio which distinguishing line appears blurred; a clear-cut community radio policy that safeguards it from being hijacked and abused; and a representation of the Opubor Committee Report that seem to be buried and forgotten about by government, as one way of taking community radio development forward in Nigeria. For him, NBC's structural problem in moving the agenda for community broadcasting forward rests, fundamentally, on its lack of *independence* from the controlling authority of the President.

### **3.3 Summary**

While the primary 'drivers' of media policy debates across the three countries are, fundamentally, the same (with differences only in the degrees of technological developments, corporate economic activities, as well as repressive or empowering political orientations), the actual media regulatory experiences of the three countries are never homogenous. Apart from the fact that Ghana and Nigeria share a lot in common

as sister West African countries and the fact that the media policy orientations of the three countries are now progressive, the degree of activism and civil society engagements with national governments to bring about changes in favour of progressive policies has been impacted principally by their different political histories and socio-economic contexts. While the States had remained the principal legitimators and administrators of media policy for decades, with the transition to democracy across the three countries, the participatory frameworks for the legitimization of policy have relatively expanded to include civil organizations, radical movements, and disadvantaged groups.

Secondly, while media regulatory environments across the three countries relatively now favour community media practices and development, their regulatory experiences are united in the common reliance, not only on colonial and postcolonial State media policy legacies to inform policy changes in the twenty first century, but also on the adoption of transnational media policy frameworks as ‘benchmarks’ for constitutional and media policy reforms. These transnational frameworks, among others, include the various United Nations resolutions on the media; the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha, Tanzania); the 2001 African Charter on Broadcasting (Windhoek, Namibia); the 2002 Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (Banjul, the Gambia); and the 2008 World Press Freedom Day (Maputo, Mozambique). These documents, among others, urge the adoption of development communication policies that support participation, social changes, and the preservation of African cultural heritages.

Thirdly, while there are now expanded legislative frameworks for media liberalization and democratization across the three countries, it is clear that it is the media policy experiences of Ghana and South Africa that now holds out, through established constitutional and legislative means, greater hopes for the continuing broad-based participation of minority groups in media management. Nigerian broadcasting policy environment, by not enabling grassroots communities gain greater access to the technologies of public communication, is still weak in this regard. However, in the proceeding data chapters, this work strives to show how community media organizations and media activists of the three countries have continued to affect, through campaigns and activism, media policy developments in the most recent times.

## Chapter Four

### **Research Design and Methodology**

In chapter two, I have provided, at a macro level, a theoretical foundation for this study by considering the concepts and approaches of media policy and alternative journalism and how community media practices (print and broadcasting) fits into the broader theoretical discourse about alternative journalism. The concern of chapter three, in turn, was to build, at a micro level, a contextual background for connecting the theoretical conclusions of chapter two with the empirical data obtained from the 'fields'. By connecting context with established theoretical explanations, this work now has a broader framework to draw on available empirical data to address the research questions raised in chapter one and reformulated in this chapter on the basis of theoretical and field findings, indicating how community media of the three countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa function to shape media policy-making.

The core reformulated questions answered at the empirical study level therefore include: Are there significant media policy changes across the three countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades? What is the current developmental state of community media? What is the constellation of practice challenges confronting community media organizations today? What are the specific strategies they have adopted to engage with the States in media regulations? What is the level of participation of community media institutions in media policy decisions? To what degree do the participatory structures and alternative economic models available to community media institutions impact on their approaches and policy inputs? What are the successes and setbacks they have recorded? What new media policy model does their participation in deregulation processes offer to government, policy-makers, and the generality of society?

The choice and design of the instruments of investigation (the approach, the methods, and the sources of information) are aimed to provide answers to these questions and other inter-related issues; answers that could be generalized to other African and world regions. Thus, it is these questions which provided the original springboard for my 'field' investigations, that now offer directions for data presentation, analysis, and for general arguments, problematizing the causal relationship between community media and media policy changes of the most recent times, as well as the contributions this work makes into the current debates about the 'drivers' of media policy developments.

#### **4.1 The Qualitative Research Field**

The over-arching approach adopted for 'field' investigations is that of 'case study'. The data generation strategy is that of 'mixed method'. 'Case study', on the one hand, is traditionally a method of qualitative analysis. Developed first within the context of social research by the North American Chicago School, the approach has since then been differently defined by scholars. The generally acceptable understanding of 'case study' is that it is a method of intensive study of social 'cases' and 'actors', so as to identify patterns of social relations, influences, processes, and existential complex situations (Hamel et al., 1993; Ghosh & Chopra, 2003; Gray, 2004; Braun & Clark, 2006; Deacon et al., 2007; Yin, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). But within the context of this study, the qualitative case study is taken to mean an evidence-based descriptive, analytical, and interpretative process that has inductive implication.

Within the context of this definition, 'case study' as an approach is distinguishable from its 'methods' of inquiry. While case study signifies the 'process' of making decisions about every aspect of the study and about what is to be studied, the 'methods' highlight the wide range of 'techniques' for generating and analyzing data about the subjects of study (Mason, 2002; Thomas, 2011). The kind of case study model I have adopted for



this work is that of ‘multiple case study’ or ‘cross-case analysis’, whereby selected *cases* are studied as ‘parallel’ and ‘comparative’ reality and not as ‘sequential’ or ‘nested’ occurrences (Thomas, 2011). With regards to the ‘methods’ of investigation, emphasis is placed on the use of oral interviews, direct personal observation, questionnaire, documentary study, and general analytical strategy. The practical and strategic reasons for their choice are explained later in the chapter.

However, the central methodological logic that underpins the entire case study is, fundamentally, defined by its *argument-building* potential, whereby comments from activists, academics, regulatory and community media institutions are approached as the primary sources of descriptive and interpretative information. How social actors (as ‘insiders’) make meaning of their experiences and activities in relation to their community media formations also remain the issue of primary concern. This inductive logic is context and process-sensitive. Within this *theory-building approach*, my mind remains focused on my research questions and open to the themes or interpretations suggested by my data.

‘Mixed method’, on the other hand, is one of the common elements of qualitative research. The strategy is underlined by the integration of a survey or statistical instrument, such as a questionnaire, into a qualitative study (Mason, 2002). The adoption of the mixed method of qualitative orientation is informed, firstly, by the need to ‘triangulate’ empirical data so as to approach research questions from a variety of angles (Thomas, 2011; Mason, 2002). Secondly, it is motivated by the need to avoid an ‘elite bias’ in the study by talking only to high-status respondents and neglecting the valuable views of other (‘non-elite’) employees of community media establishments. Thirdly, the mixed method is significant in highlighting the fact that ‘numbers and

words are both needed if we are to understand the world' around us (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 40).

Both the qualitative methods and the survey instrument introduced into this study are used at the level of data presentation and analysis, not as separate entities, but in an *interactive* and *corroborative* way, to explore, describe and interpret the same phenomena (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Mason, 2002). The qualitative data are coded *thematically*, and the survey data *numerically* in terms of percentage scoring. The use of mixed methods will enable an expansion in the scope and breadth, not only of empirical findings and information sources, but also of research arguments in relation to how community media groups impact on media policy changes.

Thus, the use of case study approach and mixed-methods is aimed, firstly, to enable one establish a close tie with alternative media groups and coalitions within the three selected countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, so as to provide conversational opportunities for in-depth examinations of the state of community media and the impact of alternative media activism on media policy developments. Secondly, the approach is considered flexible enough to allow the transition from mere empirical details and analysis to the definition of hypothesis or arguments with regards to the objects of study. Thirdly, they provide means by which practical solutions could be proffered to address specific issues that could hinder the future contributions of alternative media organizations (albeit civil societies) to policy developments.

In pursuing these goals by way of mixed methods of case study, I am also conscious of the political requirement of the academic community in terms of the representativeness and rigorousness of the qualitative method in yielding data that could be considered as scientific for the purpose of fruitful theoretical analyses and practical suggestions.

While there are competing claims with regards to the authority of qualitative case study that seeks to create spaces for empirical findings, generally the arguments of the critics of empirical case study methodologies (e.g. the experimental analytical researchers of the Columbia University in New York and the structural analytical strategists of the French Anthropological tradition founded by Claude Lévi-Strauss) have been based primarily on three factors:

- The presumed lack of *representativeness* of a single *case* used as a vantage point for the study of social phenomena;
- The presumed lack of *rigour* that often accompany the collection, construction, and analysis of empirical data; a lack that presumably arise from the subjectivity of the researcher and the subjective bias contained in the comments of field respondents; and,
- The presumption that qualitative narratives and criticism offer very little *ethical gain* to the field of objective social science (Hamel et al., 1993).

Thus, at the heart of the criticisms (especially those of the Realist and Poststructural traditions) surrounding the use of qualitative method for any research work is the politics and ethics of evidence and the value of qualitative work in addressing matters of equity, social justice, and minority empowerment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001).

In this regard, the credibility of the adopted case study approach shall rest on its descriptive, illustrative, and critical interpretative frameworks. This position is solidly affirmed by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, when they rightly observe that ‘the province of qualitative research, accordingly, is the world of lived experience; for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture’ (2011: 2). Under this model, the authors maintain that it is the empirical materials generated from social actors and

institutions that enable illustrative and interpretative practices and constitute the very representativeness and credibility of qualitative research data.

Consolidating this argument, Maanen et al. (1993) argue that the representational value of case study methodologies is best appreciated when it is understood that the wealth of empirical materials they generate could be valuably used for sound theoretical and sociological arguments that could either consolidate aspects of already established general theories or resolve issues raised by rival hypothetical theories, through the discovery of additional units of information that improves on what is already known. In this regard, the authors maintain that qualitative researchers should be perceived as *journalists*, whose works are authoritative because the scientific nature of those works are essentially informed by the ability of researchers to explore, critique, and interpret the subject-matter of their research on the basis of their empirical investigations. Secondly, their works are credible because their chosen strategies allow them to examine, illustrate, and confront both the constraints of everyday life of social actors and connect those constraints with the very research questions they raise for the purpose of practical recommendations.

Seen in the light of these arguments, the justifications for adopting a qualitative research approach for this work may be said to rest on the following factors:

- The need to generate extensive empirical materials for the analysis of particular *cases* of media policy changes and of the ‘active’ (or passive) role of alternative media institutions within Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa in the processes of policy reforms;
- The method will help the identification and explanation of the complexities and diversities of alternative media structures and policy visions/values and how these

interrelate with the policy visions of national governments and/or mainstream media professionals;

- The method will be useful in highlighting the essential elements of reformed media policies of 1990 – 2010 that operate to strengthen (or weaken) community media practices across the three countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa;
- The method is employed because it generally draws on the benefits of applied qualitative traditions, which purposes are to expand our knowledge of the organizational processes and problems of small media institutions; indicate the possible solutions to organizational problems; and help develop findings of practical relevance for institutional stakeholders, within the context of their cultural and social differentiations (Gray, 2004);
- Finally, the employment of qualitative methods will make ‘the careful selection of the research ‘site’ the most critical decision in the analytical process of the experiences of alternative media groups and of their involvements in policy reforms.

#### **4.2 Research Design**

The design covers both the main research plans and contingency plans. The main plans were in two parts: the “pilot” phase and the “full-scale” fieldwork phase. The “pilot” phase was carried out only in Ghana and Nigeria between May 28 and April 29, 2011. The scope was limited due to financial constraint. The aim of the preliminary work was to enable me build contacts with relevant policy actors and community media institutions and to have oral interviews with those respondents who were willing to be interviewed at this stage.

Oral interviews were held at the pilot stage with Retired Professor Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh of the University of Accra (East-Legon), Vincentia Akwetey and Ramatu Dadzie of NAFTI, Kofi Lahweh and Isaac Djangbletey of Radio Ada, and Fara Awindor

of GAFTA. Others were Bright Blewu of GJA, Albert Lutterodt of GBC, Mudashiru Atoyebi of NPC, and Patricia Bala of NFVCB.

The first phase was also valuable in enabling me to further delimit my research focus, in terms of restructuring the research questions and ‘indexing’ the final themes meant to guide the organization of data and arguments. The original ‘research questions’ and ‘index’ of themes were developed prior to the pilot study, but were revised after the pilot study on the basis of available empirical data.

It was not possible to pretest the questionnaire at the pilot stage. In fact, the decision to integrate a questionnaire into the research process was made after the pilot study. Findings at the preliminary stage tended to be coloured by ‘elite-bias’, in terms of praise singing and defensive posture towards institutional policy and processes. The valuable comments of employees of community media establishments who were not at the top management cadre were not reflected in the pilot findings. In order to eliminate this bias and capture broader viewpoints, it became necessary to introduce a questionnaire at the full-scale stage of study.

Ideally, the questionnaire should have been pretested in the field. But because the questionnaire was designed after the pilot stage, it became necessary to pretest it with a group of students outside the fields. Kenneth Bailey (1982) admits that, though it would be ideal to pretest at the pilot stage, there is no rigid rule about this. The sample for pretest could be drawn from some “captive audience”, such as office staff, coworkers, family, or fellow students. And where there is absolutely no choice, it is also not rigidly necessary that the pretest respondents share the exact characteristics of the respondents in the final study (pp. 148-50).

The “full-scale” phase was undertaken, between February 18 and April 19, 2012, in South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria. This phase was designed to build on the achievements of the preliminary stage in terms of expansion in the horizons of those interviewed. A revisit was also made to Kofi Lahweh of Radio Ada who had provided valuable information at the pilot stage of study. The revisit was necessary to clarify some areas of ambiguity in the previous comments made by him. The second phase was valuable because it provided depth to social contacts and broadened one’s information-base.

Contingency plans were meant to take care of unforeseen problems, such as the difficulty of gaining access to any of the originally selected institutions or social actors. In this regard, a list of alternative institutions were made prior to my departures for field investigations, which was further revised based on insights gained from the ‘fields’. For example in Nigeria, because of the difficulty of being able to have access to the editor-in-chief of Atlanta Express, a community-oriented newspaper (Bayelsa State, South South) whose name was on the original list of respondents, an option was made for the editor-in-chief of Insight Communication Service (Akwa Ibom), also located within the South Southern geopolitical region of the country. In a similar way, the inclusion of the Voice of Cape (100.4FM Stereo) and the Christian Community Radio (CCFM) in the contingency plan for South Africa was informed by insights gained from the ‘field’.

#### **4.2.1 The Selection of Cases and Research Challenges**

The main social units of study and analysis are South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana. The sub-ordinate units of study and analyses within these different national contexts are alternative media groups, academics, media foundations, media coalitions, as well as media regulatory institutions. The selection of the sub-ordinate *cases* as well as the ‘key’ interviewees was made to fit with the objective of this study and to take notice of

their geographic dispersions within national regions. Efforts were, therefore, made to pick respondents from those regions where community media institutions are present and where the head offices of media regulatory institutions and media coalitions/foundations are located.

The choice of respondents was informed primarily by the multimedia orientation of this work and not by any political or socio-cultural expediency. Secondly, the selection of small media institutions was aimed to provide the vantage points for comparing the experiences of community media groups within and across national contexts. Thirdly, the inclusion of media regulators in particular was deemed necessary to enable one to have unified institutional responses to the comments raised by community-based journalists and coalition groups, so as to clarify some policy concerns and have a balanced approach to policy-related issues. The strategy for the alteration of *cases* whereby some *cases* were dropped in favour of others was informed by the willingness of respondents originally chosen to cooperate with the research process by providing non-confidential information; as well as by the limits of financial resources available to one for the purpose of the research.

But generally the careful choice of *samples* was underlined by the *theoretical representative sampling* model that supports qualitative content analysis and not by *statistical representative sampling* model applicable mostly in experimental research fields (Hamel et al., 1993). The significance of the *theoretical analytical strategy* is that it is grounded in the classification of *cases* in terms of qualifications and characteristics (or sociological representation) and not in terms of *random quality* (or extensive quantitative representation). Secondly, the value of *analytical generality* as opposed to *statistical generality*, as Yin (2009) and Ghosh & Chopra (2003) note, rests on the commitment of the researcher to establish correlation among *cases* on the basis of



comparison meant to draw out similarities and differences, so as to establish general theoretical principles that could be replicated and applied to other societies. While *randomization* seeks to control and represent an infinite number of collective *case* units chosen to yield a specific statistical model and validate an already established scientific theory, the *theoretical non-random* process adopted for this work is aimed to enable selected *samples* provide *illustrative* vantage points for understanding, describing, and interpreting collective *case* units within and across the chosen national contexts; as well as for understanding the subject-matters of the research (Deacon et al., 2007).

While a total of thirty-eight media-related institutions and individuals were selected and contacted for investigation, fifteen were drawn from South Africa; fourteen from Ghana; and nine from Nigeria. Though one recognizes the fact that selected “sampling frames” may not capture the “totality” of the feelings and views of each research populations, the complex sampling selection, stratification, and alteration were deemed necessary to capture the varied complex contexts (form, size, level, location, and platforms) within which alternative and small media institutions work in each selected country and to indicate how their production initiatives, ideological positions, and level of social interactions have significant implications for their media policy formation relations.

#### **4.2.1.1 South Africa**

Out of the nine provinces that make up South Africa, the fieldwork was conducted in three provinces, namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Western Cape provinces. These three provinces were selected, firstly, because of the high concentration of both commercial mainstream and alternative media institutions within them. Secondly, Gauteng province, known to accommodate such cities and towns as Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Soweto plays a pivotal role as the political administrative seat of South

Africa. Mpumalanga province, because of the high concentration of English, Afrikaans, as well as black business establishments in it, has continued to serve as one of the major seats of entrepreneurship and industrialization in South Africa. Western Cape, in turn, has over the years remained the seat, not only of prominent media establishments, but also of legislative debates, rulings, and administration in South Africa. All three provinces have, in one way or another, over the past years generated tremendous resources (legislative, human, technological, and financial) to strengthen media democratization, policy formations, and the practice of alternative journalism in South Africa. Though there is a very wide range of community media institutions and media regulators operating from within the three provinces, only a few were selected in the course of my “full-scale” investigation, to represent three media sectors (the press, the broadcasting, and the screen). Respondents were chosen for interviews from the following alternative media institutions:

- CTP–Caxton’s Johannesburg North Community Newspapers (Gauteng Province);
- The Voice of Wits (90.5FM) and Wits Radio Academy of the University of Witwatersrand (Gauteng Province);
- The Mail and Guardian Newspaper (Gauteng Province);
- Jozi (105.8) FM, a community radio station in Soweto (Gauteng Province);
- The Lowveld/Leaveld Media, originally an Afrikaans newspaper organization that currently belongs under the CTP – Caxton Group (Mpumalanga Province).
- Bush Radio (89.5FM), a geographic community radio (Western Cape Province);
- Cape Town Community Television (CTCTV), the only surviving *genuine* community television (Western Cape Province );

- The Voice of Cape (100.4FM Stereo), an Islamic-interest-based community radio station (Western Cape Province); and,
- The Christian Community Radio (CCFM) Station (Western Cape Province).

The choices were premised, not only on the pioneering role some of these stations played in citizenship activism of the 80's and early-90's, but also on their continuing importance, in the twenty-first century, as centres of public debates, education, campaigns, and activism for the purpose of reforms. The inclusion of Mail and Guardian, an institution that is not strictly a community media institution or a mainstream establishment was informed by its closer affinity with alternative media establishments in terms of politics and practice orientations.

I was also privileged to hold a brief telephone conversation with Martin Botha, a media activist and film critic; as well as a brief face-to-face (to be followed by a telephone) conversation with Professor Franz Krüger, the Director of Journalism and Media Studies of the University of Witwatersrand.

Respondents drawn from among media regulators and industry organizations in South Africa included:

- The South African Screen Federation (SASFED) - a federation of independent audio-visual practitioners and institutions;
- The National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), one of the three institutions that support the development of the film industry;
- The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), the principal regulator of broadcasting, telecommunications, and postal services;
- The Film and Publication Board (FPB), the main regulator of the print and audio-visual sector;

- The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), the body mandated to oversee the development of the small broadcasting, print and New Media sectors; and,
- The National Community Radio Fund (NCRF), the umbrella body for community radio practitioners and institutions.

Apart from the FPB whose head office is located in Cape Town, the headquarters of others are located within the *Gauteng* province. However, entry into these regulatory and development institutions for interviews (except SASFED and NFVF) was generally frustrating due to administrative bottlenecks or the unwillingness of their officers earlier contacted to cooperate in the research process, caused perhaps by the culture of ‘spiral of silence’ (Noelle-Neumann, 1974/93) that is increasingly creeping into public institutions in South Africa or by my inability to conduct a “pilot” fieldwork in South Africa to enable me to build wider social contacts. Most respondents equally admit of having difficulties in gaining access into the offices of media regulators (especially ICASA) due to the ‘closed-door’ administrative initiatives they have recently adopted. In spite of the entry-related frustration, generally a reasonable level of success was recorded in my field investigation in South Africa.

#### 4.2.1.2 Ghana

Ghana is made up of ten regions: Volta, Ashanti, Eastern, Central, Western, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Brong-Ahafo, and Greater Accra Regions. Out of the ten regions, the ‘sites’ of field research were selected from the Central, Western, Volta, and Great Accra regions. Respondents were selected from the following alternative media institutions:

- Coastal Television, the only community television in Ghana located in the Cape Coast (Central region);
- Radio Peace (88.9MHz-FM), a decentered community radio station located in Winneba (Central region);
- Radio Ada (93.3FM), a development-oriented community radio station located in Big Ada (Great Accra/Volta region);
- Universe Radio (105.7FM), a pioneer educational radio station that belongs to the University of Ghana, East Legon–Accra (Great Accra region);
- Film Africa and TV Africa Limited, a culturally-oriented independent free-on-air audio-visual company owned by Kwaw Ansah (Great Accra region);
- Ghana Palaver, a locally-based newspaper with national outreach published by *Revalap Publishers and Suppliers Limited* (New Weija, Western region);
- Enquirer Newspaper, a locally-based political publication of Focal Media Limited that has a national outreach (Tesano, Great Accra region);

I also had opportunities of speaking directly with some media activists and academics:

- Mr. Alex Quarmyne of Radio Ada and Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN);
- Mrs. Vincentia Akwetey, the Dean of Studies of the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI);
- Miss. Ramatu M. Dadzie, the Head of Designs Department of NAFTI;
- Albert T. Lutterodt, Head of Audience Research of Ghana Broadcast Corporation (GBC) who provided one with a few documents only;
- Retired Professor Kwame Karikari of the Media Foundation of West Africa, an advocacy private company (Great Accra region);

- David Kwesi Gharthey-Tagoe of Radio Peace and a one-time Director General of GTV (Central region); and
- Retired Professor Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh of the Communications Department of the University of Accra, East Legon (Great Accra region).

I also had face-to-face conversations with representatives of regulatory institutions and industry organizations:

- Edmund Yirenskyi Fianko, the Manager of the Engineering Section of the National Communications Authority (NCA) and the Secretary of the Digital Broadcasting Migration Committee (DBMC);
- Ms. Paula Sanziri, the Administration Officer of the National Media Commission (NMC), the legally mandated regulator of media contents in Ghana;
- Mrs. Wilna Quarmyne, the Coordinator of Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN);
- Fara Jim Awindor of the Ghana Academy of Film and Television Arts (GAFTA), the purported organizer of the film and television sectors; and
- Bright Blewu, the Executive Secretary of Ghana Journalist Association and the Director of the Ghana Press Center.

Unlike South Africa, there wasn't much difficulty connecting with respondents from media regulatory institutions in Ghana; except for lack of sufficient time to speak with them due to their other commitments.

#### 4.2.1.3 Nigeria

Nigeria is made up of six geopolitical zones with the exception of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT): North central; North Eastern; North Western; South Southern;

South Western; and South Eastern. Out of these geopolitical zones, respondents were selected from Abuja; South Western; and South Southern zones. These three zones are known for high concentration of media and political institutions. Abuja (FCT) currently remains, not only the administrative and political seat of government, but also the principal operational center for a host of media establishments and regulators in Nigeria. The traditionally Yoruba language-speaking South Western zone has also been known as the hub of media-related activism in the country. The oil-rich South Southern zone, in turn, has for the past few decades become the center of intensive social movements and oil revenue-related militancy for the purpose of grassroots developments (cf. Osaghae, 2010). I could not visit media and regulatory institutions within Northern geopolitical zones due to the high level of insecurity brought about by the violent and terrorist activities of Boko Haram, an Islamic fundamentalist group.

Respondents in Nigeria were therefore drawn from the following alternative media institutions:

- Media Trust Limited, an English and Hausa-language publisher of four alternative titles with local as well as national circulation outreach (Abuja, FCT);
- The Social Communications Department of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja, the publisher of the faith-based Good Shepherd Newspaper and the producer of various audio and audio-visual materials for circulations through friendly mainstream radio and television stations (Abuja, FCT);
- Unilag (103.1) FM, an educational radio station of the University of Lagos (South Western zone).

- Insight Service and Communication Network, a locally-based publisher of three community newspapers (South Southern zone).

One was also able to have a face-to-face conversation with a few academics and media activists:

- Professor Andrew Moemeka of the Covenant University, Ogun State (South Western zone); and
- Rev. Fr. Dr. George Ehusani, the former Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (Abuja, FCT).

There were also opportunities to hold face-to-face conversations with representatives of media regulators and industry organizations:

- Mr. Mudashiru Bayo Atoyebi, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Press Council (NPC), the regulator of the press industry in collaboration with the Nigerian Press Organization;
- Mark A. Ojiah, the Executive Secretary of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the principal regulator of broadcasting frequency;
- Mr. Tom Chatta, the Director of Broadcast Policy & Research of NBC;
- Armstrong Idachaba, the Senior Assistant of the Director General of NBC;
- Obiora Chukwumba, Senior Assistant to the Director General of the National Film and Video Censor Board (NFVCB), the legislated regulator of the audio-visual content.
- Patricia Paulina Bala, the Director of Film Verification of NFVCB;
- L. Nnamdi Njenanze, the Director of Research & Documentation of NPC;
- Onwurah Ifyeanyi, the Chairman of the Actors Guild of Nigeria (Abuja Branch), the regional coordinating body for Nigerian local actors and filmmakers; and



- Mr. Akin Akingbulu, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Community Radio Coalition (NCRC), the central coordinating body for community broadcasting in the country.

Just like Ghana, there was little difficulty in connecting with respondents from the regulatory and industry organizations in Nigeria. However, the effectiveness of the case study process in generating the needed information did not depend only on the choice of microsocial units and respondents, but also on how one was able to draw on the benefits of well tested and established qualitative research strategies and priorities.

#### **4.2.2 Methodological Strategies**

The methodological strategies adopted for research included oral interviews, questionnaire, direct participant observations, and documentary study and analysis. The adoption of multiple sources of evidence was intended to provide multiple measures of the same research objectives/questions (Gray, 2004).

##### **4.2.2.1 Oral Interviews**

The oral interviews are semi-structured conversations aimed to address a set of issues, guided only by a pre-prepared list of questions (Gray, 2004). The justifications for the adoption of this strategy, among others, rests on its potency to enable me connect personally with respondents so as to directly appraise their perceptions, opinions, feelings, and attitudes in relation to the research variables; to allow respondents express themselves freely and in details; to allow for probing of views to elicit new responses and expand answers; to offer extensive data for analyzing my research questions; and to enable an effective management of the conversation to meet the research objectives. Thus, the semi-structured interviews did not require any written responses; except where interviewees needed to provide additional information through emails after my

departures from the research 'fields'. The pre-set 'open-ended' questions meant to guide the process were forwarded to respondents before the interview dates to enable them prepare for interviews. Only a few were delivered on the spot due to quick alterations of some *cases* or as a result of respondents' delays in accessing their emails prior to the agreed interview dates.

The pre-prepared questions were generally designed to address eleven important themes, most of which are related to the already established research questions: background information on interviewees and on the institutions they represent; the current state of community media; the situation of community media before 1990; and the nature of horizontal relationship between community media and civil society organizations (and NGOs) or of vertical relationship among community media organizations, government and mainstream media establishments and how these impact on activism for policy reforms. Others are the key policy issues that community media journalists hold against governments and/or mainstream establishments; the current rules that shape and control media practice in general; the implications of the current rules to small media practices and locally-oriented cultural productions; the platforms of participation of community media groups in media policy debates and decisions on regional and national levels; the central coordinating structures for community media initiatives; the existing internal democratic frameworks for management and editorial policy decisions of small media institutions; and the potential for external and bureaucratic influences on community contents productions. There was also room for free personal comments by interviewees (See a copy in Appendix B).

In the framing of the *aide-mémoire* questions and in the conducting of the interviews, consideration was also given to safety and ethical issues. For example, efforts were made through a letter from the School of Arts and Creative Industries to obtain the

consent of interviewees in providing non-confidential information prior to the interviews (See Appendix A for sample). Interviewees were also assured that the results of the interviews would be used purely for the purpose of academic research and that no harm would come to their persons as a result of the interviews. To ensure that their confidentiality would be respected and harm avoided, it was explained to them at the beginning of each interview that they could refuse answer to any questions they were not comfortable with. Interviewees were also given opportunities to indicate if they would want their names to be mentioned when research findings would be summarized and analyzed.

Occasionally prior to interviews, the pre-set questions were slightly modified or their number further reduced to meet the time-related needs of specific interviewees. Sometimes the questioning order was varied to fit the flows and directions of some interviews. As new issues emerged, especially in relation to media regulations, additional questions were also introduced to address those issues. The need for respondents to further expand on their previous answers either through telephone or email exchanges was also allowed.

Essentially vital to the interview process was the use of journals, a camera, and an audio recorder to help in the gathering and preservation of data. Before using the electronic devices, one always sought the permission of respondents or their agents. This was in addition to a personal commitment to prepare for each interview the night before the agreed date.

While some of the interviews ran nearly into two hours, a few others took only one hour to complete. Only the interviews with Patrick Alumuku, Andrew Moemeka, George Ehusani, Martin Botha, and Franz Kruger lasted less than forty minutes. Throughout the

course of oral interviews, my role was to encourage the interviewees to tell their own story guided mostly by the pre-set questions and without much interruptions. Interruptions were made only where one needed to ask a few additional questions in order to clarify areas of ambiguity in relation to issues raised; where there was need to return to an aspect that had not been sufficiently addressed; or where one needed to manage the flow and the time of discussion to ensure success. But generally the maintenance of neutrality with regards to respondents' perception and expression of issues was sustained.

Nonetheless, the full transcriptions of interviews after one's return from the 'fields' were found to be cumbersome and time-consuming. Yet, between end of May and early September 2012, all recorded oral interviews were successfully transcribed from audio into paper form to enable a careful selection of data to address research questions from the enormous respondents' comments recorded.

#### **4.2.2.2 Questionnaire**

In addition to oral interviews, a questionnaire was designed to elicit written answers from a wide spectrum of community media practitioners. The primary aim was to enable me capture the views of employees of community media institutions that could not be orally interviewed, due to the relationship between the sheer strength of their number and the limited time I had available to complete my field investigations. The questionnaire was not administered to representatives of media regulators, coalition groups, and to media activists because the design of the questions was not targeted at them. Also the questionnaire was never used during the "pilot" fieldwork; it was applied only during the "full-scale" phase of the research.

The questionnaire comprised a set of 17 questions (some 'open-ended'; others 'closed' questions), all aimed to address specific issues in relation to my research objectives. In framing the questions, I began with issues that were general in outlook and then gradually narrowed down to questions that target specific dimensions of the research questions.

While the requirement for responding to "open-ended" questions was for respondents to write in personal views/comments, the coding frame for answering "closed" questions was that respondents tick "Yes" or "No" or "Don't Know/Not Sure" as they deem appropriate. Thus, the response process was intended to reflect both qualitative and quantitative results.

There were also the introductory and personal data sections. The introductory section simply indicated the area and purpose of research; as well as the time frame (10 minutes) it would take to complete it. The personal data section was meant to elicit personal details from respondents purely for the purpose of data comparison (e.g. gender or age). Respondents were also required to indicate if they would like their names to be mentioned in the final collation of results. The entire design was limited to five pages to encourage high and quicker response rate (See sample in Appendix B).

The final draft of the questionnaire was carefully examined by my Supervisors and was pre-tested among some students of the University of Dundee to enable me appraise the clarity and relevance of the questions formulated. Among aspects of the questionnaire pretested were question wording, inadequacy in relation to research questions, confusing response categories, and question order. Their observations were incorporated into the final copies applied within the 'fields'. Generally, the questionnaire was administered in the 'fields' either shortly before or after oral interviews with key

institutional respondents. Except for Radio Ada (Ghana) which responses were expected to be sent by post, all others had their responses submitted on the spot.

Out of the 100 copies originally produced, 54 were administered in South Africa; 14 in Ghana; and only 15 in Nigeria. Two and four copies were never returned from Nigeria and South Africa, respectively. The 16 additional copies given to respondents in Radio Ada (Ghana) were also never returned through postal services as agreed upon and paid for. Out of the 84 responses collected from the three countries, only 83 contained useful information. One was discarded as misleading; that is because the answers provided to ‘open’ questions were generally half-written and those to ‘closed’ questions had multiple and unclear marks beside them.

The information sought through the use of questionnaire included: evidence of substantial changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and cinema) with positive or negative impacts on the citizens; degree and platforms of general participation of community media groups in policy changes; degree, nature and platforms of participation of individual respondents in institutional internal policy reforms; personal assessments of the effectiveness of community media for cultural, educational, and democratic developments; as well as indices of the years that could be considered as the most significant in alternative media practices and in media policy changes in respondent’s country.

Because of how ‘open-ended’ questions could lead to unexpected answers and of the difficulty of categorizing responses to such questions, a “coding frame” or brief thematic outline that is relevant to my research theme was designed to enable me categorize and analyze respondents’ answers to ‘open-ended’ questions (Gray, 2004; see Appendix B for sample). The calculation and scoring of results were done by a

simple percentage value (Number of similar responses to a particular question multiplied by 100 and divided by the total responses from the country in question).

In spite of the known drawbacks associated with the use of questionnaire in policy research, such as low response rate, selective literacy target, flippant and sometimes misleading answers, and the lack of opportunity for researchers to clear up on the spot ambiguous or ill-conceived answers, I was still convinced that its use, within the context of a qualitative research would, among others, allow me to have additional empirical materials to complement the ones obtained through oral interviews; thus enabling me to have diversity of views on the subjects of investigation and overcome any possible elite-bias (Gray, 2004).

However, not all information obtained through the questionnaire has been used in the analysis of findings; only selective use of results has been made. Written responses not used have been preserved for possible future needs.

#### **4.2.2.3 Direct Observation**

Direct participant observation, as non-verbal interactive strategy, was adopted to enable me look closely and purposefully at the behaviours, mannerisms, and demeanour of respondents, as well as evaluate the technical and production processes of small media institutions in the course of oral interviews. Also observed were respondents' changing social settings and interaction contexts (e.g. interview place, time and physical appearance).

The logic behind directly and personally observed behavior and technical events is that they could also yield valuable empirical and objective information for thick description and analysis; for example, information on the state of production facilities, the nature of relationship between management and other staff members or any attempts to deceive or

conceal vital information. In particular, diary notes, photographic evidences, and guided tours of some community media production centers provided significant additional empirical data.

The managements of community media institutions that could not offer privileges for guided tour, such as the Mail & Guardian newspaper, the CTP-Caxton Johannesburg North Newspapers, and Media Trust Limited, gave explanations for their refusals. Also having a photographic impression, for example, of the transmission and production studios of Coastal Television station in Ghana was not possible as this station was closed at the time of my visit on the instruction of the local tax revenue authority.

Apart from the known weaknesses associated with personal observation procedures, such as the possible effect of subjective emotional prejudices and the difficulty of interpretation of observed details (Gray, 2004), the value of this strategy rests ultimately on the richness of evidence it can provide for careful description and analysis of respondents' actions in relation to the research questions.

#### **4.2.2.4 Documentary Analysis**

Different sets of documents were obtained and evaluated in the course of my 'field' investigations. These included national constitutions; legislative rulings; professional Codes; institutional practice guidelines; institutional brochures; copies of published newspapers from community media institutions in Nigeria and South Africa; memoranda; communiqués emerging from conferences and workshops; text books; and internet-based documents (See Appendix C for a full list of documents).

Documentary study was particularly necessary to enable me highlight significant elements in policy and legislative developments and to make up for any lack in information obtained in the course of oral and written interviews. Documentary



evidences also became necessary where it was not possible to have direct observations of the production centers of some community media establishments. In this regard, official documents and news materials could offer knowledge that supports findings from interviews and participant observations. The overall aim was to take notice of internally or externally generated policy positions or the kind of social philosophy that shape and inform policy instructions.

However, because documentary materials obtained are of different intellectual treatments and emerge from different social institutional contexts, these could pose some approach-related problems for their in-depth analyses. Yet as Hamel et al. (1993) suggest, this inherent difficulty could be surmounted if each set of documents are approached and analyzed in an appropriate form from the ‘epistemological’ (content-based knowledge), ‘sociological’ (deconstructed to demonstrate social realities and correspond to research objectives), and ‘linguistic’ (illustrate its language problem in relation to its social context) points of view (p. 45-46). In this regard, the process for the analyses of documents will require, not a semantic approach, but a philosophical, linguistic, and sociological strategies; with the aim of also indicating whether the core elements of the documents are ‘univocal’ or ‘multivocal’; as well as ‘clear’ or ‘unclear’ for easy understanding.

#### **4.2.3 Analytical Strategies**

Drawing insight from Gray (2004), Braun & Clark (2006) and Yin (2009), the strategy adopted for data analysis and interpretation is the *General Analytical Strategy*. The benefits of this strategy include the way it enables the spelling out of conceptual *priorities* in response to available empirical data and in line with one’s research objectives; and the way it enables the identification, grouping, comparison, and

interpretation of data within and across national contexts, by way of inductive interpretative method (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Yin (2009) for example, identifies *five* specific techniques of *General Analytic Strategy* of case studies: Pattern Matching; Explanation Building; Time-series Analysis; Logic Models; and Cross-case Synthesis (pp. 126, 136-60). Though each of these techniques has its own core identifying elements, for the purpose of this research I adopt the Explanation building and the Cross-case synthesis techniques.

The *Explanation building* logic, on the one hand, is a narrative and an interpretation process aimed to bring clarity to an existing issue, by revealing its underlying dimensions, complexity, and tensions, as well as the causal relations between facts about the issue. As a less structured form of pattern matching, explanation building is not a haphazard process. Its validity rests in the way it brings understanding to the perplexity expressed through already formulated research questions. Where the data fails to address any of the questions, either a rival explanation is sustained or the question is amended on the basis of a new investigation. The overall objective of the process is to build general conclusions (or hypotheses) about the study which could be used in making recommendations for future policy actions. The process begins with an initial statement that reflects the core issues raised in each research question; it proceeds to compare the findings drawn from multiple case studies against the question, with the aim of generating a general principle.

The logic of *Cross-case synthesis*, on the other hand, applies mostly to the analysis and interpretation of multiple *cases*, to provide for a more robust findings and conclusion. As noted by Yin (2009), while the technique treats each individual *case* as a separate focus of study, the *cross-case synthesis* enables one aggregate findings across several

individual *cases*; incorporate (where necessary) quantitative data; and draw valid cross-case conclusions, using conceptual tables created from empirical data (p. 156-60).

The rationale for the adoption of the two analytical strategies in this work, therefore, rests firstly in the way they will enable the comparative arrangements of empirical materials, drawn from multiple case studies across the three countries, and in a way that provides logical answers to my research questions. Comparative analysis can sensitize us to variation and similarity and this can contribute powerfully to the refinement of arguments (Hallin & Mancini, 2010). Secondly, the justification rests on their capability to assist me in treating evidence fairly and in producing compelling analytic conclusions (Yin, 2009). Thirdly, their use will enable me to avoid the possible fragmentation and decontextualization of data and to keep a logical unity among various data items. Thus, under the frameworks of explanation building and cross-case analysis, empirical data are read literally and interpretatively (Mason, 2006).

## Chapter Five

### **The State of Community Media in Anglophone Sub-Sahara**

Although this investigation is primarily about the activist role of community media and media foundations in media policy developments, this chapter focuses more specifically on findings about the developmental state and the political economy of community press and broadcast media. While the developmental state is concerned with issues of the size, types, contents, and the place of community media amidst the diversity of media services present in each selected country of Sub-Saharan Africa, the political economy focuses specifically on the pressures that shape community media, such as organizational and management structures, production philosophies and values, funding arrangements, and audience participation mechanisms. Findings on the political economy, in particular, will enable one establish in this chapter whose interests are served by community media institutions, as well as ascertain later in chapters six to eight how the specificities of political economy impact on the expression of policy concerns and campaign initiatives of community media institutions across the three countries.

The materials in this chapter are, therefore, arranged under four different sub-headings to address issues in relation to those two broad subject areas: media types and diversity, organization and management structures, funding arrangements, and audience participation. Understanding these issues at the empirical data stage is necessary to set the framework for articulating the interventionist role of small media institutions in media policy reforms across Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa.

## 5.1 Media Types and Diversity

Empirical data reveals that community media are becoming a noticeable part of the media landscape in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. Most respondents from across Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana admit that, because of the media deregulations of the early-1990s and beyond, a good number of Sub-Saharan African countries currently experience an unprecedented and complex scenario in the growth of community newspapers and broadcasting media; as well as in the culture of participatory media management and organization. The complex nature of the small media landscape takes cognizance of differences in forms, contents, aesthetics, professionalism, political, and business perspectives.

### 5.1.1 The Community Press

Information published by OMD Media Direction of South Africa in 2013 shows that, by March 2010, there were 470 community newspapers and magazines in South Africa. By October 2012 that figure had changed to 480. Also, the Print Media South Africa (PMSA), the organizer of the general press industry, indicates that by 2010 there were about 350 community press associations that make up the membership of the Association of Independent Publishers (AIP), the specific industry organization for the community press sector ([www.printmedia.org.za](http://www.printmedia.org.za)).

Based on respondents' oral comments, it is clear that existing and circulating alongside diversity of community publications are a multiplicity of *specialist* papers and magazines with diversity of interests (education, computerization, fashion, music, environment, etc.). A good number of them now target both "Black" and "White" working class readership. While a few are sold at flexible prices, the majority are delivered, just like community newspapers, on a "knock-and-drop" basis or given out free-of-charge at Shopping Malls. And, with the rise in internet services, their audiences

are stretched to include a broad spectrum of social media users and readership. These radical papers (community & specialist) are published in English or Afrikaans or in other local languages. But generally the growth in contemporary alternative press in South Africa is against the backdrop of an already stagnant mainstream press now dominated by the four 'Majors': CTP-Caxton Group; Media24 (formerly 'Naspers'); Independent Newspaper Group (affiliate of 'Argus Media'); and Avusa Media (affiliate of 'Times Media Limited').

Nicholas Dawes, the Editor-in-Chief of the Mail & Guardian newspaper (Gauteng), in a face-to-face conversation, admits that there is "a funny dichotomy in the community press sector". The situation could be best described as the co-existence of a mammoth of commercial texts and a thin layer of "the people's newspapers". Dawes observes that there are those community newspapers that operate in the spaces outside those of corporate media institutions "to cover issues that are most urgent for the communities – issues bordering on corruption, municipalities, service deliveries, as well as whether local employers are fair to their staff or not". He admits that this set of newspapers are independently owned and managed by individuals or local communities (including NGOs and religious groups) with orientations towards authentic community participation and development. These "genuine" community papers (e.g. The Edge, published for communities in the Lakes area of Garden Route) may be found from time to time within the suburbs or townships. Generally, they function to serve the interests of the township communities. Their contents and management structures are influenced largely by socialist or radical democratic ideologies.

Co-existing with these 'authentic' community papers are those that are mostly owned and managed by big multimedia establishments. For example, there are the fleets of titles published by Media24 Holdings (Pty) Limited, an Afrikaans-oriented multimedia

conglomerate with over 55 subsidiaries. The company has about forty-three community newspapers spread across different regions of South Africa, particularly the Cape regions, Boland, and KwaZulu-Natal, to mention just a few. Limpopo Media Corporation, a leading black publication company, also engages in widespread provincial publications in the Limpopo area. It is one of the biggest black-owned community publication companies in the country. One of its papers, *The Speaker*, currently provides an alternative voice to other publications in the Limpopo province. There are also those sets of community newspapers run by the foreign-sponsored Independent Newspaper Group. One of its community papers, *The Independent on Saturday*, caters for the KwaZulu-Natal market ([www.medioclubsouthafrica.com](http://www.medioclubsouthafrica.com)).

My personal visits to two branch offices of CTP-Caxton Group (Johannesburg North community newspapers in Rosebank and the Lowveld/Leaveld Media in Nelspruit) reveal a similar picture. CTP-Caxton is a commercial multimedia outfit. The company has several community newspaper titles rolled out weekly across most provinces of South Africa, except the Cape regions. Its Johannesburg North branch, at the time of my visit, owns nine community newspapers and one community magazine (*Get It Johannesburg North*); while the branch office in Nelspruit (a town of Mpumalanga province) rolls out over seven community newspapers and one community magazine; not to mention the number of titles spread across other provinces.

Kenneth Muzuli, the Editor-in-Chief of the Johannesburg North branch notes “in other provinces where we don’t operate in, you will find one or two of the other big companies operating there. They are all into the community newspaper business. And in the areas that we operate in, you will find a town that has its own publication and also some small business men trying to publish for their communities”. He maintains that, in comparison, the corporately-affiliated sector is far larger both in terms of titles and

outreach. Additionally, the corporately-affiliated community press, though provides spaces for local content productions, generally function to serve commercial and corporate interests. Their contents and management structures are, therefore, largely influenced by capitalist ideology and by proprietorships.

In this regard, Dawes of the Mail & Guardian cautions that “one has to be careful to separate out those newspapers that are hyper-local and those that are not opposed to things that are of the economically rich in the communities. The latter are the ones we call “knock-and-drop”. He went on to explain that the strange reality on the ground does not mean that the “knock-and-drop” papers do not focus on local reporting. Their style of reporting is, however, quite different from those papers “which economic roots enable them to sit with the communities”.

Dawes further admits that among the ‘genuine’ community papers, there are also those being used by the ANC-government to advance their political agendas. For him, the picture of South African alternative press is very strange and complex. The complexity is such that South Africa now has a much more open mainstream press operating and competing alongside diversity of community newspaper titles with different business orientations. Another side of the complexity is that there are a number of the activist groups that use newsdesk to produce information and circulate through the internet and other social media formats. As part of his free comments, Dawes admits “by and large the synergy and the landscape is not a fantastic one”.

David Wigston, observing a similar industrial ‘split’ as far back as 2001, attributes the affiliation between corporate media and the people’s media in the 80s to the attempt to avoid how popular resistance was ignored by the conventional mainstream sector. He explains that the synergy was for “the progressive-alternative press” to gain new fronts



for *left-wing* activism for the redefinition of citizenship. Additionally, he argues that the hybridized “left-commercial alternative press” did function particularly in the 80s to complement the strong critical editorial focus of “the independent social-democratic alternative press” (exemplified by the Mail & Guardian newspaper) on the promotion of democratic ideals and aspirations of local communities. Wigston, however, cautiously maintains that collectively the news contents of the hybridized “left-commercial alternative press” still differs markedly from that of the conventional mainstream press.

Compared with South Africa, the experience of community newspaper publications and circulations in Nigeria also admits of diversity and complexities in terms of newspaper types, size, and business priorities. The complexity is not so much about the dichotomy between ‘authentic’ community newspapers that educate citizens and represent the voice of the voiceless and ‘corporately-affiliated’ community newspapers whose primary goal is tied with commercialism. Rather it is about the difference between community newspapers with ‘ethnic’ political orientations and community newspapers that genuinely serve grassroots information, education, and entertainment needs.

Most of what are considered today as ‘community press’ in Nigeria are criticized by a few respondents as either being genuinely community-specific in contents or as being mere agents of ethnic advocacy and mouthpieces of powerful politicians. Both newspaper orientations in Nigeria are, however, shaped in varying degrees by concern for commercial gains for the purpose of survival. Respondents’ testimonies further show that the “knock-and-drop” experience of community newspaper, which is extensive in South Africa, is lacking in Nigeria. Most community newspapers and journals, except for a few *specialist* publications that circulate in the big cities, are sold to interested readers. Based on participant observation, it is clear that the big industrial production capacity evident in some community press institutions in South Africa is not

a general experience for Nigeria. Respondents' oral comments further indicate that voluntarism within the press sector of the two countries is now an exception, rather than a rule.

Mudashiru Bayo Atoyebi, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Press Council (Abuja), notes that, based on the newspaper documentation available to his agency in 2011, there are many alternative newspapers and magazines in Nigeria. He observes, however, that community-based publications in the country generally fall short of the conceptual *proviso* of UNESCO whereby community newspapers and magazines are defined in terms of grassroots-based publications that serve the information, educational, cultural, and entertainment interests of local communities. For him, what exist as community newspapers are publications undertaken by private individuals or institutions to serve their political and/or faith-based need, as well as to satisfy commercial interests. He cites the Atlantic Express (published in Bayelsa State) and the Third Tier (published by a private person from the Northern region) as examples. Atoyebi is emphatic that the value of contemporary community newspapers and journals, as far as the Nigerian experience is concerned, is tied with ethnic politics and commercial-based interests. In this regard, their contents are largely impacted by divisive political and capitalist ideologies.

Some of the views of Atoyebi, however, are counter-balanced by the comments of Patrick Alumuku of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja (Abuja). Alumuku admits that a lot has been achieved, especially by the Church, in community newspaper publications. He differentiates among campus community newspapers, faith-based diocesan newspapers, local vernacular newspapers and specialized publications. Speaking specifically about The Good Shepherd newspaper, published by his office for the Catholic Archdiocese, Alumuku notes that the paper has "a strong community appeal".

Currently about 5,000 copies are in circulation weekly through Church parishes and at the cost of N150 (equivalent of one US Dollars). The company, however, has a plan to go into the streets in the future.

Additionally, he maintains that the experience and efforts of the Archdiocese of Abuja in newspaper productions are being multiplied in different other dioceses in Nigeria; that there are currently about 15 of such faith-based community publications in the country; and that, outside the Church-oriented publications, there are numerous other community newspapers springing up in different geopolitical areas, with the primary aim of enabling the ‘voices’ of marginalized people to be heard. He is emphatic that these papers, some of which are thriving fairly well, can hardly be considered as regional or national newspapers. Alumuku notes that “they generally operate at the level of local information”. Their contents, in this regard, are largely informed by democratic or socialist ideals.

If the stories of the community press in Nigeria and South Africa indicate some level of progress and diversities in terms of types and ideologies, this cannot be said of Ghana. Most respondents in Ghana admit that, except for *specialist* publications, there is a dearth of community newspapers and journalism in Ghana today. Though there are some newspapers which producers claim to belong to the community sector, respondents generally maintain that they are mostly newspapers sympathetic to either the ruling party or the opposition party; they are not ‘community newspapers’ as conceptualized by UNESCO.

Ansu-Kyeremeh of the School of Communications Studies (East-Legon) is of the view that Ghana does not have a lot of community publications. He mentions only a few as examples of the surviving relatively alternative-oriented press: the Public Agenda, a

private newspaper published by an NGO and that reports on social issues; the Catholic Standard, an 'old' faith-based publication owned by the Standard Newspapers and Magazines Limited; and one other newspaper published in the Northern part of Ghana which name the retired Professor could not recall.

Ansu-Kyeremeh maintains that, compared to those local newspapers with strong elitist and political inclinations (e.g. *P & P Weekly* that circulates mostly in Accra), these three publications are less politically-oriented in information coverage and reportage. Additionally, he maintains that outside these, there are a few *specialist* magazines and newspapers that focus on such issues as sport, health-care and agricultural development. But generally these specialist publications that target only specific audiences lack stability as "they quickly appear and disappear from public domain".

Corroborating Ansu-Kyeremeh's statements, retired Professor Kwame Karikari, the founder and the CEO of the Media Foundation of West Africa (MFWA), in a face-to-face conversation, insists that there have been some community-produced print media circulating in Ghana in the past; but he does not know of any existing at the moment. He admits that there are some newspapers circulating in Accra and which head offices and/or production centers are locally-based. He cites Ghana Palaver, The Democrat, and The Enquirer as examples. He observes that, though their proprietors lay claim to their papers being of the community-orientation, a careful examination of their contents and business philosophy will reveal that they are actually "political papers set up by big politicians and that cater for the ruling party". Karikari maintains that generally these papers are produced and circulated alongside some other mainstream commercial dailies that may be sympathetic to one political party or the other. For him, though these papers are not owned by political parties, they nevertheless function to advance the cause of the oppositional political groups.

Drawing insight from Francis P. Kasoma's conceptualization of community newspaper, Karikari argues that 'authentic' community newspaper is defined not only by the fact that it is published in a rural area but more so by the fact that its rural readers themselves become their own story-tellers, compilers, and publishers of the paper (cf. Karikari, 2000, p. 45). For him, the claim of certain publishers to belong under the community newspaper establishment in Ghana should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Personal visits to the head offices of The Enquirer (published by Focal Media Limited ) in the Tesano area of Great Accra and of the Ghana Palaver (published by Revalap Publishers and Suppliers Limited) in the industrial area of New Weija (Western Region), two papers that lay claims to being locally-oriented, offered further proofs of respondents' testimonies. These visits were motivated by the initial wrongful perceptions of these establishments as community newspaper institutions. The publishers and editors of both press establishments who had earlier agreed to interviews later renege on their commitments for unknown personal reasons.

Comparatively, evidence suggests that the nature of community press across the three countries is never homogeneous. While there are similarities, there are also differences. The 'hybridized' community press is more extensive in South Africa than the 'political' (or the 'ethnic') community newspapers. But the operations and the effectiveness of the 'political' community press are often strengthened by the 'independent social democratic' community press (e.g. the Mail & Guardian). The 'political' community press is more extensive in Nigeria than the 'hybridized' community press. The operations of the 'political' papers, just like in South Africa, are also strengthened by the 'independent radical democratic' press (e.g. the Media Trust). But in Ghana, while there is still limited presence of 'political' community newspapers, evidence indicates that the community press sector, as an industry, has declined considerably.

Regardless of contextual differences, the three sets of community newspapers are united in their shared concern for the intensification of liberal democracy in media practice and organization in terms of external and internal pluralism. Figure 1.1 captures a comparative conception of community press across the three countries and their likely distinctive practice and policy directions.

**Figure 1.1:** The typology of community papers, practice & policy directions



The similarities and differences across the community press sector notwithstanding, the question of how 'politicized', 'corporately-affiliated', and/or 'ethnically sensitized'

community publications can be considered as ‘authentic’ community newspapers is also worth considering. While I agree, with Spivak (1988/2007ab) and Chakravartty & Sarikakis (2006) that ‘politicized interests’ cannot be completely ruled out from community media productions (e.g. linguistic or ethnic minorities representation interests), the actual status of these newspapers as ‘authentic’ or ‘non-authentic’ community papers can only be determined by how much they further social cohesions or generate social tensions and disruptions. Downing’s (2001) categorization of radical media clearly admits as non-constitutive of ‘authentic’ alternative media those corporately-affiliated, ethnically-sensitized, and fundamentalist reactionary media that are capable of generating and furthering disruptive social consequences. But because the corporately-affiliated and ethnically-politicized publications in South Africa and Nigeria currently fall short of Downing’s specification, they can still be approached as ‘counter-hegemonic’ community press with varying degrees of emancipatory objectives.

However, the actual effectiveness of the different forms of community publications in advancing progressive media policy reforms could be best evaluated against a number of other factors: Against Atton & Hamilton’s (2008) distinction between alternative media with ‘ideologically and culturally radical’ policy strand and those with ‘not too ideologically and culturally radical’ commitments; against Hackett & Carroll’s (2006) distinction among ‘public sphere radical liberalism’, ‘public sphere market liberalism’, and ‘public sphere radical democracy’; and against Brants & Siune’s (1998) consideration of the importance of regulating the ‘political contents and outputs’ of alternative and mainstream media as an effective organizational mechanism for avoiding ambivalence in the linking of ‘organizational politics’ with ‘media’ in the process of rethinking citizenship in the public sphere of nation-states.

Their radicalism for media policy reforms will also go beyond the simple question of selected organizational and business imperatives to the actual presence of official attempts at information repressions. Their activism for reforms will definitely become more pronounced at moments of political suppression than it would be at moments of socio-political calm (cf. Wayne, 2001).

### **5.1.2 The Community Broadcast Media**

While community-specific interests, ethnic, political, corporate and commercial imperatives affect and shape community newspaper publications in Sub-Saharan Africa, information gathered from the 'fields' confirm a similar relatively expansive and diverse growth in the community broadcast media, in terms of forms, contents, and business imperatives (except in Nigeria where State policy prevents the establishment of 'grassroots' community media). Respondents generally admit that there is an astronomical growth in community radio, caused by government's selective interest in the sector and by the cheap and ubiquitous nature of the radio technology itself. A similar growth rate is never recorded for the community television (CTV), because of the prejudicial perception of television by academics and governments' experts as incapable of advancing rural developments, especially within those areas where high degree of poverty and illiteracy may impede a meaningful use of television systems to communicate information to local populations.

But generally the effectiveness of community broadcast media (radio and television) in addressing 'community' communication needs have been evaluated by respondents against the presence (or lack) of independence by media regulators which invariably affects any further development of the broadcast sector; the enduring ambivalence in the very conceptualization of 'community' by media regulators; how the community broadcast media stations have been firmly rooted (or not rooted) within local



communities; how they have been empowered to function through the provisions of subsidies and stable social infrastructures (electricity, telephone services, etc.); and against how they have been enabled to operate independently outside satellite broadcast spaces.

Information provided in 2009 by Lumko Mtimde, the CEO of MDDA, indicates that about 127 community radios were licensed in 2009 in South Africa, out of which 87 were already on air at that time (“Media Freedom Day” Paper, 19 October). Three years on, this figure would have changed.

Also, a personal study of the research document released on June 15, 2009 by Z-Coms on behalf of MDDA indicates that in the past 10-12 years there has been a slow evolution of community television in South Africa. Z-Coms’ study further admits that at present there are about 4 licensed community televisions (CTVs): Cape Town Community TV (CTCTV); Soweto Community TV in Gauteng; Bay Television Station in Durban; and The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) in the Eastern Cape ([www.mdda.org.za](http://www.mdda.org.za)). The document, however, fails to take notice of existing ‘campus television’ stations, such as Cue TV (Rhodes University), Bush TV (University of Western Cape), and GDTV (University of KwaZulu-Natal). These community television stations generally operate alongside a plethora of private commercial television stations and a few public service broadcasting stations run by SABC (Hadland et al., 2006).

Also, in a face-to-face conversation with Karen Thorn, the Station Manager of CTCTV (Western Cape), she notes that the year 2004 was crucial to the emergence of CTVs. She admits that initially only six to seven community television licenses were issued by ICASA. Out of these, only one – CTCTV – can at present be considered as a ‘genuine’

community television station; that is because CTCTV alone has operated in the last couple of years independently of satellite spaces and has survived the challenges of economic recessions that the others have not been able to live through. Other licensed CTVs, she observes, either collapsed at take-offs due to lack of funding or were taken over by Kagiso Media, a big black-owned private commercial media company, to function as advertising outlets for the company. Thorn further maintains that CTVs are emerging “to fill the gap that has been left by a public broadcaster (SABC) that many consider not to be fulfilling its mandate”.

Thorns’ concern with the growing diversity in CTVs in South Africa, caused partly by the cross-relationships between some CTVs and multi-channel satellite networks, may be understood, just as envisaged by McCauley et al., (2003), against how these stations are enabled to function either to promote the cultural, educational, and democratic interests of the generality of South Africans or to strengthen the regulatory frameworks for media concentration and for the advancement of the financial interests of the emerging cadres of post-apartheid business elites of South Africa. Her concern is also illustrative of how *absorption* or *parallel* policy direction has shaped alternative broadcasting practices in South Africa. Evidently, the affiliation between community broadcast media and satellite networks for the purpose of survival is currently lacking in Nigeria and Ghana.

But, just like South Africa, community broadcasting, especially community radio, is thriving very well in Ghana. It is a situation only comparable to the developments in some other West African countries; except Nigeria. But only one community television station (Coastal TV, Cape Coast – Central region) currently exists in the country. The growth of ‘grassroots’ community broadcast media in Ghana, has been informed, not by the need for multi-media convergence, but by the need to promote local languages,

encourage socio-cultural and economic developments; as well as to give ‘voice’ to marginalized communities to express themselves and define their needs. How the ownership and management, especially of community radio stations, have been firmly rooted in the communities, however, remains contestable.

Nonetheless, the available oral information indicates that the development of community broadcasting across the country has been initiated and facilitated primarily by NGOs and by persons with known professional and Western education backgrounds. Many of them have been prolific broadcasters and journalists or people who have worked for years either with development agencies or with state-owned media institutions. They are generally imbued with strong passion for the development of community media in Ghana.

Mrs. Wilna Quarmyne, the Coordinator of the GCRN (Accra), the coalition body for community broadcast institutions in the country, in a face-to-face conversation, notes that there are only 12 community radio stations currently on air in Ghana. These 12 stations are the only ones formerly registered with the Network. GCRN is currently working to get 12 more on air as soon as NCA is open to grant them operational licenses. Mrs. Quarmyne is emphatic that the primary issue militating against the development of community broadcast media in Ghana are not research or capacity-building; but the independence and the willingness of NCA to grant operational frequencies. She observes that out of the ten regions in Ghana, eight have community radio initiatives. Only two - Ashanti and Western regions - do not have even one community radio station at the moment. Contrary to this statistics, NCA indicates that there are 37 licensed community radio stations in Ghana as against 34 public and private radio stations. But that statistic covers both ‘campus radios’ and ‘grassroots community radio’ stations ([www.ghanaweb.com](http://www.ghanaweb.com)).

Also speaking about the current state of community broadcasting media in Ghana, retired Professor Ansu-Kyeremeh maintains that most of the community radio stations in Ghana are owned, operated, and managed, not by the communities themselves, but largely by what he describes as “entities” outside the communities for the communities. However, their programming and activities remains community-focused. Ansu-Kyeremeh is of the view that, though these radio stations are classified by NCA as ‘community media’, seen from the point of view of UNESCO's definition of ‘community radios’, their status remains questionable. This is because they are not licensed to the communities in question but to individuals who purport to run them on behalf of the communities. He maintains that there is an existing misunderstanding among business elites with regards to the notion and practice of “community media”; and that, the idea of ‘community’ still remains contentious in relation to the understanding and distribution of the non-commercial broadcasting media in Ghana.

Personal visits to four community broadcasting stations, namely, Radio Ada (Big Ada), Radio Peace (Winneba), Universe Radio (East-Legon), and Coastal TV (Cape Coast) were also instructive of the status and operational conditions of community radios and television in Ghana. While Coastal TV operates through street theatres and documentary film productions and broadcast to preserve the rain forest environments and the cultural heritages of the local communities of the Central region against exploitations, Radio Ada and Radio Peace both function principally to promote local languages and developments. Universe Radio, in turn, functions to advance the educational and the apprentice needs of the University of Ghana (Accra).

The essential ingredients of these stations are that they are non-profit-making; engaging primarily in social services. They encourage community participation in public discussion and two-way communication through ‘discursive’ or ‘phone-in’ programming

and 'affiliation' mechanism, whereby the smaller locally-based radio stations occasionally link up with and pick up programmes from the bigger mainstream stations in the urban centers, to enable the people stay in touch with developments within the urban political centers. Yet, respondents generally recognize that the effectiveness of these stations in providing mediated spaces for communication, social services, and activism are regularly affected by the poor and unstable state of social infrastructures (electricity, telephone, and road services) in the country.

If there are recorded successes in 'grassroots' community broadcasting in Ghana and South Africa (regardless of their size and programme differences), the same may not be said of Nigeria. Though Chapter Nine of NBC Code (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) recognizes community broadcasting as "the third tier of broadcasting" and as "a key agent of democratization for socio-cultural, educational and economic development" (2010: 61), the only area of success in the non-profit community broadcasting industry, as recognized by most respondents, is in the establishments and strengthening of 'campus radio initiatives'; a situation that is considered by most respondents as only a partial official response to the desire and aspiration of Nigerians for an inclusive community broadcasting for the country.

Akin Akingbulu, the Executive Secretary of the NCRC (Lagos), and Alumuku of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja (Abuja) are in agreement, firstly, that there is a lack of legislative enabling environment for the licensing and take-off of 'grassroots' community broadcasting in the country at the moment; and secondly, that the venturing of NBC into the licensing and strengthening of 'campus broadcasting' for universities and tertiary institutions, though good in itself for the purpose of apprenticeship, is only a strategic and partial official response to the need for a broader democratization of public

broadcast facilities, to enable the participation of disadvantaged communities in the ownership and management of these outfits.

Alumuku notes that government favours commercial private broadcasting against 'grassroots' community broadcasting. Yet, government through NBC claims "there are already community radio stations in the country". He explains that government does not have any argument against granting licenses for 'grassroots' community broadcasting. In his view, "governments and politicians who work against this project are afraid of their misdeeds being exposed".

Akingbulu of NCRC offers another perspective to the development, an account that is also corroborated by Alumuku. According to Akingbulu, President Goodluck Jonathan at the "Africast" conference of 2010 did make an announcement before the delegates giving authorization to NBC to go ahead and license 'grassroots' community broadcast media. He notes that, shortly after the conference, NCRC met with NBC and demanded for guidelines for license applications in line with the presidential announcement. But NBC's response indicated that the Commission had been waiting, since October 2010, for an official letter authorizing them to implement what the president had said. Akingbulu admits that, fundamentally, the problem with Nigeria is bureaucracy or a lack of political will that generally delays policy implementation, even when a clear decision has been made and publicly announced. He maintains that for there to be any significant transformation in this regard, the advocacy activities already initiated by NCRC, as well as the capacity building programmes currently running at grassroots levels, should continue.

Akingbulu and Alumuku further admit that, though the campus radio stations licensed by NBC are generally doing good work, some of them have actually been turned into

commercial centers to raise money for the Universities. The duo cite as an example Unilag 103.1FM (Akoka), a pioneer educational radio that covers the communities within the University of Lagos and around Lagos Metropolis. They admit that it took only the strong interventions of NBC for this situation to be officially put under some level of control.

Responding to questions on the current situation of community broadcasting in the country, Mark Ojiah, the Executive Secretary of NBC, in a face-to-face conversation, notes that NBC is well disposed, not only towards state and commercial broadcasting (which current terrestrial and non-terrestrial licensing figure stands at over 400), but also towards the community broadcasting. He admits that “NBC understands the need to do community broadcasting; that it has always been there in the NBC Code that we should have community broadcasting media; but the modality has always been the problem”.

He advanced three arguments to show NBC’s good will towards the community broadcast sector. Firstly, the Commission has initiated conferences and collaborated with NGOs and other stakeholders to formulate modalities for the operation of community broadcasting media in the country. For him, their engagements with NGOs and civil organizations have over the years helped in clearing up some of the ambiguities surrounding the conceptualization of ‘community’ in NBC policy documents. Secondly, the Commission has painstakingly prepared a policy document (Chapter Nine of NBC Code, 2010) in collaboration with a host of stakeholders to offer guidelines on community broadcasting in the country. Thirdly, NBC is licensing an arm of community broadcasting “and that arm is what we name campus broadcasting”.

Ojiah explains that the licenses granted to about 19 universities and tertiary campuses offering Mass Communication to run campus radios (using student volunteers as a resource and low power transmitters) is meant for the stations to serve as teaching tools with at least 70% of their airtimes dedicated to instructional programmes, and for them “to broadcast within their environment”. He cites Madonna University (Okija), a private University, as offering a good model in this regard. For him, the campus radio project has moved on quite well in spite of a few challenges. He explains further that the project is experimental and is meant to serve as a preparatory ground for the actual take-off of ‘grassroots’ community broadcasting, using UNESCO policy documents and the African Charter (2001) as guides.

Additionally, Ojiah admits that NBC currently has many administrative challenges. These challenges are not mostly within the Commission, but outside the Commission. As he explains, “the Constitution of Nigeria grants Mr. President the right to grant broadcasting licenses. The Commission only recommends and advises”. Ojiah admits that what the Commission is waiting for in order to kick-start the licensing of ‘grassroots’ community radio is a letter of approval from the presidency. He is emphatic that “until we get that approval we are constrained from granting licenses”.

Tom Aliu Chatta, the Director of Broadcast Policy and Research of NBC, in a face-to-face conversation, also explains that the primary reason government delays in issuing a letter of approval to NBC to kick-start ‘grassroots’ community broadcasting stems from the high level of insecurity in the country. He maintains that, though government recognizes the developmental benefits of community broadcasting, it is afraid that placing a spectrum as sensitive and powerful in the hands of miscreants, fundamentalists, and divisive forces in the country could further compound the security problems the country is currently facing. For him, government’s fears are also not



unconnected with the increasing level of political instability and Islamic terrorists' activities in the country at the moment (cf. The Punch Newspaper, April 16, 2012; p. 14).

Chatta further admits that over 1,000 applications for 'grassroots' community radio frequencies have been received by NBC from individuals, NGOs, and cultural organizations. He assures that once government grants in writing a take-off approval, qualified applicants will be given licenses. Generally, the NBC officers interviewed, far from being entirely defensive, were quite candid in their responses to questions.

Comparatively, the experiences of community broadcasting across the three countries are never the same. Though they all engage in developmental, activist, and empowerment projects, they are different in many areas: in their 'formats'; extensive spread; the sophistication of their technologies; the strength of their staff members; their developmental orientations, and in the degree of political impacts each can generate. And even the experience of commercialization through campus broadcasting is not general; it is only incidental to the experiences of the three countries.

The testimonies of respondents from across Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, therefore, provides strong evidence for one to conclude that (with the exception of the dearth of community newspapers in Ghana and the lack of 'grassroots' community broadcasting in Nigeria) there is a robust culture and diversity of community media across Sub-Saharan Africa. The spread of different formats of community media across the three countries is captured in figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2:** Community media diversity and progress

Country	Community Press	Community Broadcasting
<b>Ghana</b>	Low	High
<b>Nigeria</b>	High	Low
<b>South Africa</b>	Very High	Very High

From respondents' evidence, it can also be reasonably inferred that generally the values of these participatory media outfits are tied with their potentials for problem-solving (political, social, economic, cultural); especially their capability to advance literacy, communication, and entertainment. However, their value could also be stretched to include their capability to provide mediated and participatory platforms for media management in the broadest sense, for opinion-formations and consensus-reaching in media policy themes, as well as for increase in media activism for public policy reforms across Sub-Saharan Africa.

In making this second argument, the interpretative implications of figure 1.1 and figure 1.2 in terms of policy directions and contributive impacts of the diversity and spread of community media towards media policy reforms also deserves attention. Where the experiences are of 'Very High' and 'High' grading, the contributive impact for reforms is likely to be stronger than where there is a 'Low' grading. And where the policy direction is 'reformative', 'parallel', and 'subversive', the contributive impact for reforms is likely to be stronger than where it is 'absorption' or incorporation'.

## **5.2 Organization and Management Structures**

The capabilities of community media to perform their developmental, educational, and empowerment roles are also very much tied with the questions of organizational and management structures available to these stations. A consideration of management structures is aimed to understand how these institutions are organized to ensure participation, accountability, as well as their rootedness in the local communities. The conviction is that the availability of effective organizational structures, will not only determine a high level of participation in terms of community membership, the ownership of licensing rights, collective programming and accountability, but also in terms of the participation of local communities and civil societies in the affairs of their nation-states. And where these structures are lacking there is every possibility that bureaucracy, unilateralism, as well as the adoption of wrong set of priorities could continue to exert undesirable influences on the practice of community media (Article 19, 2003).

The most obvious organizational and management structures within the community press sector are the establishment of Executive Boards of Directors and the adoption of different systems of departmental creations and separations (editorials, graphics, marketing/sales, productions and distributions, administrations, etc.) to ensure division of labour and cross-working partnerships. Respondents' oral comments and a personal study of some institutional documents reveal that similar management structures, though differently organized in all cases, are also visible within the community broadcasting sector of the three countries. These structures generally function in varying degrees to determine and clarify the relationship between organized participatory politics and the economics of community press and broadcast media (Atton & Hamilton, 2008).

Respondents in South Africa indicate that there are two distinctive types of management models currently operational within the community broadcast media sector: *Individual Membership-based Model* (IMM) and *Organizational Membership-based Model* (OMM). The two models, as indicated by Thorn of CTCTV (Western Cape), simply determine the pattern and manner these institutions are made to be directly answerable to the local communities and to the regulator (ICASA). Though distinctive, the two management models are, nevertheless, united in their common fidelity to ICASA's requirement for the formation of a "Board of Trustees" or "Shareholdings" (or equivalent) to whom the ownership rights of community broadcasting stations could be granted in the name of the community (Chapter 9; Section 50 of ECA); as well as by their common concerns for serving the neighbourhoods and grassroots communities, through research and diverse programming.

Thorn of CTCTV (Western Cape) and Brenda Leonard, the Station Manager of Bush Radio (Western Cape), independently admit that the process for the selection of a participatory management model for community broadcasting in South Africa entails a long process of research, an extensive groundwork, mobilization, and consultations of the communities. These are often undertaken even before the official licensing of the stations to begin public operations.

Thorn explains that prior to the licensing of CTCTV in July 2008, HSRC was commissioned to undertake a research project on behalf of the TV station. According to Thorn, it was the outcome of that research and of their extensive consultations within the communities in Cape Town that informed their final selection of an OMM for CTCTV. She admits, "it is a truly democratic and representative structure. And it has been incredibly robust".

The opting for OMM, she explains, was made by the “Cape Town Community Television Collective”, a body that consists of over 200 activist organizations working to promote community media initiatives in the Western Cape and to whom the operational license of CTCTV was granted. This central body was formerly lunched by the communities around the Cape Metropolis at their first AGM in 2006.

What the OMM model entails, she explains, is that any non-profit-making organization and all civil society organizations could become members of CTCTV. Members would be divided into seven categories: Arts and the Media, Youth Movements, Labour Movements, Education Sector, Sports Sector, Non-governmental Organizations, and the CBOs. All the sectors will have 2 representatives on the Board of CTCTV, which will ensure that there is diversity of interest groups represented on the Board.

Again, there is always an AGM where reports are given, the situation of the station evaluated, and major policy decisions by the Board are ratified. Thorn notes that it is at the AGM that members elect their representatives for the Board. The Board holds its own “General Council” meetings and consults members on policy issues as well as on programming. While the Board, which meets four times a year, oversees the overall organization of CTCTV, the AGM remains the highest decision-making body. Within the Board itself, there is also a management committee that oversees the day-to-day running of the TV station. The current head of that committee is Karen Thorn. She reports regularly to the Board. Thorn admits that that structure “works extremely well. It makes sure that CTCTV is directly answerable to the needs of the community”.

Leonard, in turn, indicates a different structural pattern by which Bush Radio experiences community participation in the very management of the community radio station. Her account points to the adoption of IMM for the radio station. What that

means is that the station works mostly with individual community members and individual organizations; rather than with a “Collective” of non-profit organizations where citizens can come together to organize around particular issues. However, just like the model operational within CTCTV, one of the core specificities of IMM is AGM that pulls together individual community members for a collective discussion and decision with regards to the life and programme operations of the radio station.

While the AGM remains the highest decision-making body, the Board of Directors that is appointed by the community takes care of strategic responsibility in terms of recommendations for policy visions, monitoring and evaluation of the station’s performance. Within the Board is the Managing Director who oversees the day-to-day running of the radio station and reports back to the Board. The Managing Director, who is currently Brenda Leonard, exercises her responsibility in partnership with the Management Team that is made up of heads of the various units of the radio station. Members of the Management Team are generally employees of the radio station who are themselves drawn from the community.

Corroborating Leonard’s position, Adrian Louw, the Station’s Programmes Integrator, indicates that policy decisions are made at two main stages: at the “Monthly Open Forum” that is open to all staffs and to the public. This workshop, which was first organized in 1992, runs for eleven months in a year (except January). Policy-decisions made during the meeting are ratified at AGM based on the recommendations of the Board of Directors. Louw further indicates that it is through this process that even the station’s “Policy and Procedure Manual” was formulated. It is a document that offers strategic guidelines on the day-to-day management and programme operations of the radio station.

But for Leonard, though the station is founded on the IMM strategy, it does continuously provide “platforms” for both individuals, civil society organizations and NGOs to address issues aimed at ideological, behavioural, and attitudinal changes. Leonard agrees with Louw that it is in this regard that Bush Radio sees itself “as agent in the process of social change and as a conduit for activism”.

Unlike South Africa, the question of organizational models that could enable community broadcasting strengthen participation and overcome bureaucracy and private greed, so as to remain accountable to the communities when it eventually takes off, was not effectively addressed by respondents in Nigeria for unknown reasons. This issue was addressed only by Chatta and Ojiah of NBC.

But from a documentary study (Section 9.03 of NBC Code, 2010), “a community broadcasting service shall be owned and controlled by the community through a trusteeship or a foundation with a Board of Trustees”. This participatory model, the Code admits, constitutes one of the core elements for the “suitability of an application for the grant or renewal of a community broadcasting service license” (Section 9.4.1). The Code also provides the rationale for the adoption of this model to include the need for members of any community applying for licenses to participate in deciding the operational nature of the station; as well as to ensure that the community broadcaster does not “abdicate its editorial and scheduling responsibilities to any other party” (Section 9.2.2). The Code also recognizes the need for effective internally developed democratic mechanisms, especially within campus broadcast stations, to ensure adherence to regulatory standards, safety, and security of the station; as well as accountability and transparency in the day-to-day operations of the station (Sections 9.7.4).

Explaining these provisions, Chatta of NBC notes that once ‘grassroots’ community broadcasting officially takes off, it will be managed to minimize individual commercial interests, whereby licenses will be granted, not to a few rich entrepreneurs who would claim to run these stations for their communities, but to the communities themselves represented by a “Board of Trustees”.

Ojiah of NBC, in turn, notes that a good number of times NBC has been approached by rich private entrepreneurs seeking licenses to run community broadcast media. But on further probing it becomes apparent that they have had little consultation with the local communities whose interests they claim to represent. Secondly, it becomes clear that these capitalists have little idea of what community broadcasting is all about, and that their purported representations of local communities are actually cover-ups for personal commercial imperatives. For Ojiah, drawing on a “Board of Trustees” model will ensure that the Board is actually constituted by the community seeking application. Besides, it will ensure that different sectors of the community are well represented in the Board, and that the actual license application is undertaken, not by individuals, but by the Board on behalf of the intending community.

While the NBC Code, just like ECA of South Africa, effectively provides for a representative, consultative, and transparent method for organization of community broadcasting in Nigeria, a similar representative mechanism is provided in NCA’s *Guidelines for Operation of Community Radio Stations in Ghana* (2007). Such representative mechanism should be in the form of “a Company Limited by Guarantee” for the purpose of ownership, management, and accountability of community radios in the country. Documentary evidence indicates that the formation of such representative structure should, however, be guided by the establishment of a “Board of Trustees” (or its equivalent), a Constitution, and Bye-laws duly approved and signed by



representatives of the community and by officers of the radio station (Section 2.2.13). Generally, the company must be rooted in the local community and its communication objective “shall be not-for-profit” (p.2).

Responding to questions about the ownership and organization status of Radio Ada (Big Ada) in line with the claim of retired Professor Ansu-Kyeremeh that most community radios in Ghana are actually owned and unilaterally managed by “entities” (individuals and NGOs), Kofi Lahweh, the Training Officer of the Station, admits that there have been cases like that in the past that are well-known to GCRN and that Ansu-Kyeremeh “is not telling lies”. He maintains, however, that what Ansu-Kyeremeh said relates only “to the former experience of community radio ownership and management in the country”. Additionally, Lahweh recognizes that it is good that what the retired Professor said is picked up and investigated; “because it is important for us to return all that is in the name of the community back to the community. And that is what we are pursuing in Radio Ada to provide a model for others”.

Lahweh further admits that the ownership and organization of Radio Ada is different. The radio station is owned by the community in line with the requirements of the African Charter and NCA’s Guideline. He observes that the station is not related, in terms of ownership, to the Quarmyne’s family. The license was granted by NCA to a “representative” body of the community called Ghana Broadcasting Services (GBS). The community is the one that runs the radio station. They do the training and everything which the Quarmynes sometimes do not know about. The only relationship the station has with the Quarmynes, he admits, is that “we speak the same Dangme language”; the Quarmynes initiated the idea and facilitated the application for the license; and Chief Alex, just like many others, serves in the Executive Board of the radio station and occasionally contributes money from his pocket in support of the

station. Lahweh confirms that it is the “representative” (or Board of Trustees) model that NCA officially recognizes in granting the right of ownership and management of a community radio station to any community in the country.

While findings from respondents, in varying ways, indicate the adoptions of diversity of participatory models for the organizations and managements of the community broadcasting sector to ensure their rootedness in the communities and for the purpose of participation, accountability, and stability, findings further confirm that the community publication industries across the three countries tend, on the contrary, to have “loose” participatory organizational structures that ensure maximum accountability to business stakeholders, and only minimal accountability to local communities; as well as to ensure the adoption of contradictory practice imperatives as dimmed necessary to impact on productions. Again, respondents from Nigeria and Ghana failed to indicate whether the OMM and IMM models are also part and parcel of their community media organizational experiences of their respective countries.

However, the effectiveness of the different organizational structures for activism would be seen in the way it brings together and encourages sustainable broader participation of the diversity of social and political groupings within local communities in the campaigns for political accountability and reforms in some media policy initiatives of governments.

### **5.3 Funding Arrangements**

Funding remains one of the vital components of effective organization, management, and sustainability of community media and institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. The provision of funding and other mechanisms of support by national governments is seen by respondents as potentially capable of bearing consequences (directly or indirectly)

for ongoing infrastructural growth, small-scale local programming and productions, staff developments, as well as ‘active’ audience developments. Discussions on funding pressure across the three countries is becoming even more essential considering the minimal material supports that now come from transnational donor organizations. However, the increasing shift from ‘patronage’ to either a ‘mixed funding’ or a ‘business funding’ model for a sector that is generally considered as ‘non-profit-making’ continues to raise concern and debates. These issues, among others, were also considered by respondents.

While the discourse on the development of a viable funding model for community media is continuous, the task of funding and developing community broadcasting, small print and New Media sectors in South Africa officially falls on MDDA. NFVF is officially responsible only for the funding and the developing of the audio-visual (independent television and film) sector in collaboration with the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). Both agencies of government have, however, been seriously criticized by respondents for their inability to effectively manage the small media industries. Most respondents of the small print and broadcast industries express concerns about the limited nature of supportive mechanisms available to independent media producers; as well as about the difficulty of accessing funds from MDDA through formal applications.

Attempts to discuss these issues with Lumko Mtimde, the CEO of MDDA, was unsuccessful as he was engaged in an official assignment in Cape Town at the time of my visit. The Executive Secretary of the institution, Harriet Maseko, who was on seat, would not commit herself to an interview as she felt Mtimde was the most competent person to answer my questions.

However, based on documentary study (the MDDA's "Position Paper Process", 2002), there is evidence that MDDA offers three types of funding support: direct subsidies (or cash grants); indirect subsidies (grants given to public utilities such as SENTECH, Telkom or Post Office to create enabling environment for media diversity); and emergency funding. The support types are, however, spread across three primary project categories: provision of capital for operational and human capacity-building cost for community media (with 60% of its funds meant to support this project); grant and/or loan arrangement with a third party with low interest rate for independent and small commercial media enterprises (with 25% of its fund allocated for this project); and research-related projects such as feasibility study (with 5% of its fund allocated to this project).

The Paper also shows that MDDA's primary sources of funds include the legislated levy from mainstream media institutions; from Print Media South Africa; from government through DAC and Department of Communication (DC); as well as from foreign partners, such as European Union. Outside MDDA's funding mechanisms, individual small media organizations also have their own internally organized funding models.

Leonard of Bush Radio (Western Cape) attributes the difficulty community broadcasters and small press producers experience in accessing funds from MDDA primarily to the culture of poor compliance with application procedures. For her, most community media stations that find it difficult to access money from MDDA are those that are unable to provide "tax clearance certificate" and an "annual audit report" as required by law. She, however, blames MDDA for its poor record-keeping and slow feedback cultures; as well as for delays in "contracting" for immediate disbursements of approved funds to support community radio stations which in many occasions are forced by these delays to struggle on their own for survival for close to six months.

Most respondents in South Africa also indicate that there is currently a ‘split’ in the funding models adopted by independent media institutions in South Africa for survival. Oral interviewees, in varying degrees, indicate that the prevailing funding models are either the ‘mixed funding’ (or co-funding) or the purely ‘commercial model’. The ‘business model’ that is common in places like USA draws primarily on sponsorship and large-scale advertising, while the ‘mixed funding’ model common in UK and Scandinavia aims to combine “limited commercialism” with “non-profit-making” mechanisms that makes it possible for community media institutions to survive, while at the same time not compromising their editorial policies and expository practices.

Narrating their funding experience at Jozi (105.8) FM, Mhpo Mhlongo, the Station’s Executive Director, notes that Jozi FM does not at the moment receive any grant from government through MDDA or from any foreign financial source. He explains that the station used to have external funding supports (as starting capital) in the 80s when activism against racial segregation was still on and from such foreign bodies as Friedrich Ebert Tifftung Foundation of Germany. But that is no longer the case as the station had to learn to stand or fall on its own since 1994. As a result, Mhlongo notes, the station has “unfortunately been put at a corner” to rely completely on commercial advertising for survival and on occasional ‘patronage’ in terms of annual membership fee from the communities in Soweto. However, most of the contributions made by the communities are purely for social development projects undertaken by the radio station. For example, the station undertook a social project in January 2012 to raise money for school uniforms for about 200 children. This project was supported by the community. Outside this and other similar developmental projects, Mhlongo maintains that the communities do not at the moment offer any direct financial support for the day-to-day

running of the radio station. The necessary finances, he explains, come solely from advertising, sponsorship, and programme-sales.

The unfortunate outcome of this development, Mhlongo states, is that the community radio station is “forced to operate both as a commercial and community radio in the sense that we need to balance in our programmes how much air-time we spend on getting funds and the rest on serving the community”. He explains further that the split of air-time between the two goals, however, varies from time to time, depending on the amount of advertising loading available to the station each week. But the station generates close to 80% of its income from “national advertising brand” (i.e. international companies and government) as against “local advertising brand” (i.e. local businesses and township shops).

For the Executive Director, there are two sides for analyzing their experience: on the one hand, it would have been nice to receive grant from government just like other rural community radio stations do. He admits “that would have ensured that our operations are 100% community-driven. But because Jozi FM is classed by MDDA as an urban community radio station with its independent signal distribution system (outside what is provided by SENTECH) and with a better chance of surviving through advertising, the station is therefore expected to generate its own operational capital”.

On the other hand, even if the station was to draw some financial benefits from MDDA, it would be difficult to tell how long such support could last, as MDDA itself does not get enough money to sustain over 100 community radio stations in South Africa. For him, even though the lack of direct government’s support for the radio station places government’s goodwill in a bad light, the experience is in itself beneficiary for the station, in the sense that the radio station is now able to generate employment by

developing its Sales Department in the drive to raise its own fund. He admits that if the station was to rely solely on MDDA, “we would not have been empowered to learn how to raise funds on our own. So at the moment we rely on our own skills. We have been empowered”.

If Mhlongo’s story is expressive of how the community radio sector is partially torn between commercialism and community-specific interests, the stories of the two Caxton-owned community newspaper companies (Johannesburg North & Lowveld Media) are indicative of how the hybridized community newspaper industry is compelled to rely weekly on intensive capitalism for the purpose of survival and how this, in the long run, could compromise editorial contents and the ability of their papers to create spaces for activism on public policy.

Kinnear of the Lowveld Media (Nelspruit), for example, admits that all their publications and payment of salaries and bills are funded from advertising. He maintains that where Lowveld Media gets “profit-sharing at a particular year, it is because we have exceeded our advertising budget”.

Explaining the nature of their advertising loading, Kinnear notes that with The Lowvelder (their flagship) and with the Mpumalanga News (one of their two sold publications), they aim at 15% advertising loading. But with all the “knock-and-drop” publications, it is 60% advertising loading. For Kinnear, the high level of advertising is justifiable in the sense that the company receives no support from government or external donors. Yet, it has to stay in business and pay up its running costs. As he explains, the notion of non-profit-making is not part and parcel of Caxton’s community newspaper business approach. For him, “Caxton is in community newspaper business to make money; to make as much money as is possible for the shareholders”. However, he

admits that the company also has “a very strict editorial policy that enables it to produce quality newspapers and to remain the watchdog of the public”.

A personal examination of copies of the newspapers obtained from Lowveld Media shows that about 50% to 70% of advertising loading actually makes up the contents of each of their titles. It is also evident that the advertising spaces sometimes compromise the available editorial spaces. That same tendency appears to be the general characteristics of those community newspapers that are run by big media establishments in South Africa.

In view of this fact, the validity of Kinnear’s claim to an ‘independent’ editorial position is questionable. The validity of his claim can also be evaluated against contrary claims by participatory-democratic theorists who maintain that the tendency towards excessive commercialism in the media could unwittingly lead towards the ‘dumping down’ of news and an undisciplined media concentration and monopolization, with potential negative consequences for investigative practices and invariably for activism for social and policy reforms (Habermas, 1962; Meier & Trappel, 1998; Carter & Allan, 2000; Atton and Hamilton, 2008).

While there is relatively good funding and supportive mechanisms available for small media in South Africa (regardless of some inherent challenges), respondents in Nigeria indicate that that is not the case for Nigeria. Though NBC Code (Section 9.1) allows for the transition to ‘mixed funding’ arrangements for community broadcasting media, there are currently no official arrangements to support the community press or community broadcasting media industry. Generally, most community media institutions, compelled by limitations in public funding sources, now draw on a ‘mixed funding’ model to sustain their productions.



Speaking about the Good Shepherd newspaper, published by the Archdiocese of Abuja, Alumuku notes that the faith-based community newspaper is no longer directly financed by the Archdiocesan Chancery as was in the past. The sustainability of their productions, he explains, depends on the meager profits made from sales and from adverts. Other additional sources of funding, he admits, include donations from individuals and church communities (in the form of special collections for the annual Social Communications Day celebration) as well as grants received from a few foreign donors, such as World Catholic Association for Communication (Signis). For him, even though their sources of funding are currently limited, the Archdiocesan communication department is still able to produce quality newspaper and pastoral materials that satisfy the educational and information needs of the Catholic communities in Abuja and in other suffragan dioceses.

The dependence of community media stations on a combination of funding models in contemporary times in Nigeria in order to survive the pressing challenges of global economic imperatives is, therefore, very much in line with the provisions of NBC Code that permit community broadcasters to draw on a multiplicity of funding sources to support their stations; even as it continues to raise critical concerns about the professed 'non-profit' ideals of community media.

These critical concerns were strongly explained and defended in Ghana; even as most respondents also admit that, just as it is in Nigeria and South Africa, small media institutions now draw on multiplicity of funding arrangements for survival. Ghana currently lacks a viable official support mechanism for community media. As a result, many community media establishments now favour the 'co-funding' arrangements.

Coastal TV (Cape Coast) has a ‘mixed funding’ model. It draws supports from ‘patronage’, adverts, and other sources. Selete Nyormi, the Head of the Station, admits that the only things that are helping the station stand on its feet are the grants they receive occasionally from foreign agencies and Embassies, as well as the contractual programmes they do for various organizations within and outside of Ghana.

The institution produced in July 2010 a series of documentaries on “Skills Delivery” for UNICEF. After that they produced a series of instructional documentaries for some banks on responsible financial management to train people in effective banking operation. The community television station also produced some educational and advocacy-oriented documentaries for the African Cashew Initiatives and for Ghana Revenue Authority, the government’s body responsible for value-added tax and custom duties derivations.

The station had also been funded in the past by the Royal Danish Embassy in Ghana to the tune of 600,000 to 800,000 US Dollars which covered infrastructures and payment of staff salaries. It has also occasionally received funding help from Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED), a German development service organization, and from two organizations in the United States called Conservation International Organization (CIO) and Critical Equity Partnership Fund (CEPF). Nyormi maintains that, because the funding assistance from international organizations is gradually drying up, they have to find other means of sustainability. As a result, the television station “has also been forced to sell out some of the air-times to pastors and other people, because without that our bills will not be paid”.

When asked if this drive towards commercialism was not in breach of the ‘non-profit-making’ ideal of community media, Nyormi explains that there is the need to draw a

distinction between “what is self-sustaining” and “what is profit-making”. He explains that for the past four years of their existence the television station has never made any profits; rather they run the station on accumulation of deficits. For him, the management of Coastal TV wants it to be deficit-free. To be able to do this, the station cannot lean on donor agencies alone and forever; that is because some of the agencies at a time may explain that the policies in their home countries are changing; and, as a result, they can no longer support the television station.

For him, the idea of going into commercials is for the station to be self-sustaining, as well as for the purpose of “cost-sharing”. He maintains that the station cannot compete on the same financial level with other commercial stations or with the national broadcaster (GBC) whose financial resources come through levies on TV licenses, adverts, and from government subventions. On the contrary, Coastal TV survives on minimal advertising and on the proposals they make to develop programmes for organizations “at the cheapest possible cost rate”. Nyormi is, therefore, emphatic that their venturing into commercials is never in breach of the ‘non-profit-making’ ideal of community media; rather it is a strategy for survival in the face of growing donor-fatigue and of the demands of global economy.

The information generated from respondents from across Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, by and large, reveals and supports, firstly, the fact that there are sustainable governments’ funding supports in South Africa. Such official support is non-existent in Nigeria and Ghana. The official funding agenda recently announced by the Ghanaian government, however, lacks the necessary modality to enable it become functional. And secondly, most community media institutions now rely on multiple funding sources for survival, with a recognized shift between ‘mixed funding’ and ‘commercial funding’ models.

While the question of heavy reliance on a ‘business model’ remains contestable because of its inherent potential to affect the community-specific educational and public policy development objectives of community media, a few respondents maintain that the adoption of ‘co-funding’ arrangements does not in any way breach the known ‘non-profit-making’ ideal of community media; that it is simply a strategy of survival in the face of growing global economy and of the dwindling nature of international support for the small media sector. Respondents also agree that the provision of effective funding systems could also provide the means for encouraging growth in small communication infrastructures, staff capacity developments, programme planning and developments, as well as ‘active’ audience participations in community media sectors across the African region.

#### **5.4 Audience Participation**

Apart from funding that can invariably impact on staff, technological, and production developments, another significant issue that exerts pressure on the organization of community media in South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana for success in activism is audience development and participation in all facets of community media management and productions. Modalities for effective audience participation as well as for audience demographic analysis are very big policy issues among community media groups and governments of the three Sub-Saharan countries. The general conviction of respondents and governments is that participatory programming could create not only income and audiences, but also loyalty for small media institutions with implications for ongoing efforts at collective campaigns for reforms (NFVF’s Draft Report on Third Film Indaba, 2010, p. 9).

The comments of majority of respondents from across the three countries further indicate three emerging patterns of audience participation in community media: (i) the

participatory engagement of different categories of audiences in the organization and management of community media stations through different formats of representational structures (e.g. OMM, IMM, the Board of Trusteeship, or Executive Board/Council); (ii) the giving of *access* to technologies and technicalities of productions to enable individuals, communities, and civic groups voice out their concerns and represent themselves; and (iii) the strategic and partial delivery of audiences from the informal economic sector to advertisers, through the selling of advertising spaces (in print media) or time slots (on electronic media).

Thorn of CTCTV, for example, notes that the community television station builds capacity for audience participation through engagements with different stakeholders in the community at the management and production levels.

On the management level, the station draws on its OMM strategy to engage different categories of civil societies, activist organizations, and NGOs in the management of the station at AGMs and on the Board. She admits, firstly, that the adoption of OMM is valuable because it enables viewers and communities to become ‘active’ partners in the life of CTCTV. Secondly, the long-term goal of OMM “[...] is to basically boost the capacity of NGOs to produce contents for CTCTV”.

On the production level, she admits that principally the mission vision of CTCTV is to provide people *access* to the powerful medium of television to promote human rights, social justice issues, and participatory democracy. This entails drawing on audience-relation policies (training, technical advice, and broadcasting opportunities) that aim to strengthen the communication capacity of civil society organizations and individual producers in order to empower them to have strong voices at advocacy; as well as “enhance the work that they are doing - whether it is dealing with gender issues;

prevention of HIV/AIDS and other socio-economic issues or labour movement and sport-related issues”. She explains that it is in this regard that CTCTV adopts something similar to the *Public Access Model* of programming to encourage broad-based participation of viewers in programme productions.

The station’s adoption of this model is given greater visibility through one of their programmes called “Open Studio” whereby “anyone in the community that wants to host their own show has the right to do so”. For her, the use of this decentered and participatory model implies a deliberate rejection of the top-bottom production model peculiar to SABC and other commercial stations in their professionalized approach to content production and engagement with audiences.

She further admits that while the “decentered model of programming” holds serious challenges to the station in terms of the required resources (human expertise and capital) to sustain it, it also holds positive implications in terms of a careful definition of co-production agreements to benefit all production partners in the areas of technical commitments, revenue distribution, and specification of the right of ownership of completed programmes. Thorn notes that the split varies in each case depending “on the inputs of the various co-production partners”.

Technically, CTCTV functions only as “the technical and broadcast partner” (providing studio recording and studio live broadcasting); while the independent producers are expected to function only as “editorial partners” (in terms of scripting and provision of settings, crews, inserts, and sequences) or they are expected to bring to the station their ready-made contents, either in DVD formats or through cell phone recordings.

In terms of the distribution of revenue and of the right of ownership of completed programmes, she explains that the split is always “a 50-50% down the middle”, whether

the producer is from within or outside South Africa. But if independent producers raise their own capital and equipment and the only thing CTCTV is expected to do is to provide “a broadcasting deal” then the producers retain 100% of the revenue benefit and of the copyright. The only thing CTCTV gets is the exclusive right to broadcast the programme for a period of six months. After that the right reverts to the producers who can sell their programmes anywhere in the world and keep all the income.

Thorn admits that the outstanding thing about the model, firstly, is that it encourages private producers, not only to develop and actualize their talents both at production and fund-raising, but also to benefit from their creativity. Secondly, it enables the station show-case local talents and community-generated contents, which national regulatory requirement currently stands at 55% as against the required 45% foreign contents.

From the point of view of advertising, Thorn explains that because CTCTV was set up in a way that was not really sustainable and had to function under serious financial pressure which made the full realization of its goals and mission sometimes difficult, it builds up audiences from the informal economic sector in Cape Town, using the commercial segments of programming, to be able to deliver those audiences to advertisers. But because CTCTV is always conscious of compromising its editorial independence if it has to fall back heavily on advertisement income, the station maintains a carefully-controlled ‘business model’ to inform audience relationship.

Evidently, the engagement of CTCTV with its audience through ‘moderated’ commercial activities has been undertaken against HSRC’s research wisdom that it could force CTVs to compromise on their community development potentials (Hadland et al., 2006:170). How a breach on this research advice has actually impacted on the community development potentials of CTCTV is not yet clear.

The three-point approach to audience capacity development evident in South Africa was equally present in the testimonies of respondents from Nigeria. Muhammed of Media Trust Limited (Abuja), for example, shows that their company draws on three different participatory strategies to actively engage with and to develop the production and consumption capacities of audiences.

The first strategy is the constitution of an Executive Board which membership cuts across professional, religious, and ethnic divides. He maintains that the Board members of Media Trust are not only people who are media professionals or people who are from the Northern region. Experts in law and economics and other trade areas are involved. People from the Yoruba and Igbo-speaking areas of Nigeria are also actively involved in the life and management of the company. Thus, the strategy for the organization of the institution recognizes the need to bridge the ethnic and professional divides in the country.

The second strategy is in two forms. The first form is through the provision of spaces for individuals, civil societies and NGOs to publish their events and write stories on health, justice, and human right issues. Students from different educational institutions also send in their written materials for publication. As Muhammed explains, students that make outstanding reports on campus-related issues are generally given a stipend of N3, 000 as incentive. This is in addition to a promise of automatic employment with the company after the completion of their studies.

The second form is the encouragement of a participatory story-telling in the forms of “Letter to the Editor” and “Opinion/Comment” columns. These participatory strategies allow the newspaper company to receive timely feedbacks and personal comments from private citizens and institutions and to publish them to engage with readership. And,



because their readers are actively involved in generating contents, Muhammed notes that ordinary citizens love reading their community papers.

The third method of audience participation, Mohammed admits, is a 'modest' delivery of audiences to advertisers. Muhammed indicates that the establishment, as a policy, does not engage on extensive advertising in their community-oriented publications (e.g. Aminiya; Eko Chronicle, Aso Chronicle and Kano Chronicle) to avoid their editorials being compromised. Their advertising loading is reasonably controlled to provide spaces for reports on social and political developments; as well as on the concerns and activities of local communities.

Unlike South Africa or Nigeria, a good number of respondents in Ghana, however, failed to highlight the three-way audience participation strategy. Only respondents from Radio Ada (Big Ada) and from Universe Radio (East-Legon) indicated the existence of a similar structure (representative Executive Board, participatory programming and moderate participation in advertising) in Ghana.

Explaining the nature of their media-community interactions, Lahweh of Radio Ada notes that, among other things, the development process of the radio station is always carried out in partnership with the community. This could come in different ways: through a joint effort to constitute the Executive Board of the radio station from among those known to and appointed by the community; through collective research and regular consultations to revise the mission objectives of the radio stations which happens every 10 years; and through a working partnership with staffs of government development departments that have extensive services in the community and that use the radio station as a resource center for creating awareness and implementing

government programme policies. Together with local volunteers, the external staff members remain vital programmers and story-tellers for the radio station.

Secondly, the station draws the topics for their radio discussions from the community. Generally, it is the representatives from the community and their opinion leaders that dictate and shape what they have to do, even before they come on air. Apart from this participatory approach to programming, most of their broadcasting (talk and music-shows) are done by community members who have already been trained in the rudiments of radio operations. And because the radio station depends on volunteers to do what it has to do, Lahweh admits “children, youth, and women participate in our radio operations”. For him, while it is a lot cheaper to maintain the radio station in terms of technology, it is far expensive to maintain it in terms of community participation in programming. Yet, the radio station has a commitment to live by the participatory programming expectation of the African Charter on broadcasting.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

Based, therefore, on information drawn from respondents from across the three Sub-Saharan African countries, the following arguments and conclusions could validly be made about the developmental state and political economy of community media in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa: Firstly, regardless of the differences in types, size, contents, ideology, technology, economy, and professional imperative, there is a robust and complex culture of community media in the English-speaking countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. This position is challenged only by the evidence of the demise of community press in Ghana and of the non-existence of ‘grassroots’ community broadcasting in Nigeria.

Secondly, community-based journalists draw on multiplicity of organizational and management structures to ensure rootedness, participation in, and accountability of community media stations, as well as to inform a two-way flow of communication for civic empowerment and for development. While the participatory and management structures are better organized within the community broadcast media sector, they are somewhat loosely organized within the community press sector primarily for the benefit of business stakeholders; and only secondarily for the participatory benefit of local communities. But, generally, evidence tends to indicate that without the existence of such structures, the very sustainability of community media outside elitist political mechanisms and commercial influences could be difficult.

Thirdly, the funding mechanism for community media is gradually shifting from 'patronage' towards either 'commercial' or 'mixed' funding arrangements for the purpose of sustainability. Though a large percentage of corporately-affiliated community press in South Africa still lean strongly on a purely 'business' funding model for survival, the possible danger this holds for investigative and campaigning practices for public policy reforms has also been recognized.

Fourthly, there are recognized attempts at 'active' audience development across the Anglophone Sub-Saharan region. However, audience participation strategies, in varying ways, draw on three emerging practice patterns: the participatory engagements of different cadres of audiences in the ownership and management of community media stations through diversity of representational structures; the provision of access to technologies and technicalities of productions and programming; as well as the strategic and partial delivery of audiences from the informal economic sector to advertisers or to their agents.

There are, therefore, concrete proofs from respondents' comments and from institutional documents that support the fact that community media institutions in the three countries draw tremendous support from the communities and from audiences in the belief that such partnerships is at the core of what constitutes community media, distinguishing them from commercial or public service media; as well as essential for the sustainability and the activist organization of community media institutions to enable citizens find forums to engage with the States in public policy debates and decisions.

Having examined the diversity and political economy of small press and broadcast media in South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana, I will now turn to the next chapter where I will present and analyze the empirical findings on substantial media policy changes and the enduring policy concerns of community media groups.

## Chapter Six

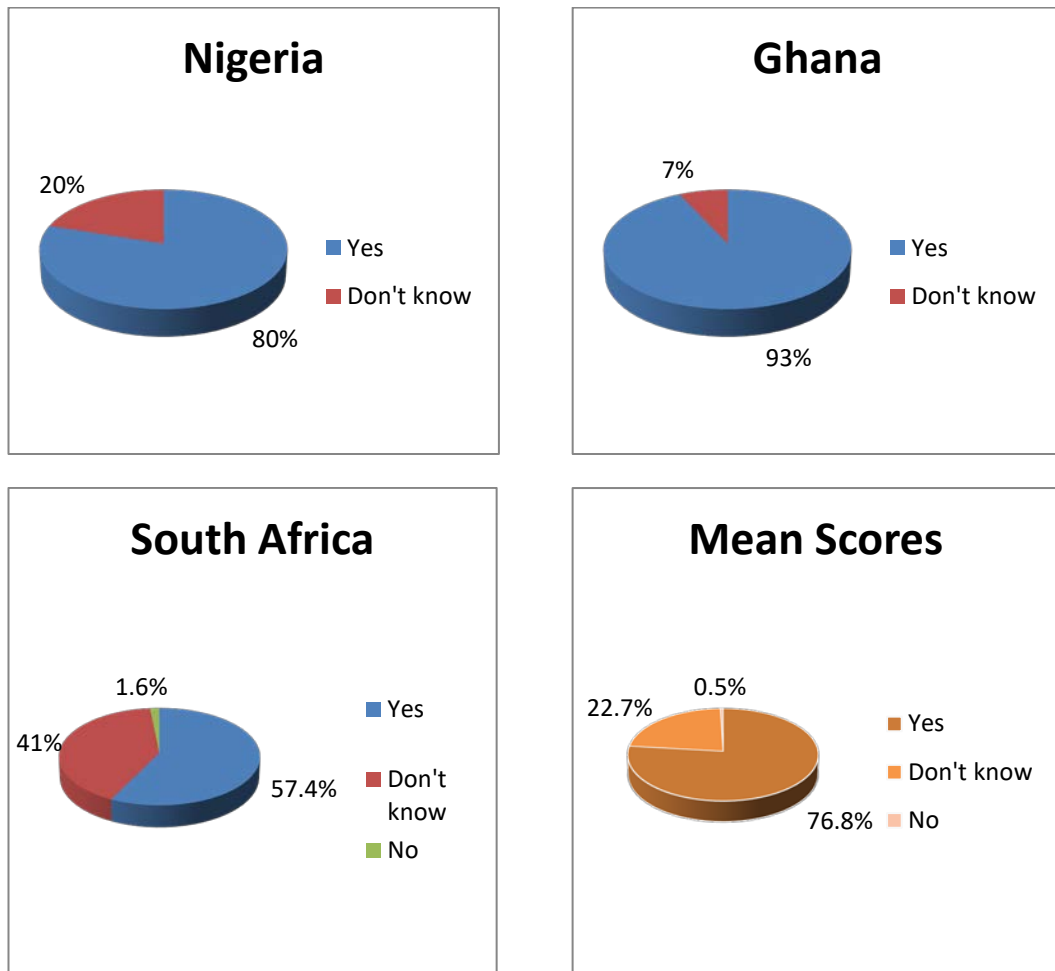
### **Policy Changes and Key Policy Concerns of Community Media**

This sixth chapter covers fieldwork findings aimed to address the questions of substantial media policy changes impacted by activism and of the principal policy concerns of community-based journalists. The questions of contemporary media policy changes (statutory & non-statutory) and of policy visions, just like in the previous chapter, are approached from a comparative perspective.

#### **6.1 Substantial Policy Changes**

Majority of respondents from across South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria admit that, because of the deregulations of the early-1990s and beyond, there have been significant media policy changes with both positive and negative consequences across the Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa; that media policy changes with positive outcomes, informed largely by civil society and media activisms, are now far larger in number than those with negative impacts; and that, with the growing expansion in community media and in alternative platforms for opinion-formations, dialogue, and consensus-building, outside those constituted by the States and mainstream commercial media, alternative journalists and media activists have played (or are playing) significant role in media policy developments across the continent in the last two decades (see figure 1.3 for comparative survey).

**Figure 1.3:** Comparative survey on substantial positive media policy changes



Out of the 15 valid responses to the questionnaire in Nigeria, 80% admit there have been substantial policy changes in the last two decades that impact positively in the life of ordinary citizens. Only 20% maintain “Don’t know/Not sure” position. Among those policies with positive impacts mentioned are the *1999 Constitution* put in place by the military to promote media freedom, media pluralism, and political accountability; *Freedom of Information Act of 2011* that ensures citizens’ access to public information through judicial process; the *Nigeria Broadcasting Code* (2010) that encourages transparent legal and political processes for access to the radio spectrum; enables all political parties to be given a level-playing field in electronic media during political

campaigns; and ensures the gradual switchover from analogue to digital media. However, 25% are critical of the *1999 Constitution* and the *Code*. They maintain, firstly, that by preventing religious bodies from the ownership of broadcasting media and by their failure to ensure the institutionalization of public service broadcasting, the *Constitution* and the *Code* have not gone far enough in granting freedom of expression and of the press. Secondly, NBC's monitoring mechanism has not gone far enough in controlling 'yellow journalism' in the country.

From South Africa, out of the 54 valid responses to the questionnaire, 57.4% acknowledge substantial media policy changes with positive impacts. Only 41% maintain "Don't know/Not sure" posture. Among those policies with positive effects listed include the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, media freedom, and the development of economic support for media pluralism; the IBA Act that strengthened community participation in media ownership and decision-making through small media; the *Electronic Communications Act of 2005* that institutionalizes civil society-based representation and advocacy in support of policy-making; the new Press Code that strengthens the power of the Press Ombudsman and the Appeal Panel to ensure professionalism; improved legislative standards in relation to defamation laws; laws that introduce independent media regulators; the changes in media rules regarding the publication of information about victims of sex crimes; policies that have enabled explosion in online media to provide instant and easy access to news; the MDDA Act that strengthened media diversity and development; and laws that enable the employment of people of colour within mainstream media industries. However, 46% of respondents are still critical of the poor implementation of employment laws by MDDA and how this weakness still allows many 'Whites' occupy senior positions, while people of colour who are highly experienced are still placed at the lower cadre of the

employment scale. Respondents also criticize the continuing lack of effective management by regulators of ‘stereotypes’ and of the use of ‘racial language’ in crime reportage in the media.

And from Ghana, out of the 14 valid responses to the questionnaire, 93% admit there have been substantial policy changes with positive outcomes. Only 7% maintain “Don’t know/Not sure” position. Among those policies with positive effects listed include the *1992 Constitution* that guarantees freedom of the press and media pluralism; the repeal of the *Criminal Libel and Seditious law* by NPP government, whereby press offences formally punished under that law will now be handled under Civil Tort actions; the current proposal for the establishment of *Media Development Fund*; the current proposal for the *Freedom of Information Act*; and the proposal for the *Whistleblower Act* that will enable effective management of media excesses through institutional adoptions of objective practice policies. 50% are, however, critical of those policies that still strengthen monopoly of the media spaces by the State or by private commercial corporations; as well as the ineffective managements of media outputs that have strong political blackmail, violence, and nudity priorities.

Evidently, an average of 76.8% of respondents across the three countries is in agreement that there have been substantial media policy changes with positive impacts on citizenship and in favour of community media activism in the last two decades.

## **6.2 Key Policy Concerns**

While there are recognized media policy changes with progressive consequences across the three countries, a careful examination of respondents’ oral comments and some policy documents also indicate that, in spite of these achievements, there are still some ‘key’ media policy concerns that require further actions in terms of mediated activism



and official deregulations in favour of citizenship. There are those policy concerns that are general to either two or three of the countries under investigation; and there are those that are unique to each legislative country or are specific to the needs of each community media sector.

### **6.2.1 Shared Policy Visions**

Shared concerns are expressed, among others, on the following issues: availability of funding; how community media have unfairly been left to compete for limited advertisement resources with big mainstream media institutions; the lack of transparency in the licensing procedures for broadcast media and/or the limitation in available spectrum frequencies; the drive for tighter control of the media to manage excesses in politicization, sensationalization and commercialization; planned regulations of social media uses; effective regulations for digital migration for community electronic media; and the need to draw on African ethics and traditional values to inform regulations. But how these concerns and their contexts are addressed by respondents differs markedly from one country to the other, problematizing areas of similarities and differences.

#### **6.2.1.1 Funding Policy**

Evidently, funding pressure on community media has been translated over the years into a major policy concern. There are, however, three dimensions to the issue: how availability of funding support from government can enable alternative media withstand pressing economic recessions; how lack of adequate funding now forces community media stations to turn to excessive commercialization; and how reliance either on ‘commercial’ or ‘mixed’ funding can assist or impede editorial competencies and investigative practices. But, generally, interviewees are in agreement that it is the poor economic conditions of African countries, reduction in international supports, changes

in audiences and how they access news, and the growing demands of global political economy that makes funding a perennial policy issue.

Mudashiru Atoyebi of the Nigerian Press Council, for example, notes that apart from the fact that UNDP and IRA occasionally provide funding to the Council to assist in the training of journalists in the country, there is no direct government financial support to influence the development of the community press industry. And because these establishments are funded primarily through proprietorship and with money realized from sales and advertising, they tend to dance to the political and commercial dictates of their proprietors and editors and flout some significant professional ethics in the process. For him, while fidelity to professionalism remains one of the primary concerns of the Press Council, how the community press could be supported by government to minimize issues bothering on unpaid staffs salaries, brown envelope syndrome, and potential political influences where some of the proprietors work in partnership with political administrators, is worth official consideration. He cautions, however, that the magnitude of the funding problem is just too large for government to be expected to resolve it completely just within a year or two. Atoyebi's argument in support of the need to establish a better supportive mechanism for the small press industry in Nigeria simply captures, to some degree, the general feelings of other respondents in the country.

Interviewees from Ghana also complain about unavailability of official funding support. They maintain that, in view of this limitation, keeping community media afloat in the country is a huge struggle. Kofi Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada), admits that the only areas of support, which is a big relieve for the sector, is "the waiver of tax on the importation of community broadcasting equipment" and the enablement of staffs of government ministries to engage, on a long-term basis, with community radio stations

in extensive services. Outside these, he notes, firstly, that government is not funding the sector. Rather government requires from them to pay VAT on their services, to pay frequency fee of \$200 to NCA, and to pay utility bills in the same degree that mainstream commercial media houses are required to pay. Secondly, though the democratic government of Late Professor John Mill Atta had in late-2011, during his annual budgetary speech to the parliament, made a public announcement with regards to the establishment of a Media Development Fund (MDF), until the modality for the functionality of that funding scheme is successfully worked out, community media institutions in the country will still have to be sustained only through local community supports, minimal advertising, private sponsorship, and minimal grants received from development agencies.

Explaining the funding concern of the management of Radio Ada in particular, Lahweh admits that the main concern for official funding is tied around participatory programming and the training of their staff; that is because these are more capital intensive than even the acquisition of broadcast technologies. He notes that in order for community radio institutions in the country to continue to engage the talents of the local people in programming to improve local contents, the question of official funding support for the sector should be quickly addressed by government through pro-active policy.

From South Africa, Nicholas Dawes of the Mail & Guardian newspaper (Gauteng) admits, firstly, that it is the fast changing publishing environment in terms of audiences and the way they access news and the potential demands for increase in capital investments that continues to raise concerns today about the availability of larger money for the sustainability of the community press in South Africa. Secondly, the problem of funding has *ab initio* been tied with the gradual drying up of foreign supports for

alternative press institutions and with the minimal and “right-centered” economic policy adopted by ANC government in the early-1990s. He notes that the Mail & Guardian, at that time, had a shared critical vision with unionist movements and grassroots (“leftist”) publication organizations of the “Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme” under which the ANC government’s economic policy was initially articulated. But with the gradual adoption of a mega-economic system and with the establishment of a central funding system for the development of small media institutions in the country, the harsh criticisms of government’s economic policies and of the available funding support to promote media diversity has reduced drastically. Thirdly, while the ANC government’s recent proposal to the Parliament to increase the money paid by mainstream media institutions in support of MDDA’s media development projects is indicative of an attempt to buy over “the small media guys” for the purpose of power-building for the democrats, the proposal is nevertheless recommendable.

Dawes further explains that the transition of the Mail & Guardian from its earlier strictly non-profit-making model to a combination of a “high-tech commercial model” with “non-profit (or public benefit) model where donors put money in for powerful investigative journalism, advocacy around media freedom, and the training of journalists” was informed by the difficulty the company had getting on the schedules of the big advertising agencies and by the need to avoid what happened to the New Nation, Grassroots, Vrye Weekblad and other old alternative newspapers.

While critiquing the adoption of a purely ‘commercial’ funding model to support community media, Dawes’ comment also suggests a ‘mixed funding’ strategy as the most appropriate in contemporary times for the internal management of small press organizations across Africa. ‘Mixed funding’ is also recommended by AMARC-ALC’s *Principles for a democratic legislation of community broadcasting* (2008). The

advantage of a ‘mixed model’ rests, firstly, on how it helps the small media industry survive unexpected moments of economic recession and the prevailing highly competitive advertising landscape. Secondly, it provides the necessary opportunity for small media institutions to keep firm grips with their humanist visions, investigative practices, and campaigning for reforms.

In view of respondents’ comments, I wish to maintain that it is highly important for governments to put in place, by way of national legislations, stable funding arrangements (devoid of official self-serving agenda); that is, if community media initiatives must be stably sustained across Sub-Saharan Africa. The continuous provision of funding support can potentially offer not only stability, but also innovation and growth to the sector. Finding appropriate mechanisms to improve public funding (in addition to private funding initiatives) for community media, within the context of a fast shifting global economy and regulatory environments, is crucial for the future participation of small media in campaigning for public policy changes and positive national developments across the African region.

#### **6.2.1.1 Equitable Management of Advertisement Resources**

Closely tied with funding is the concern for equitable management of limited advertisement resources, through official policy, to benefit community media and mainstream media establishments. There are three dimensions to the issue: the difficulty small media have in getting into the advertisement schedules of big media and the concomitant result of having to lean only on the informal economic sector; how national policy can provide for equal advertising benefits for all media institutions; and the negative consequences of extensive drive for advertisement benefits on community media.

The issue of equitable advertisement benefit is, however, not addressed by respondents from Nigeria. The concern is more specifically addressed by respondents from Ghana and South Africa. However, from policy documents it is evident, firstly, that the problem of advertisement management remains a perennial policy issue across the three countries. Secondly, while there is an official budgetary arrangement in South Africa to encourage equitable advertisement placement by government departments across different media sectors (mainstream and community), such an arrangement is lacking in Nigeria and Ghana.

A personal study of Chapter Seven of the NBC Code, for example, shows that the document contains a guideline for advert placements in broadcast media in Nigeria. While the document requires that every advertisement should aim to conform to professional ethics and that equal access is given to facilitate political party-related campaign messages prior to elections, it however warns against the use of advertisement to exploit children and youths or to encourage 'the popularization of negative myths and superstitious beliefs' (Section 7.0.21).

The document also allows a total of four-and-a-half minutes advertising in a 30-minute programme and nine minutes advertising in a 60-minutes programme. The only exception is Grade A programme (Presidential broadcast) where no advertising is allowed. Though the Code permits a minimal advertising in community media in the form of 'local spot announcements' (Section 9.1.1c), it however, fails to canvass for equal advertising opportunity for community media stations. One of the consequences of this failure may be seen in the singular drive by some campus radio stations for excessive commercialization for the purpose of survival amidst the highly competitive advertising market in Nigeria.

Addressing, through oral interview, how the poor management of advertisement spaces in Ghana impact on the advertising benefits available to Radio Ada (Big Ada), Isaac Djagbletey, the Programme Coordinator of the radio station, maintains that Radio Ada, because of its inability to compete on a national scale with the big commercial media houses for the limited advertisement resources, has been forced to focus only on the informal economic sector within Big Ada and Ada Foah for minimal advertising income.

He maintains that, among other financial resources available to the station, it is “paid advertorial” (e.g. funeral announcements) and “advertising services for local small entrepreneurship” (e.g. biscuits, soap, palm-kernel oil, body oil and other locally produced goods) that now help bring in minimal finances for the radio station. He admits “when an individual has produced something good and is appropriately registered, the community radio station is open to give him access to the public to promote his goods and services”. For Djagbletey, the possibility of official budgetary support for the placement of advertisements in community radios in the country, as it is the case in South Africa, is something that should be looked into by government.

Outside the question of entry into the advertisement spaces dominated by big media establishments and the provision of promotional services only to the informal economic sector, respondents also expressed concern about the negative impact increasing competitions for limited advertisement resources is having on the community radio sector in South Africa. Adrian Louw of Bush Radio (Western Cape) observes that, as a result of the constant fight for advertisements in order to stay afloat and maintain their volunteers that are mostly unemployed, a good number of community radio stations in South Africa “are beginning to sound like commercial stations. They are more interested in the products that they are selling and in the charges they impose on

interviews and other services”. For him, because this problem has now reached “a crisis point”, it has become a very big issue of concern for the management of Bush Radio.

He maintains that the issue requires MDDA, as the government body responsible for community media development, to look again at how community radio stations are funded. It requires stakeholders to review continually how community broadcast media can best fit into a purely Western business model. It requires a rethink of “how we started as a community radio and why some stations now sound like really bad version of community radio”.

Brenda Leonard of Bush Radio, is however of the view that, in order to help address the existing imbalance in advertising benefits in South Africa, there is the need for government to formulate pro-active policy measures that can ensure that the 30% advertisements allocations built into government annual budget and made available to government departments, for the purpose of advert placements in community media, actually come to these stations. She maintains that, so far, there are problems with the disbursement of these annual advertisement budgetary allocations; and that government needs to look into this issue and address it once and for all.

#### **6.2.1.3 Licensing and Frequency Allocation Procedures**

Most respondents from the community broadcast media of the three countries express concern about limitations imposed by broadcast media regulators on frequency allocations. They admit, firstly, that the modality for licensing, though unique to the experience of each country, is not sufficiently independent and transparent. Secondly, that, though radio frequency is essentially a limited natural resource, the question of equitable frequency allocations, in line with the requirements of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), should be approached by electronic media regulators



as issues of fundamental human right and as touching on effective service delivery to the citizenry.

Briefly addressing the issue of licensing procedures in relation to Nigeria, Mark Ojiah of NBC notes that Nigeria currently has a good 'bidding system' for the licensing of electronic media and institutions in the country. Secondly, licenses are granted only on payment of legally prescribed fees. Thirdly, there are specific licensing conditions, laid out by law, that applicants are expected to follow on the formal reception of their licenses. And fourthly, a license may be renewed subject only to the required renewal process and the satisfaction of the conditions under which the license was granted in the first instance or subject to the findings of a "Public Hearing Committee" set up by the Commission to determine the appropriateness of renewal. He maintains that the NBC Code recognizes only 15 sub-categories of broadcast licenses placed under seven broad divisions: terrestrial; satellite, cable, community media, networking service, syndication service, and internet broadcast; and that it is illegal for any person in the country to operate an electronic media without being appropriately licensed by the Commission.

Based on documentary evidence, some critics of the Commission have, however, blamed it for its lack of political will to apply sanctions on defaulting licensees (Saidu, 2002). Community media activists, orally interviewed, are also very critical of NBC for its lack of independence in the licensing process and for its failure to license 'grassroots' community media in line with the Presidential directive of 2010. They demand that the official directive be immediately complied with by the Commission for the good of rural communities (cf. NCRC's *Communiqué*, March 29, 2012).

However, comparing the Nigerian licensing experience with that of South Africa, Karen Thorn of CTCTV (Western Cape) is highly critical of what she describes as "the

random procedure” introduced by ICASA for the licensing of electronic media system in the country. She notes that when the *Electronic Communications Act* (2005) was issued, it provided for “classed licenses - a haphazard, experimental, and pilot kind of a thing - where anybody out there can just fill in the application form and send it to ICASA. And ICASA has to respond within 60 days. And if it does not respond the applicant can assume that it has a license”.

Thorn observes, firstly, that “the random process” for license applications and frequency allocations does not provide for “a leveled-playing-field whereby all players at different levels are brought together to bid for licenses and the best bidders are awarded licenses as it is the case in Nigeria”. Secondly, there is no real diligence and monitoring by ICASA to “check and verify who the applicants are and whether the applicants have track records of experience in television broadcasting”. As a result, most of those stations licensed as CTVs never went into air or collapsed at take-offs or have been taken over by big private commercial media organizations that use them as advertising outlets across the country (e.g. Kagiso Media now controls Soweto Community TV and Nelson Mandela Bay TV). She argues that, while these stations have given opportunities to a lot of local people to produce contents, they are basically extensions of commercial private television entrepreneurships.

For Thorn, the licensing process has not worked effectively to check media concentration and cross-media ownership in South Africa. She maintains that there is no justification for the adoption of the “classed licensing” process in the ECA, which in some sense is detrimental to the development of community television in the country. To further compound the situation, she notes, all efforts by stakeholders to gain access into ICASA for a better explanation has remained futile. She confirms that ICASA apparently operates a “closed-door” administrative and political environment that is

sometimes beyond understanding. For Thorn, things are only getting better now because of their regular meetings with the Portfolio Committee on Communication (PCC), a parliamentary body that works with ICASA to look into the challenges faced by media establishments in South Africa and that makes recommendations to the Parliament.

If issues with licensing in South Africa has more to do with the failures of the adopted licensing procedures, respondents' testimonies from Ghana shows that the licensing experience of Ghanaians is about the purported lack of spectrum frequencies for community radios; as well as about the adoption of an opaque licensing process that is easily open to manipulations in the interest of politicians and of the ruling political parties.

Speaking about the arbitrariness and patronage in the licensing process in Ghana, Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada) notes that the opaque nature of the licensing process makes it extremely difficult to know which politician owns which broadcast media for the promotion of a partisan agenda against the common good of the people. He maintains that there is so much confusion surrounding the "frequency mapping" made by NCA. And as a result, those frequencies meant for community media have hardly been used for that purpose. Rather than license community radio stations, NCA prefers to use the scarce frequency to place on board private commercial radio stations (or what they called "District Assembly Radio Stations", with political appointees as Directors). This development is in addition to the existence of ineffective monitoring of the broadcasting environment by NCA; as well as the misuse of terminologies such as "community commercial" by NCA to confuse the actual status of some radio stations purportedly licensed as commercial radio stations. Lahweh notes that if things continue this way then ongoing development of community broadcasting will not have a future in Ghana. The problem of clarity of language in the policy of regular commercial radio

vis-à-vis community radio was also confirmed by Mrs. Wilna Quarmyne, the Coordinator of GCRN.

Mrs. Quarmyne, in a face-to-face conversation, further provides the context for understanding some of the problems relating to frequency allocations to community media institutions in Ghana. She notes that the campaigns for equitable spectrum access began during the democratic administration of President Jerry Rawlings. Mrs. Quarmyne observes that the whole question of “struggles” for frequencies since 1999, when the first three community radio stations were licensed, have been met with empty promises by every government in power “even after follow-ups” by the Community Radio Initiatives of Ghana. She notes further that after the November 2000 failed affair with John Mahama, the then Minister of Communications, who had promised to lift Rawlings’ ban on further frequency allocations “exceptionally for community radio stations”, it would be six years later before any community radio station recognized by the Network could get its frequency, beginning with Rev. Fr. Rex Begbey’s coordinated Nabina Radio at Navrongo (Kasena-Nankana East District of Ghana).

She admits that the fundamental problem with frequency allocations rests more on the fact that NCA Act of 1998 was deficient in matters pertaining to community broadcasting. The old NCA Act, however, did provide for a more transparent process for frequency allocations. For example, it provided that “within 60 days from the day of submission of application, NCA has to give a response to a frequency application”. And where it refuses approval to any applicant, NCA has to offer an explanation to the applicant within 7 days. This clause, she observes, was dropped out completely from the 2009 amended NCA Act. As a result, the 12 new Community Radio Initiatives, facilitated by GCRN, has found it difficult to use the 2009 NCA Act to support appeals for a review of the applications they made between September 2010 and August 2011.

Even a letter of petition written on behalf of the Initiatives by UNDF to government was brushed off.

The second militating problem, Mrs. Quarmyne confirms, has to do with the fact that NCA (formerly known as “Ghana Frequency, Registration & Control Board”) was essentially at that time a security organization. And the issue of broadcasting was seen as a security affair. And because NCA still functions largely as a security agency, more or less tale-guided from the Presidency and accountable to the Ministry of Communication, the Network continues to find it difficult to convince it to license community radios in the country and to clearly differentiate between authentic community radio stations and private commercial stations that are being licensed by the agency to politicians as community radio stations.

A good demonstration of the murky frequency regulatory picture is the case of “Latino community radio”. The “Latino” case was first mentioned by Kwesi Gharthey-Tagoe, the Station Manager of Radio Peace (Winneba) and later confirmed by Mrs. Quarmyne. The story is about the experience of a twin community (Tesano-Mungwa) with shared communication and information interests. The two neighbouring communities separately submitted license applications to NCA in 2005 for geographic community radios. But because of their proximity to each other and to avoid conflicts of interests, NCA (and later GCRN) suggested that they come together as one community and submit a single license application. The two communities accepted the proposal. They formed a democratic association to apply for a license under the name “Latino Community Radio”. Their license application was rejected by NCA under the false claim that there were too many applicants for community radios.

This issue moved on for years. But five years later, a community radio frequency was granted by NCA to a Russian-educated former Minister based in Accra who is from that same locality. The former Minister and his wife came to GCRN seeking help to set their radio station in motion. Mrs. Quarmyne notes that this development, whereby a license meant for a community was approved for a single politician and without any radius limitation, came as a complete shock to the Network and to the two communities in question. And when the former Minister was advised to go and resolve the matter with “Latino” people so that they could embark together on a joint radio project, the former Minister’s response was “I don’t care; I have my frequency”. He and his wife left GCRN secretariat furious. And later, information came around that the politician has been allowed to install a 2Kilowatts transmitter on one of the highest hills in Accra close to where GBC’s transmitters are located.

The Quarmynes averred that allowing him to locate his transmitter on that hill was strategic – it was meant to enable him cover all of Accra and its environs. Yet, his radio station (Radio Vrabda) was initially licensed as a community radio station. For the Quarmynes, the licensing process for Radio Vrabda was a complete hoax orchestrated from within NCA and the “Castle”. And when NCA was questioned by the Network, the regulatory agency simply responded that the granting of the frequency was a decision made by the Board on security considerations. Mrs. Quarmyne notes that it took much condemnation and advocacy for NCA to eventually authorize, one year after, a separate frequency of 5Kms radius to “Latino” people. She admits that the “Latino” case highlights the lack of transparency in the licensing process in Ghana. It is this opaque process and other issues that GCRN now struggles against in partnership with a host of other organizations, including COTA, MFWA and others.

Edmund Fianko, the Manager of the Engineering Department of NCA, in a face-to-face conversation (and later through email), refutes the claim that NCA has serious issues with GRCN. He admits, however, firstly that “NCA depends on the National Security Coordinator (NSC) for security advice on applicants of FM radio broadcasting stations”; secondly, that “feedback from NSC are irregular and can take a long time”; and thirdly, that the radio station GCRN talks about as belonging to a politician is a commercial radio station.

Defending the allegation of lack of transparency in the process of spectrum management, Fianko notes that “a review of the FM radio broadcasting classification policy is underway. The objective is to reduce the maximum coverage area of commercial FM radio stations from 1000km to 45km to enhance the ability to reuse frequencies to meet existing demand for local FM radio stations in communities”. Additionally, he insists that the allegation concerning the independence of NCA from the Executive arm of government is purely a question for the legislature and not for NCA. And with regards to the alleged weak monitoring capacity of NCA, Fianko states that “NCA monitors technical aspects of broadcasting effectively with automated spectrum monitoring and management systems in Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tamale in addition to 3 mobile monitoring stations”. Fianko is emphatic that press and broadcast contents monitoring is the prerogative of NMC and not the role of NCA.

Generally, the ‘frequency scarcity’ type of argument adopted by broadcast media regulators in Sub-Saharan Africa has for decades remain the most familiar (and perhaps) outdated method of regulating broadcast media by the State. The aim has always been to manage access to the airwaves in favour of state services and political agenda (Feintuck & Varney, 2006). One of the significance of my proposed ‘ethical-political’ approach to media regulation rest on the need to reform this argument as the basis for broadcast

media management across African nation states, so as to ensure broader access and representation of broader interests outside that of the state.

Secondly, the two main types of licensing process adopted by the different African countries is also a reflection, not only of informed choices specific to each country, but also of the different transnational traditions that inform such choices. The ‘Bidding’ process operational in Nigeria, on the one hand, is generally identified with the ‘auctioning’ policy of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of North America. The approach adopted by South Africa and Ghana, on the other hand, and which places licensing at the discretion of the regulator, is generally identified with the licensing approach of ITC in UK as contained in the Broadcasting Act of 1990 (Feintuck & Varney, 2006).

#### **6.2.1.4 Digital Broadcast Migration**

The question of digitalization of community broadcast media is one of the shared policy issue raised at a two-day International Conference on community media held at the University of Ibadan between 27 and 29 March, 2012. The conference (tagged “If Community Radio is the Answer what is the Question?”) was organized by NCRC in partnership with the Institute for Media and Society and other organizations. Participants at the conference were drawn from diverse professional backgrounds within different African countries and across different international organizations. In a *Communiqué* issued at the end of the Conference, media activists, academics, and members of industry organizations present admit the need for communities to continue to take advantage of the new digital technologies; as well as maximally draw on available capacity-building opportunities for effective utilization of these technologies.



The issue of digital convergence and migration is, however, not a new policy issue within Sub-Saharan Africa. It has been in the front burner in media policy discourses across the region for years now. Different countries, in response to media policy reform demands, have already set out datelines for the completion of the transition from analogue to digital media in line with international best broadcast practices. For example, in Nigeria the analogue system is to be faced out by 2012 (now updated to 2015); in South Africa, the dateline is 2013; and in Ghana the agreed faced out period is 2015.

The electronic media regulators of the different countries have also tended, in recent times, to use their set plans for digital migrations as arguments to explain delays in spectrum allocations within their respective countries. Most of them orally interviewed indicate that it is utterly unrealistic for community media groups within their respective countries to seek additional spectrum allocations until the digital transition phases have been duly completed. Community media groups generally disagree with that argument; they explain that delays and purported limitations in spectrum allocations are primarily political.

While most respondents from across the three African countries admit that it is still difficult for media regulators to persuade and convince rural viewers and listeners who are already used to analogue systems to change to digital receivers or to acquire from their meager earnings converter equipment for programmed materials, the questions of careful planning (bearing in mind its economic, national developmental objectives, and training implications) and of availability of relevant regulations for 'contents development' in the switch-over remains the most contentious issue across the Sub-Saharan region.

Respondents further maintain that, directly affecting the ability of some government agencies to develop effective regulatory guidelines for the future management of digital contents is the lack of comprehensive broadcasting laws in some countries. Ghana, for example, does not have a comprehensive broadcasting law at the moment. Lahweh of Radio Ada notes that, though GRCN in partnership with strategic civil society organizations has gone around the country, obtained views, and made submissions to the Ansu-Kyeremeh-led national broadcast law Committee “on how a broadcasting law for the country should be like to eliminate monopoly and create freedom”, the Parliament is yet to issue a “White Paper” regarding the final draft of the Report submitted to it by the Committee. Respondents from Ghana are in agreement that, unless a comprehensive national broadcasting law is approved by the Parliament and unless NCA and NMC are willing to continue to work as a team (rather than against each other), even the question of digital content development will still remain problematic in the country.

Maintaining a similar argument in relation to South Africa, Marc Swinges, the Vice Chair of the South African Screen Federation (SASFED), an industry organization for the independent audio-visual sector, orally admits that South Africa currently lacks a comprehensive television broadcast policy; and that for the past twelve to fifteen years a broadcast review process has not taken place. This means South African audio-visual broadcast facilities, to some degree, are still outdated. Swinges argues that, rather than embark on effective all-encompassing television broadcast deregulation, what government is doing is to “flag on with pieces of amendments in legislations which are very messy and untidy”. He admits “such messy amendment procedures are all over the place”.

Swinges notes that SASFED is currently working with other industry organizations to influence government to undertake a television broadcast review process and to get the review rightly done, especially in relation to the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT). He admits that the DTT migration has been fully regulated. But no attempts have been made to resolve a few problematic areas, such as the building of local infrastructures; defining clearly how additional channels will be provided for broadcast TVs; indicating what it will take for people to get their decoders; as well as how digital reception boxes will be set up for poor local people who are used to small free-to-air TVs. Other problems include “how policy is going to regulate local contents within the digital local media space; the question of standardization within the digital broadcast space; and the question of micro-management by broadcasters, especially in relation to how much they will pay producers, editors, etc”. For him, these problems could be resolved if the Department of Communications (DC), the government agency that co-ordinates media operations in the country, sets up an all-encompassing broadcast policy under which all broadcasters could operate.

Swinges further locates the setbacks to the resolutions of these problems in the ineffectiveness of ICASA. He explains that ICASA, the independent regulator of the broadcast sector, “functions as the third party in this migration process”. But SASFED is convinced that ICASA is very ineffective - affected by bureaucracy, professional incompetency, lack of transparency, and corruption. He admits that ICASA’s weakness is more glaring in the way it monitors compliance to its local contents regulations which is one of the things the body is required by law to monitor.

For Swinges, while ICASA sets the broadcast regulations; it does not follow it through to ensure compliance by public broadcasters. Secondly, the regulator has never published an accurate Report of public broadcasters’ lack of compliance with contents

regulations, except in 2009. Though findings, from a critical review of that Report by media activists, came out only in December 2011, Swinges notes that it has taken ICASA a very long time to put out one honest reflection on compliance to its policies. The accuracy of this particular Report, he observes, rests more on the fact that ICASA is able to admit, for the first time, that it has been unable to determine accurately whether broadcasters were complying with its contents regulations or not. For him, this Report is one strong proof that ICASA is still unable to perform its legally mandated role to effectively monitor the broadcast television sector in South Africa, in order to bring about the DTT migration. He observes that this is another significant area that SASFED collaborates to campaign for changes.

All efforts to have access to ICASA to confirm or disprove these allegations, however, remain unsuccessful as emails were rarely responded to; and where promises were made by some of its officers through telephone calls to set a date for interview, these were never kept.

#### **6.2.1.5 Stronger Control of Media Spaces**

Firmer political and regulatory control of media spaces is another shared policy concern of respondents from across Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. This issue is viewed from two different (but interrelated) dimensions: stronger *self-regulatory* mechanisms to inform professionalism; and government's attempts to impose professional ethics and disciplines on media institutions for mere political reasons.

Concern for stronger self-regulation to control the press industry (alternative and mainstream) in Nigeria is first expressed by Atoyebi of the Nigerian Press Council. This concern is given against the backdrop of ethnic politicization in the press and the rise in sensationalism for the purpose of commercialization.

While admitting that there are many operational laws that currently impinge on press freedom in the country and that are still relevant even to the community press sector, Atoyebi argues that, because freedom of the press is taken for granted in the country and is constrained largely by political, ethnic, and commercial biases, there is need for a more effective internal regulatory mechanisms and for training in conflict managements.

While training in conflict management will help the press sector and the Council better contain the rise in “conflict of interests”, firmer self-regulation will help improve professionalism and enable journalists have greater confidence in themselves and in their profession. Atoyebi admits that stronger self-regulations to minimize malpractices would become one of the primary focuses of his office in 2012.

Also, Muhammed of Media Trust Limited (Abuja) argues that one of the biggest challenges in journalistic practice in Nigeria today that requires well-coordinated campaigns is institutional *self-censorship*. Just like Atoyebi, his strong contention is that freedom of expression is relatively taken for granted in the country and that it is “politics” and “commercials” that regulate media practices. For him, because newspaper contents need to be effectively monitored, fidelity to the rules of self-censorship should become an issue of strong advocacy in the country to prevent anyone publishing just anything he feels like publishing. While self-censorship could become a big threat to the practice itself when publishers align with State governors and politicians, Muhammed argues that it is nevertheless a resource for institutional discipline. For him, this is one big policy area that Media Trust advocates for a rethink and for changes for the good of the profession and for news credibility.

While I agree with Atoyebi and Muhammed on the need for ongoing campaigns to strengthen self-regulations for the press in Nigeria, I wish, however, to argue that, seen in the light of the recent Leveson Report of November 2012 in the UK, self-censorship alone within the context of a free press may not be a sufficient point for advocacy. This could go hand-in-hand with campaigns for the strengthening, through legislative rulings, of the power of the *Press Ombudsman* which is an arm of the Nigerian Press Council and of the law courts to ensure more effective legal mechanisms for a timely and efficient redress of press offences and the holding of the press accountable to aggrieved citizens. Again, with the high level of corruption in the country, the strengthening of the courts and an independent complaint body, for instance, will also require the establishment of a 'check-and-balance' mechanism that could keep these institutions equally accountable to the citizens through the Ministry of Justice and/or the Parliament.

While concerns for stronger control of the media is seen by respondents in Nigeria in terms of institutional self-censorship, it is viewed widely by interviewees from Ghana and South Africa in terms of official attempts, through official orders or legislative instruments, to unilaterally impose journalistic ethics and discipline on the media purely for political gains.

Kwesi Ghartey-Tagoe of Radio Peace (Winneba) and Mrs. Quarmyne of GCRN (Accra) are in agreement that attempts to externally control the media spaces in Ghana is best exemplified in the case of Multimedia Corporation, a private media conglomerate with a number of commercial radio stations. They explain, through oral interviews, that Asempa 94.7FM (Accra), one of the radio stations belonging to the Corporation, constituted a panelist discussion sometime in 2011, to publicize and critique a public policy event. But the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the current ruling political

party, felt that its leadership was being attacked by the radio station. As a result, the NDC-led government of Late John Mill Atta unilaterally issued an order prohibiting government ministries and agencies from having any official dealing with Multimedia Corporation. For Ghartey-Tagoe and Mrs. Quarmyne, this official statement was generally interpreted as indicative of an official attempt to unilaterally impose discipline and to constraint press freedom in Ghana. The official behaviour generated public outcry, forcing government to rescind its decision.

A similar official ‘push’ for greater control of the media (especially the print media that has long been perceived as the most noisy and problematic) is observed by respondents in South Africa. Respondents admit that this official ‘push’ has come in two ways: through attempts to reorganize print media ownership on the basis of demographics (with specific emphasis on ‘Black’ townships coverage); and through the recent proposal and lobby in the parliament by the conservative arms of ANC-led government for the formations of the “Protection of State Information Bill” and the “Media Appeal Tribunal Bill”.

Louw of Bush Radio (Western Cape), for example, indicates that the management of the radio station is seriously concerned about the “Protection of State Information Bill”. He explains that because this ‘Bill’ (if passed by the Parliament) will function to diminish media freedom in the country, Bush Radio has also picked it up for advocacy. For him, South Africans are generally afraid that the “Information Secrecy Bill” will only function to affect disadvantaged communities who will be prevented from accessing relevant government information to fight for their rights or hold government accountable.

Other respondents in South Africa are equally worried about the possible negative outcomes of the “Information Secrecy Bill”. For them, issues tied to the “Bill” are not as oversimplified as the politicians attempt to make them look like. It is very much interwoven with the question of freedom of expression; with the ownership and control of the media; and with the right to public information guaranteed under *Section 32* of the South African Constitution. Majority of respondents, therefore, agree that the proposals for the “Information Secrecy Bill” and for the establishment of the “Media Appeal Tribunals” is a direct attempt by ANC government to unilaterally impose media ethics from above in order to suppress critical voices; something reminiscent of the old apartheid era when freedom of expression and access to State information were denied the citizens.

But for Dawes of the Mail & Guardian (Gauteng), far from the new policy proposals being an official backslide to the old apartheid era, with its rules that were promulgated under the state of emergencies to limit freedom of expression, the new proposals “look like softer arrangements”. Yet, the effects will be the same, namely, “to contain press freedom”. Dawes notes that it is important to be cautious about comparing the new policy issues with that of the apartheid governments; that is because under the apartheid administration “we were dealing with an illegal, racist regime”. But now “we are talking about legalized and somewhat increasingly authoritarian democratic government”.

He maintains that “there is no doubt that there is an authoritarian strain emerging in this democratic government and the desperate desire to take control of the media environment that is seen as uncontrollably noisy and frustrating and not ideologically on point with the democratic government’s development objectives”. For him, the saddest part of the emerging authoritarian political culture is that the very process for the entrenchment of democratic authoritarianism and the demand for a tighter regulation of



the press is aggressively being driven by the very people who put themselves forward as champions of democracy and “who purportedly ought to be champions of community media development in the MDDA and in the government”.

Mhlongo of Jozi FM (Soweto) also confirms that attempt by those in the highest echelon of the ANC government to silence the media is an issue that currently requires new platforms for campaigns. He, however, argues that so far the possible negative impacts of the two ‘Bills’ are perceived mostly within the media houses. The two ‘Bills’ will only be seen to impact on the generality of citizens only when it becomes obvious that the media can no longer make comments about corruptions in the country or get people better informed to struggle for their rights.

For him, the bad spirits generated so far by the two ‘Bills’ are principally tied with the inability of government to properly educate the public with regards to the meanings and the overall intentions of the ‘Bills’. Secondly, the protests made so far against the ‘Bills’ under the platform of “The Right-to-Know-Campaign” come mostly from the media houses; which makes government to continue to see such protest actions merely as minority reactions. For him, unless the generality of citizens (or what he calls “the man on the street”) are drawn into the campaigns in order to constitute a majority platform for the condemnation of government’s recent policy actions, government will continue to live under the false illusion that campaigns against the two ‘Bills’ stem purely from media-related biases. For Mhlongo, while there is currently a progressive government in South Africa, the concerns of media activists about the “Information Secrecy Bill” should never be ignored by the Parliament for the overall good of the country.

Explaining the contexts for the emergence of the new policy proposals for a greater political control of the media, Dawes of the Mail & Guardian notes, firstly, that “there

has been a lot of frustration on the part of the ANC government; in the sense that when they came into power in this kind of holus-bolus moment, coverage wasn't immediately sympathetic to them; often it was critical of them. And they felt that that was very unfair". Secondly, ANC leadership felt that there was a kind of ideological alignment between print media in general and what they termed as "Western view of the world", which is more or less capitalistic and individualistic.

For him, it is these perspectives that created "a bit of friction between the media and the ANC-led government right from the beginning". That friction has gradually sharpened over the years. Even Thabo Mbeki openly expressed the democratic government's disapproval of uncontrolled media criticisms and even attempted unsuccessfully to re-order the press. Dawes maintains that the fact that press regulations are now being made very serious policy issues, further indicate the depth of frustration the present government is currently experiencing in attempting to unilaterally control the media environment in contemporary South Africa.

He explains that, while South Africa now has a Press Council-type of arrangement which is a slightly stronger self-regulatory mechanism than what is obtainable in UK under the PCC, the new ANC policy proposal "simply aims to create a statutory Press Council and a Media Appeal Tribunal as a second layer of press oversight". Dawes notes that some of the core elements of the new proposal are that the Press Council members are to be appointed by the Parliament and the Media Tribunal is supposed to be the second line of appeal beyond the Press Ombudsman.

For him, "any situation where you have politically appointed Commissars taking care of and overseeing journalistic ethics, you are going to go down a very messy road very quickly and that will have serious negative implications, not only for South Africa, but

also for the entire African continent; that is because South Africa is generally seen as a good example of how to do things the right way; and where South Africa does it right, the conviction (from Uganda to Ethiopia and from Mozambique to Ghana) is that the whole of Africa can do it right". Dawes is of the view that, while some in government and in the media may "talk about the recent development as interventions to improve media ethics, generally ethics imposed from above for political reasons will bring about nothing but negative consequences".

Seen, therefore, from the point of view of these comments, I wish to agree with Dawes' argument that for ethics to be wholesome for an effective organization of the media, "ethics have to be organically present in the newsroom and in people's vocations". All it requires for sustainability is for compliance to be monitored and managed, not by politicians, but by the profession. But where it is managed, through externally imposed political instruments, such ethical agenda will be viewed as self-serving and illegitimate and people will strive against them.

Generally, press regulations imposed from above merely for political reasons is a simple manifestation of the continuing reliance of governments on 'end-driven' and 'instrumental' approaches to media policy conception and decision-making; disregarding the positive values offered by the 'venue-based' and the 'ethical-political' approaches that ought to define effective policy-making mechanism for contemporary times. Government's continuing reliance only on the 'old' approaches, which ignores the valuable contributions of diversity of other policy actors and the value of multiplicity of policy venues, contention, compromises, and consensus-reaching, perhaps remains one of the best ways of explaining why there are still in existence today many examples of bad media ethical qualities across a number of African countries.

### 6.2.1.6 Uses and Regulations of Social Media

Responses to interviews contained only limited information on the uses of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, Wikimedia, WordPress, Instagram, WhatsApp, Nairaland, YouTube, and other ICT-generated networks) across the three countries. The pieces of information drawn from written and oral comments are not in relation to the growth of the new media industry in Sub-Saharan Africa; but only in relation to shared concern about how recent media deregulations enable (or not enable) access to the social media platforms in favour of citizenship.

Limitation in the response rate could be explained in terms of the fact that social media expansion and access, though important to media policy considerations, was not specifically targeted in the main focus of my research design. But from the limited available data, it is clear that the issue of social media appropriation and the interface between community media and social media 'sites', as well as how official regulatory considerations will affect such uses could not be entirely avoided.

It is becoming clear that there is now an extensive convergence between social media and community media platforms across the three African countries. The interface is enabled and constrained by the 'immediate context of practice and the wider socio-political and economic milieu' (Mabweazara, 2011: 692). The uses of social media across the African region has reshaped the structures of the everyday and professional lives of journalists and ordinary citizens, broken down the age old barriers among social classes and geographical divides, provided new spaces and the necessary tools for the expression of identity and culture, given rise to new communication avenues to strengthen social relationships and the campaigning impacts of activist organizations, and redefine the traditional news-making practices, whereby journalists and ordinary citizens can now more quickly collaborate to shape and reshape news, construct social

meanings, and collectively overcome repressive ideas and regimes that have existed in African societies for decades (Mabweazara, 2011).

Extensive appropriation of social media has also generated official proposals to regulate their uses to minimize libelous contents, invasion of privacy, and political blackmails. It has also awoken shared concern among ordinary citizens and activist organizations about how such censorship could constrain freedom of expression and affect the campaigning impact of critical individuals and radical media groups who work to bring about reforms in favour of citizenship.

From Nigeria, documentary evidence reveals official plans to control social media access and uses (Adepoju, 2013; Famutumi, 2013). The Federal government's proposed regulation was expressed at different forums by Mr. Benjamin Dikki, the Director-General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). Dikki admits that the Nigerian social media spaces are too free. The major issues that the proposed regulation will aim to contend are how harm to citizens, on the basis of age and cultural sensitivities, could be avoided and how libelous contents could be minimized and individual privacy protected.

While some Nigerians seem to welcome the proposed censorship as a step in the right direction, whereby the high rate of crimes committed through social media will be curtailed, media activists in the country and the Nigerian National Orientation Agency (NOA), in particular, argue that the planned regulation is only a subtle attempt by the Nigerian politicians to curtail freedom of expression and the negative criticism of government's failed social policies. They argue that social media 'sites' are personal spaces; and that government (rather than restrict) should encourage more responsible uses of these 'sites' to strengthen education and social networking for the purpose of

national development. Media activists, generally, describe the proposed regulation as autocratic and as far removed from the major problems currently facing the country, such as corruption and poor service deliveries.

A similar official regulatory consideration has been proposed recently in South Africa in relation to the decryption of Blackberry messenger service and other social networks (Atangana, 2011). The South African Deputy Communications Minister, Obed Bapela, is quoted to have called for new formal content regulations of Blackberry messenger service, whereby the South African Police will be enabled to have access to messages sent through Blackberry encrypted messenger service in the event where crimes have been committed. In the proposed regulatory environment, the permission of a magistrate would be required before Police could access such data. Bapela's justification for campaigning for the new law is grounded on the recent developments in the UK and the Saudi Arabia where campaigns are being undertaken by government officials for the decryption of some social and mobile networks to check against crimes.

Media activists in South Africa, on the contrary, have argued that the call for a new law is unnecessary; that such official censorship already exists under the *Regulation of Interception of Communication Act* (RICA). The RICA requires South Africans to register their mobile 'sim cards', allowing government the authority to track a number that has been registered in the event that it is used to commit a crime (Atangana, 2011).

Similar calls for the regulation of social media access is also evident in Ghana (Kingson, 2012; Akwei, 2013). The context, however, differs. Ghana regulatory advocacy are tied around the need to check against how social media platforms have been used by political parties to disparage opponents and to defy the 24 hours political campaign bans prior to general elections. Documentary evidence suggests that one big

challenge identified by media activists in Ghana is how security agencies will be able to use such official regulatory platform to identify the actual originators of libelous social media contents and how such regulation will at the long run affect innocent end-users (Akwei, 2013).

The documentary evidences, notwithstanding, there are some salient issues that have emerged in the debates about social media management in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa (as it is the case in other world regions). These are tied around the questions of mediation power through self-publications, the immediacy and openness of information, communicative entitlements and freedom of expression, the knowledge economy, human capital and productivity performance, and the regulatory role of the State in the face of increasing crime rates. Others are issues relating to the promotion of democratic governance and participation, culture and literacy, and the attainment of legitimacy for regulatory measures and enforcement, just to mention a few (Mansell et al., 2007; Couldry, 2007; Braun & Gillespie, 2011; Karlsson, 2011; Mudhai, 2011). How official regulatory considerations across the three countries will impact on the emancipatory efforts of those community media institutions that use social media as tools for activism also requires serious consideration by governments and policy-makers.

#### **6.2.1.7 Expanding Legal Protection for the Community Press**

Closely related to the issue of stronger press regulation and the proposed control of social media ‘sites’ is the need to protect thinly-resourced community press, through effective and expanded legal instruments to prevent them from disintegration. This policy concern is expressed in varying ways and degrees by respondents from Nigeria and South Africa. The issue did not emerge at all in Ghana.

Dawes of the Mail & Guardian (Gauteng) notes that, generally, thinly-resourced community newspapers in South Africa are vulnerable to political attacks through the use of ‘defamation’ (or *libel*) law suits; and that most often the only defenses available to them are appeals to the Constitutional court. For him, the inherent danger in this situation is that most of the small press establishments that lack the necessary finances to sustain such appeals could be forced into folding up. He suggests that the department of government responsible for legal rights should do more in terms of pro-active policy to protect small press establishments from disintegration when they fall under serious political or legal pressures.

Advancing a similar argument, but from the Nigerian legislative perspective, David Augustine, the Editor-in-Chief of the Insight Services and Communication Network (Uyo), a South Southern geopolitical private newspaper company, observes that one of the dangers facing the community press in the country, outside misguided internal policy vision, is the criminal laws of ‘defamation’ that could have serious consequences for the sector if their provisions are breached. He maintains that the *libel* law in Nigeria still needs to be improved upon in terms of “the defenses available to the small publisher of a story”. He argues that once an expanded “defense system” is established through judicial activism, there is every possibility that the Nigerian community press will be protected and made more daring in their investigative duties. *Libel* cases will also be more quickly adjudicated and dispensed of by the law courts than they are at the moment. Additionally, “expanded defense system” will provide another legal backing to the freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution.

The value of the concern for the protection of small media rests, fundamentally, on the fact that it will ensure sustainability and a degree of diversity and plurality in media output, as well as provides greater openings to newcomers into the alternative media



world without subjecting them unnecessarily to the prevailing political pressures and creed.

#### **6.2.1.8 Adoption of African Ethical Principles in Media Regulations**

One other shared recommendation made by participants at the International Conference in Ibadan and that is reflected in the *Communiqué* of March 29, 2012, as well as in some other *Communiqués* issued at the end of similar conferences and workshops across the Anglophone African Sub-Saharan region is that policymakers should adopt communally acceptable African ethical principles to think deeply through and thereby understand how Africans can use public communication technologies and diversity of media programming to overcome the developmental problems in rural communities.

Participants at the conference note, among others, that though it is important for community broadcast media across the continent to be evaluated in terms of availability of technologies and of their strong ties with interest politics and cultural developments, the normativity of community broadcast media will also require a broad-based recognition, effective articulation and utilization of positive African socio-cultural values to inform policy, management, and programming. In particular, emphasis is placed on the need to reawaken and strengthen African communitarian value as a fundamental principle for the organization of community media. For participants at the conference, the adoption of African ethical values could also go a long way to assist effective management of the dynamics of social changes evident across the African continent.

The significance of African ethical principles to the constitution of meaningful policy frameworks is also raised during a face-to-face conversation with Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada). Lahweh maintains that it is community values and ideology that ought to

inform community radio programming across the African region. Secondly, the inclusion of African traditional values in policy will help to stem the tide of how media programmes (including GTV programmes) openly encourage alcoholism, excessive cigarette consumption in the name of commercialism, and discussions on “how to enjoy sex” (including gay/lesbian dysfunctional behaviour) which is deeply against African positive value sensitivity. For him, attempts by government and professional organizations to throw traditional ethical values overboard in the pursuits of rights, neo-liberal media policy, and modernization will only at the long run work against human affectivity, a meaningful institutionalization of positive ethics, and effective media and professional discipline.

The relevance of respondents’ arguments could, however, become more obvious when seen in the light of some of the essential qualities that ground African ethical and traditional values and that have been highlighted by African moral and political philosophers ([www.plato.stanford.edu/entries](http://www.plato.stanford.edu/entries)). Among them are their affective, social, humanistic, and moral characteristics. While the affective character places the duty of love, empathy, generosity, and hospitality above all else, the social quality emphasizes the relationship between the person and the community with specific emphasis on the importance of togetherness (as against individualism) and on the values of collective responsibility, cooperation, interdependence, and reciprocal obligations. In a similar way, while humanistic quality transcends the moral needs of a particular African society and addresses issues that are of global ethical importance, the moral quality places African ethical principles beyond religious prescriptions and the will of God to the question of moral characters that have gained (or failed to gain) communal consensus.

The relevance of African ethical principles to media policy, therefore, rests on the fact that these four qualities together constitute the component elements of the moral and

philosophical frameworks within which African societies function (Kigongo, www.crvp.org). And because of how these elements are closely interwoven with African indigenous lifeworld, the increasing demand for the adoption of African ethical principles and value systems (some of which are formulated as ‘maxims’ and ‘proverbs’) can, therefore, provide another essential framework for understanding why media policy should be conceptualized and articulated today, not merely in terms of normative positive ethics, but more so in terms of the ‘political-ethical’ approach as formulated in chapter two of this work.

Respondents’ concern, therefore, suggests the need for a rethink of media policy in Africa, not only in terms of professionalized ethics of objectivity and neutrality, but also in terms of affective, social, humanistic, and moral experiences that are peculiarly indigenous and African and that can have global moral and political implications. Their concern also offers a perspective for appreciating, not only the alternative policy vision of community media, but also the attempts to ‘de-westernize’ media policy debates (Curran & Park, 2000) across Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **6.2.2 Policy Areas with Unique Qualities**

While funding, equitable advertisement management, digital migration, the adoption of African traditional values, the need to strengthen regulatory frameworks for the purpose of a stronger political control of media systems and institutions, among others, constitute some of the shared policy concerns across two or three of the African countries under investigation, respondents’ comments further highlight policy issues that are of unique character to each legislative or national context. These issues are unique, not because strains of them cannot be found in other countries, but because they were given ‘voice’ only by respondents from the alternative media organizations of each legislative country highlighted.

From Ghana, concerns are raised by a few respondents about the enduring power struggles between NCA and NMC that impact on how the two institutions effectively monitor and regulate media environments; as well as the special financial privileges purportedly enjoyed by NCA from the Executive arms of government over and against NMC. Responding to this allegation, Edmund Fianko of NCA notes:

- “As far as NCA is concerned, there is no power struggle. NMC is represented on NCA Board and is involved in governance of the Authority”.
- “NCA does not obtain subvention from Government. NCA generates its own revenue which comes mainly from Telecom services compared to broadcasting. Telecom operators pay 1% of Net Revenue as regulatory fee to the Authority. This runs into some millions of Ghana Cedi every year. The maximum expected recurrent revenue from FM radio broadcasting currently stands at GHC510, 250. This would only be realized if all the 248FM stations pay their annual regulatory fee. A number of them default and payment could be in arrears for two to three years. Government allows the Authority to keep part of its revenues necessary to run its operations. Government also expects some revenue annually from NCA. For example, between January and September 2011, NCA paid a total of GHC57, 123,340 of its revenue to Government from the implementation of Electronic Communications (Amendment) Act, 2009, Act 786. In 2012, Government expects GHC67.92million revenue from NCA (See Appendix 18, Page 317, of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2012 Financial Year)”. For Fianko, these statistics define clearly how NCA makes its money and the financial responsibility government imposes on it.

From Nigeria, Akingbulu of NCRC (Lagos) points to the following policy concerns specific to the Nigerian experience:

- The need for the convergence of ministerial and media regulatory institutions (especially NBC & NCC) as a means to a more effective management of resources. At the time of my face-to-face conversation with Akingbulu the ‘merger’ issue was still being studied for recommendations by a *Panel* set up by the Nigerian government.
- The establishment of a government-owned signal distributor as recommended by the committee on digitalization. Akingbulu notes that NCRC has repeatedly kicked against this proposal in the belief that it will enable only the granting of licenses for contents productions without the concomitant right to own a distribution system that could ensure independence in the transmission of signals. “If adopted”, Akingbulu maintains, “the proposal will only reverse the gains of the past twenty years and continue to place government in control of information distribution”.

And, from South Africa a few respondents also speak about policy issues that are uniquely South African:

- Kinnear of Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) speaks about the serious frustrations currently being experienced by community press houses in securing immediate official responses to media enquiries both at provincial and local government levels. Kinnear notes that the existing national policy allows 48 hours dateline for government media officers to give answers to all media questions on sensitive issues or on negative comments made by citizens about government. But the current situation is such that most government media spokespersons (some of whom are former staff of alternative media establishments) either simply refuse to

give comments about issues raised, or they simply dance to the delay strategies of their Bosses. For him, one of the negative consequences of this situation is the tendency by readers to view articles published by community newspapers about government as one-sided stories.

- Leonard of Bush Radio (Western Cape), in turn, speaks about the delay by government in finalizing the “Public Broadcasting Service Bill” (PBS) that has a huge chapter on community media. Leonard explains that the document that has been on discussion for more than three years sets out a valuable “Charter” for community broadcasters in terms of ethics of operations. She indicates that the “Charter” is good because it outlines the values and concerns of community broadcasters. Yet, it is taking too long to finalize it. For Leonard, the only problem area in that document that is of serious concern and that requires review is the demand for an inclusion of a representative of the municipality on the Board of community media institutions. For her, it is an indirect attempt to upset the ways the Board of community media institutions is constituted by local communities at AGMs and to create an avenue for external political influences.

Outside these external policy areas, most respondents across the three countries admit that community media organizations in their respective country also have their own internal policy areas (including editorial policies) that still need to be reviewed to harmonize with emerging external regulatory policies. For the management of Bush Radio, these amendments will hopefully be looked into in 2012, through the normal participatory processes available to the radio station.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

An overview of the media policy changes and concerns (shared or unique) of community media institutions across South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana indicate that

there have been substantial media policy changes with progressive effects across the three countries in the last two decades; with an average of 76.8% of those who provided valid responses to a written questionnaire supporting this position. Secondly, data reveal what brings additional pressures to community media institutions and why these should be redressed through organized and collective activism to pressure for future deregulations. In the next chapter, I will examine how community media groups have over the years campaigned or engaged with the States to bring about some level of reforms in some media policy areas.

## Chapter Seven

### **Campaigning for Media Policy Reforms**

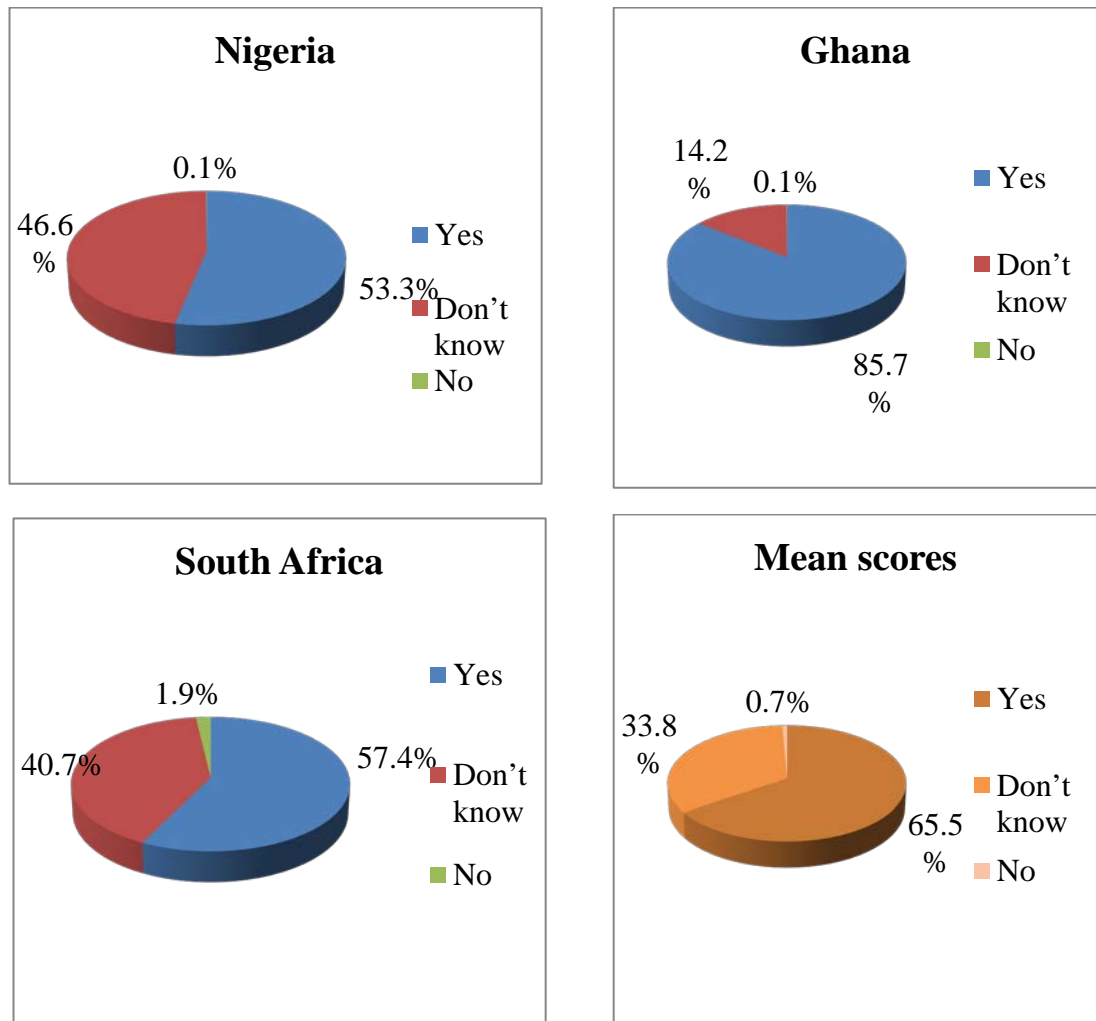
This chapter covers fieldwork findings on the ‘active’ role of community media and media foundations in contemporary media policy changes across the three countries of the Sub-Sahara. The question of ‘campaigns’ for deregulations is approached from different (but interrelated) perspectives, namely, the platforms and the nature of campaigns; and the linkages (horizontal and vertical) that aid campaigns. I also indicate how the diversity of campaign venues now informs citizens-governments power relations for the legitimization of media policy decisions. I begin with a consideration of findings on the diversity of venues; to be followed by issues on the platforms of activism and the horizontal and vertical collaborations.

#### **7.1 Diversity of Venues**

Generally, respondents from across South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, in varying ways, admit that the national legislative environment of each country is now such that anyone can participate (directly or indirectly) in policy decisions; and that, with the licensing of different formats of community media between 1995 and 2004 across the three countries, recent campaigns for media policy changes are undertaken, not only through parliamentary representations, trade unionism, street actions, district assemblies, and at multiparty conferences, but more so through a broader range of channels, including community media. However, community radios are seen to offer better prospects for popular participation because of their potentials for more personal and direct engagements of citizens in the affairs of the States (see figure 1.4 for a comparative survey of community media ‘active’ participation in contemporary media policy reforms).



**Figure 1.4:** Comparative survey on community media participation in reforms



Out of an overall total of 83 valid responses obtained from across the three countries, majority (an average of 65.5%) maintain that community media organizations are exerting significant impacts on media policy reforms through diversity of campaign platforms.

### 7.2 Community Media Platforms of Campaigns

Three main 'platforms' have been identified by oral interviewees through which alternative media and industry organizations now influence media policy developments. These include 'programming', 'capacity-building initiatives', as well as 'deliberative and social forums'. Information further indicates that their ability to inform and

influence policy developments has also been shaped by the nature of ‘horizontal and vertical linkages’ they have maintained over the years.

### 7.2.1 **Programming**

Most respondents from across the three countries admit that community media programming and productions (articles, news, news analysis, current affairs, debates, discussions, and editorials) now play highly significant roles in informing campaigns for media policy reforms, through agenda setting and opinion-formations to pressure governments for changes. But generally the effectiveness of programming to shape campaigns depends on adopted institutional programme philosophies, the chosen programme languages, availability of funding and necessary expertise for sustainability, the kind of organizational structures adopted to ensure accountability, division of labours, democratic platforms for editorial decisions, co-production partnerships with audiences, as well as the use of professional and non-professional skills. Again, interviewees admit that in providing participatory programme platforms for campaigns, alternative media journalists are not ‘The Voice’, but ‘The Mediators’ and ‘The Facilitators’ of dialogue and of consensus-reaching among disadvantaged communities and between local communities and governments.

Explaining how ‘news reporting’ and ‘editorial comments’ impact on activism for reforms in South Africa, Kinnear of the Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) notes, firstly, that because of the special duty imposed on their community newspapers to function as the “watchdog of the society”, their journalists are trained to set agendas for public discussions and mobilizations, by reporting and commenting on those public policies that are coming from the provincial and local governments that will not be of benefit to the public, that do not reflect the views of most members of the local communities within the Mpumalanga province, and that are not going to secure the kind of success

those in political authority claim they will achieve. Secondly, their ‘editorial comments’ are often written by their team of editors to critically engage with specific community issues and to reflect the institution’s current “apolitical philosophical position”.

The current non-partisan political orientation of the institution, however, stands against the earlier ‘Unionist’ political tone of the first set of bi-weekly community newspapers associated with the Lowveld Media before and during the Second World War. With the gradual transformation of the editorial policies of the amalgamated paper in 1958 under Adelaide Price, the then Group Editor, “The Lowvelder” (the flagship) became strictly a district paper reflecting the views of readers from within the Nelspruit and Barberton districts. The news and editorial contents of this “excellent little paper” is now carried in three languages – Afrikaans, English, and IsiZulu. Prior to this, the paper had functioned only to advance the linguistic and cultural interests of the local Afrikaans communities.

Again, with the extensive reorganization that took place (after the ownership of the community newspaper had once again changed in 1994) under the current proprietorship of CTP-Caxton Group and under the professional competence of Irma Green, the current Group Editor, “The Lowvelder” was repositioned to serve wider public advocacy objectives. New titles were also gradually introduced to reflect the changing political situation in South Africa, both in terms of news coverage and editorial comments.

One other factor that has impacted on the style of their production for the purpose of activism is the need to cater for the linguistic and news interest of ‘Blacks’ who, shortly after the changes in South African political environment in 1994, had relocated from the townships and the suburbs into those areas of Mpumalanga that were formally largely of

'White' residents. Kinnear explains that these demographics and residential changes needed to be taken into account in the redefinition of audiences. News stories and commentaries for the purpose of social and policy reforms needed to take account of those 'Blacks' who were not in love with Afrikaans or could not read it. In this regard, Kinnear admits, "The Lowvelder" has tried to keep a balance of 60% English and 40% Afrikaans in order to take care of the linguistic interests of the 'Black' and 'Afrikaan' populations within the Mpumalanga province.

Kinnear is emphatic that Caxton-owned group of community newspapers in Nelspruit operate to offer spaces for activism for reforms by enabling readers to write their own stories for the paper and to suggest for their journalists, through regular telephone contacts, possible news sources. He, however, fails to admit how their increasing reliance on neoliberal philosophy to inform production and for survival could possibly compromise editorials and news contents, with concomitant potential influence on activism for media policy reform purposes.

Just like Kinnear, Muhammed of Media Trust Limited (Abuja) maintains that Media Trust's community-oriented publications engage in activism for social and public policy changes in Nigeria largely through information productions and circulations. He admits that the institution does not engage in street actions. Activism, he observes, comes by way of news productions, editorial commentaries, and the publications of articles from NGOs. He maintains that, through weekly information generations and circulations, their journalists are able to set the agenda for public discussions and decisions on sensitive public policy issues, health and human right themes.

Muhammed notes that, because the primary role of Media Trust community newspapers is to get the local communities better informed and empowered to raise questions about

some policy and transformation agenda of government, it is not just enough to pick up a story, flash on it and forget about it. For him, what Media Trust does is different. The company provides continuous investigations and follow-ups on certain stories, using “personal or eye-witness testimonies and documentary evidences”, so as to provide series of revelations to the citizens, to help them find resources to question government, parliamentary committees, and policy experts.

He explains that the movement of the head office of the company from Kaduna to Abuja (the Federal Capital) in 2001 was informed by the need to stay close to the seat of power and of decision-making. Abuja, he admits, “is where things are happening. And, if we are to acquire and report news on policy and how government activities impact on the citizenry, then being located in Abuja offers the establishment the best opportunity of doing just that”.

As a matter of internal policy, the management of the company struggles to maintain a high level of independence from government and other external private influences, by refusing to draw financial benefits from them. Secondly, to avoid the problem of ethnic and religious biases that tend to plague a good number of newspaper publications in the country, the company trains its reporters to avoid negativism that tied with tribal or religious sentiments.

He is emphatic that their alternative news focus is not primarily on the Federal or State government, but on activities at the local government level. This local sector, he argues, is seriously underreported in the country. It is in this regard that their community-oriented publications are committed to give more avenues to grassroots people to express their views on policy and keep connection with the center of power, both on State and Federal levels. However, though the company is committed to local reportage

and has correspondents everywhere in Nigeria, he admits that it currently makes little inroads into the South Eastern and South Southern part of the country. He indicates that Media Trust has already commissioned a feasibility study to see the possibility of expanding readership into the neglected communities of the Southern regions.

My face-to-face conversation with Muhammed further shows the diversity of production structures available to the newspaper company and how these invariably impact on news value, technical quality of production, and on activism. Muhammed notes that the institution is structurally organized into Finance, Editorial, Production, Marketing, Training, Audit, Circulation, Purchasing, and Legal departments. These internal structures show the kind of industrial-scale and division of labour their production process entails. Strategically, production is not a one-man's affair and does not entail only the use of one production center or even non-professionals.

While Aminiya (the Hausa community newspaper) comes out every Friday and is oriented to provide information about local areas in Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, and others, the weekly "Pullouts" (Aso Chronicle, Kano Chronicle, and Eko Chronicle) cover local news and events mainly within the satellite towns in Abuja, Kaduna, and Lagos respectively. Also, while a total of about 30,000 copies of Daily Trust (with "pullouts") are printed and circulated daily at the cost of N150 (Naira) each, only 5,000 copies of Aminiya are printed and circulated weekly at the cost of N100 (Naira) each. These statistics are valuable because they show the level of impact the community-oriented papers can potentially generate for the purpose of activism, through news publications and news analysis.

Outside these few community press institutions, insights are also drawn from community radio and television institutions in Ghana and South Africa, such as Radio

Ada (Greater Accra); Coastal TV (Cape Coast); Bush Radio (Western Cape); and CTCTV (Western Cape), with regards to how programming could inform and affect campaigns for media policy reforms.

Radio Ada (Big Ada), a development-centered community radio station, broadcasts to promote “The Voice of Dangme People”, the third largest linguistic group in Ghana. The residents of Big Ada and Ada Foah that constitute the target audience are known specifically for their informal economic activities, such as fishing and farming. While the radio station was licensed for operations in April 16, 1996, full-scale broadcasting began only in February 1, 1998. The station currently uses a 350Watts transmitter and a 150 feet antenna to broadcast 17 hours a day (5.00 – 22.00 GMT). Its programme broadcasts, which could be picked up on the frequency band of 93.3FM, cover about 80Kms radius to serve the four Dangme-speaking districts in South-Eastern part of Ghana. Broadcasting is done from a small bungalow that also contains one on-air studio, two recording studios, marketing department, transmission room, and a small office space.

Lahweh, the Training Officer of the station, admits “the specific value of the station has to do with how government is found to have neglected their commitments to the local people. We are talking about the environment and their means of livelihood [...]. We are talking about language itself, cultural heritage, and social relationships development”.

Being a trailblazer in community broadcasting, Lahweh insists that the radio station broadcasters “are here to use the radio as resource for literacy and education”. Their primary programming objectives, therefore, are to develop people’s capacity to learn in order to make informed decisions; to offer voice to the voiceless; to promote informed

dialogue and reflective actions; to promote the development aspirations of the people; and to make a strong community that is part of the national and global communities.

Outside ‘news’, the radio station also impact on public policy through different formats of live and taped discursive, interview, and drama programmes; especially magazine and phone-in programmes that bring the world and the nation closer to the villages. Isaac Djagbletey, the Station’s Programmes Coordinator, explains that discursive and phone-in (or magazine) programmes are highly significant for the station because they offer opportunities for community members to raise policy issues that are important to the community for onward transmission to government and to offer feedbacks to the station for improved future programming. This is in addition to community consultations done every two years to enable the management of the station know how the community wants their radio programmes and internal policy to be designed for greater effects.

Lahweh acknowledges the importance of the local language and volunteers to programming. Apart from its potency in enabling information reach the local people easily, the use of Dangme language (in combination with English) on air “has a lot of implications for the Dangmes; the local language comes with culture and values”. Lahweh explains that Radio Ada has had to rely for years on 15 permanent staff and over 50 volunteers, drawn mostly from the local community, to do what it does in programming for the purpose of advocacy for reforms. Other volunteers, drawn from outside the local community, come from different government departments and for the purpose of extension services: the National Youth Council, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Community Development offices, and others. Thus, the station’s programmes are developed and produced with the active participation of



different categories of people from within and outside the communities that make up Big Ada and Ada Foah.

He is emphatic that it is through radio programming that Radio Ada operates, at a micro level, to affect public policies, including media policies. The station's programming currently reaches about 600,000 people from across 150 local towns and villages of the four districts that make up the catchment area. Lahweh maintains that "if what we are doing here is being done say by 100 community radio stations in the country, the impact at the center will be very strong".

Still from the community radio sector, Leonard of Bush Radio (Western Cape), indicates that the development-oriented community radio station was born out of activism in the 80s; it was born out of the deep desire to give voice to the voiceless against the backdrop of the apartheid legacy that provided little access to the broadcast spectrum and to other information resources for the marginalized and disadvantaged communities in the "Cape Flat". Unfortunately, the voiceless communities of the Western Cape at that time had only very few platforms to address their concerns. And one such platform was the Cassette Education Trust (CASET) that laid the foundation for the eventual formation of the radio station.

Under CASET, the station's earliest public communication format was in the form of pre-recorded audio-cassettes produced by media activists. These audio-cassettes that contained 'struggle' materials and offered alternative views to those of the Apartheid State were sold to members of the public at political meetings held at "Bush" (i.e. University of Western Cape) from where the name of the radio station was derived. And when the radio station was eventually formed in 1989, it was formed as a tool for the mobilization of the people through information provision.

The activists' radio station, therefore, initially "pirated" and broadcast illegally till 1993. Two of the activists who were at the helm of affairs at that time were eventually arrested and charged to court for illegal broadcasting, illegal possession of broadcast equipment, and for obstructing the course of justice. But eight months into the case and with tremendous pressures from local and international human right organizations, the case against Bush Radio was eventually dropped. And, since after the formal licensing of the radio station (under a 'shared-frequency' scheme) by IBA in June 1995, as "Section 21" radio station, activism has remained an essential ingredient of the life of Bush Radio.

And because Bush Radio currently has no specific political and commercial agenda except to function as a mediator between civil organizations and government, Leonard notes that the station has been able to provide through ethical and sensitive programming the necessary media platforms to enable the various communities and organizations in the Western Cape air their views on public policy issues. Leonard is emphatic that activism and mediation still remain very important elements in the radio station's mission statement.

Strategically, Bush Radio functions as a "conduit for social change" through agenda setting and participatory radio programming. Louw, the station's Programmes Integrator, explains that the radio station currently broadcasts 24/7, using a 250Watt transmitter located on Tygerberg Mountain and a signal distribution system provided by SENTECH, an official government's signal distribution agency. Its programmes can be picked up on the frequency of 89.5FM or audio-streamed through the use of mobile phones and social media networks. The radio station broadcasts in three languages that are understood and spoken by most residents of Western Cape: English, Afrikaans, and IsiXhosa. Louw further notes: "we use English as the bridging language and for the purpose of coast-reaching".

The radio station organizes a “district parliamentary programme” in partnership with GCIS. The GCIS-assisted programme is such that the radio station occasionally sets up outside broadcast equipment in one of the townships and invites civil organizations and government officials (or representatives of political parties) “to actually discuss the state of the nation both before and after elections, just to get the social interactions among government, politicians and ordinary citizens going again”. Louw observes that the significance of the mediated interactive platform rests more in the ability of the radio station to remove dialogue on sensitive national or provincial policy issues from the parliament and take them to the townships where citizens who have little access to the parliament can engage with the officials of government and with politicians to address the state of the nation and policy-related concerns.

There is also a discursive (and phone-in) programme called “Talk to the Ministers”. This programme enables ordinary people appreciate government and to challenge their public policy positions. In this way, the station plays the vital role of being a “platform” and a “facilitator” of discussions on public policies (including media policies). This approach, Louw maintains, is in addition to the training programmes on media that the station provides to empower civil societies and individuals on the economy of radio productions.

A good example of how the station mediates in media policy issues, through participatory discursive programming, has to do with the current debates and activism surrounding the ‘Protection of State Information Bill’ and the ‘Media Appeal Tribunal Bill’. Louw admits that in bringing this issue for public debate and for activism, Bush Radio tries to remain as objective as possible, as there is a split of opinion between government and ordinary citizens. He observes that the radio station generally tries to look at these issues “in terms of what is best for the communities we serve within the

Cape Flat”. Because of the volatile nature of the issues, he maintains that Bush Radio cannot simply sit on the fence. The radio station now works with civil societies and with government to debate on these issues and to suggest acceptable ways forward. For him, the justification for this role rests solidly on the need to affect behavioural changes, as well as contribute to strengthen the young democratic culture of South Africa.

Louw, however, admits that in the exercise of the mediatory role, Bush Radio is “not the voice”; it is simply “the platform” through which the “voices” of different sectors within the community are represented and heard. He is emphatic that in matters of policy developments, Bush Radio functions to give the enabling environment for the people’s voices to be heard and to mediate flows of ideas between government and the citizens. For him, “whether from the government side or from the community side issues emerge, the station’s role is to act as a ‘bridge’ between government and the communities and among the communities”.

While information gained from respondents from the community radio sector is highly revealing of how radio programming impact on campaigns for policy reforms, similar programme development is evident, in varying ways and contexts, in the community television sector.

### **7.2.2 Capacity-Building Initiatives**

Most respondents interviewed, in varying ways, admit that outside programming, their community media institutions engage in different forms of capacity-building initiatives. These are in the form of short-term and/or long-term training (in-house or external), community-based research (national or transnational), and feasibility studies, to enable them connect with the experiences of the local populations and with experts. The significance of the capacity-building process rests, fundamentally, on its literacy,

empowerment, and greater outreach potencies. Generally, those who made comments on this subject are unanimous in their convictions that training and competency in reportage, community building, media arts, participatory planning, and accessing of financial resources, as well as literacy in the processes of community media managements and social relations are vital to the success of community media's interventions in the complex manipulation of symbols and culture and in influencing media policy developments.

Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada) indicates that the community radio station engages in regular community-based research and in-house trainings. Because it is the community members that contribute occasionally towards the formation and revision of the station's mission objectives, and because it is the volunteers from the community that produce most of their programmes and engage in social relations at the grassroots on behalf of the radio station, the question of acquisition of operational skills and competency is very important. He admits that, prior to the beginning of operations in 1998, none of their staff members (except a few that received a brief training in radio broadcasting in Kaduna – Nigeria) had knowledge about radio production and broadcasting. But in order to equip them for these services, a series of participatory workshops on different themes was organized. For Lahweh, since then, regular trainings and community-based researches have remained the mainstay of the life of Radio Ada.

Apart from the training of volunteers in the rudiment of news production, programme planning and broadcasting, the radio station also contributes, in partnership with GCRN staff, towards the capacity-building of the staff members of other community radio stations across the country, in the form of seminars, workshops, and community-based researches. Through training, which involves the use of audio-visuals, the provision of practical guidelines and support in terms of research strategies, paperwork, and conflict

management strategies to handle “explosive situations and promote togetherness”, Lahweh maintains that the staff members of Radio Ada are playing a significant role in grooming to maturity the campaigning role of other community radio stations in Ghana. Generally, in accepting people for training, emphasis is never placed on conventional training qualification as it would be the case in private commercial stations. For him, what counts most in the selection of people for training are personal interest, love for the community, and commitment to serve the community.

Just like Radio Ada, Louw of Bush Radio acknowledges the vital role the radio station plays in capacity-building and training initiatives since after its inception. He maintains that even before the radio station officially came on air in the wake of the political change in South Africa, being one of the first community radio stations in the country, it became necessary for the station to champion, not only the cause for the establishment of community radios in South Africa, but also the cause of capacity-building, through the organization of diversity of short-term or long-term courses within and outside the radio station.

Assisted by equipment, funding, and expertise drawn from their training partners, such as UNESCO, AMARC-Africa, the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, the National Media Training Centre, Deutsche Welle, Radio France International, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Louw admits that a series of training courses and workshops have been organized by Bush Radio over the years for volunteers and interns in the areas of community radio operations, community radio management, news and magazine productions, social relations, just to mention a few. At the time of my visit to the station, I observed that the management was preparing some of their staff members for the conference on ‘Climate Change’, scheduled to take place in Durban in the last

quarter of 2012. Three interns were also seen in the live studio undergoing training on effective radio programme presentation.

Corroborating this perspective, Leonard admits that Bush Radio is not only a production and broadcast station, but also a training center. The station provides both formal trainings and on-the-job experience. She, however, complains about the high rate in which their trained staffs have been taken away without adequate notices by dominant media institutions in their search for better employment opportunities. Leonard admits “while we cannot stop the progress of our volunteers who have been well-equipped in radio operations, it is, however, unfair that they are taken away from us at very short notices”. She explains that, because of their past experiences and to avoid being continuously taken unawares, Bush Radio now trains two to three staffs on specific areas of community radio operations and management; so that if one person leaves unexpectedly for a better paid job, the radio station and its activist role will not suffer.

In a similar development, Mohlongo of Jozi FM (Soweto) admits that their radio station has been empowered because it engages regularly in different forms of training and research. He maintains that it is the ability of the radio station to advance, through capacity development, the Marketing and Sales Department of the station that they are now able to grow employment and position the radio station to better generate funding through commercials to support their activities. He, however, complains about the current lack of sufficient media and journalism departments in South African Universities and tertiary institutions to cater for the formation needs of students from community media establishments in the country.

Akingbulu of NCRC (Lagos), in turn, admits that the Coalition also carries out advocacy through capacity-building, to strengthen campus broadcasting and prepare for

the licensing of ‘grassroots’ community radio stations in Nigeria. The body builds capacities at the grassroots for those organizations that want to set up independent broadcast studios. He admits that at the “baseline” of its capacity-building for activism is research. Akingbulu notes that the institution has conducted so many studies on development communications and community radio. Some of its findings are published on their website. The research process, he explains, entails sending community media journalist to West African countries (Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Benin Republic, etc.) where community radio stations are doing well. The logic of the research, he admits, is to establish if Nigeria is really ripe for Community Radio Initiatives, as well as to inform policy positions of government at various conferences. Akingbulu maintains that the capacity-building initiatives of the Coalition have been assisted particularly by the use of audio-visuals and by the voluntary engagements of NCRC members in the awareness and empowerment-building processes across the country.

A cursory look at NCRC website further indicates that NCRC publishes materials relevant to capacity-building, especially in the areas of approaches to community broadcast media establishments, programming for community broadcast media, legal and regulatory aspects of community media, technical and development aspects of community media, and rudiments in community media broadcasting and managements. Also published are many policy materials targeted at policy-makers, stakeholders, and research experts. This is in addition to a newsletter (*Media Vista*) that educates the public and provides coverage for its activities and those of its partners. The importance of these publications rests on the fact that they can serve as tools for advocacy for other interested parties.

Just like NCRC, GCRN (Accra) also draws on the human resources and participatory research strategies at its disposal to support advocacy and the sustainability of



community radio broadcasting in Ghana. Mrs. Quarmyne of GCRN admits that their participatory research programme is essentially field-based. It draws on the benefits of oral testimonies from community members and from the power of audio-visuals to engage marginalized groups in participatory discourse and decision-making at every level of Community Radio Initiatives. She notes that the overall aim of the research is to build the knowledge, operational, legislative, and social relations capacity of disadvantaged communities in Ghana in their quest for participatory communication power and for the enrichment of their culture. She identifies some interconnected ‘power’ layers of the participatory research programme: to help the people understand themselves, understand the developmental needs of their community, and understand the potential role of community media in responding to those needs. She is emphatic that the capacity-building process is valuable in enabling local communities make informed policy decisions, design their media processes, and sustain peaceful working partnership.

### **7.2.3 Social and Deliberative Forums**

Another highly valuable ‘platform’ for the articulations of media policy concerns and for activism, as contained in respondent testimonies, is the diversity of ‘public and deliberative forums’ (conferences, workshops, seminars, retreats, etc.) available to alternative media groups. The importance of ‘deliberative and social forums’ rests, fundamentally, on the fact that they provide opportunities, not only for social interactions, but also for paper presentations, discursions, and exchange of views on practice and policy challenges in line with national or industrial constitutional provisions, as well as for collective articulations of unified policy positions for onward submission to governments, regulatory agencies and/or ministries. Deliberative and social forums also have the capacity of bringing about joint “advocacy visits” to

ministers, parliamentarians, and media regulators or in generating force for minimal street actions and open protests in partnership with unionist and human right movements. Under ‘deliberative platform’, therefore, alternative media groups and coalitions can, in varying capacities, now engage with one another or with governments’ experts at local and/or national level to set policy directions and pressure for changes.

Explaining how the Forum for Community Journalists (FCJ) works at the Mpumalanga province to impact on media policy-related issues, Kinnear of Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) notes that when issues come up, “a committee is always put together to look into the matter and report back to the general body” for the necessary collective decision and action. Secondly, the body organizes a 2-day annual gathering of community publishers within the province. The gathering, which is often in the form of a “retreat”, has both deliberative and social sessions. The first day of the “retreat” is often set aside for lectures to be delivered by selected experts on various themes. The second day is purely for “social networking”; providing opportunities to enable journalists “get to know each other” as well as strategize on policy-related issues.

Kinnear further explains that the advocacy force of the FCJ-organized forums also rests on the close tie that exists between FCJ and the Press Council of South Africa (PCSA). In this regard, most members of the FCJ are also members of the PCSA through a representative process. This is in addition to other members of the PCSA drawn from the Print Media South Africa. As he explains, the PCSA, working with its three subdivisions (the Press Council, the Press Ombudsman, and the Appeals Panel), remains the highest body that has the interest of the entire publication industry of South Africa at heart.

He maintains that Lowveld Media works closely with the FCJ and the PCSA to impact positively on ethical reforms as they affect the press sector in general; and that the most recently reformed press rules undertaken by the two bodies, in partnership with other stakeholders, are contained in the current *South African Press Code* (SAPC). He explains that the production of the original Code and its subsequent revisions have always remained a ‘collective’ industrial responsibility. And by virtue of the fact that FCJ is a member of the PCSA, the prime custodian of the Press Code, it invariably means that the alternative press sector has always been adequately represented and has remained actively involved in the formation and revisions of the Code since late-1990. The latest revision of the Code was made in 2011. Kinnear admits that even before the 2011 revised edition was made public, copies were sent “to all the relevant organizations for approval”. And members of the FCJ received their copies and had opportunities to make their observations known.

Still from the community press sector, Augustine of Insight Services (Uyo) maintains that outside productions, the newspaper company also makes submissions at deliberative forums organized by the League of Independent Newspaper Publishers (LINP), the local umbrella body that brings together independent newspaper publishers in Akwa Ibom State and by the state chapter of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), a professional body that has connections with a host of trade unions and movements in Nigeria.

He admits that under LINP, the company makes high impacts on the formations of state ‘Bye-laws’ on the media. He places 80% score on their level of participation on media policy changes through LINP-organized deliberative and social platforms. But under the state chapter of NUJ, the company makes only minimal impact on policy at the national level. For him, one recent policy area that the company has made some contributions to

inform NUJ's recommendations to government on the national level is the *Freedom of Information Bill* (now FOI Act). NUJ's position paper was submitted to the parliament when the debates on the 'Bill' were taking place in the National Assembly.

Though he does not know the exact extent the NUJ's submission was able to affect the final legislative document, he admits, firstly, that the process for the formation of the FOI Act (2011) was participatory. Secondly, the Act is good because it grants the public access to state information and makes it possible for the media to assist in checking corruption, and in holding government and policy-makers accountable. Thirdly, when properly applied, it is good for investigative journalism, whereby it ensures that journalism is taken out from the realm of mere speculations to that of "hard facts", especially facts about the use of public resources.

Evidently, the activist role of Insight Services in the formation of the FOI Act may be best understood within the context of the general campaigning initiatives undertaken for years by the generality of activist organizations in the country, to get government pass the FOI Bill into law. As indicated by Odinkalu (2011), the formation of FOI Act has constituted one of the most exciting and challenging legislative odyssey in the country. Advocacy for the law began in 1993 as "the FOI movement" and at a time when a new scale of dictatorship was foisted on the citizenry by General Sani Abacha who was then in power. FOI advocacy, therefore, began as citizens-led demand for authentic information, against the prevailing lack of transparency in governance. The campaign was met with extraordinary resilience by media activists against several setbacks which ultimately secured widespread support for the law from policy-experts, politicians, and government officials (Odinkalu, 2011).

The initial spark for the FOI activism was enkindled by Edetaen Ojo of the Media Rights Agenda (MRA), an organization that works assiduously in defense of the rights of freedom of expression of Nigerians. The campaign soon drew sympathy from Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), the Lagos branch of the NUJ, Senior Advocates of Nigeria who provided the core proposals of the first draft, and a host of other organizations. The entire process of consensus-building and negotiation was a testimony of “how citizens can become friends in a common cause” (Odinkalu, 2011). With several delays in the National Assembly and after counter-reviews by President Obasanjo’s civilian administration, the ‘FOI Bill’ was eventually passed by the National Assembly and signed into law in May 28, 2011, to provide “a ray of hope for democracy” (Article 19, 2011) and a ground-base for the continuing realization of the freedom of the press, as guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution of the Republic.

While implementation and some inherent barriers remain the main issues raised by respondents about the law, Nigeria remains one of the few countries in West Africa (alongside Liberia and Niger) that have now adopted the FOI law. Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Senegal are still campaigning for its adoption by their separate parliaments. But the general position of respondents from Nigeria is that every achievements made in relation to the formation of the Law in Nigeria owes a lot to media-organized deliberations and mobilizations and broad-based citizens’ activism.

If submissions at deliberative forums have assisted the formation of different press laws across Nigeria and South Africa, similar (and sometimes interrelated) experiences have been recounted by respondents from the community broadcast sector of the three countries.

Leonard and Louw of Bush Radio (Western Cape) are in agreement that the third most important ‘platform’ through which Bush Radio engages in activism is through representations at the multiparty conferences organized by CODESA and through submissions made at NCRF-organized deliberative forums. They observe, firstly, that Bush Radio had been very much part of the processes that led to the establishment of the NCRF in 1994, to co-ordinate the community radio sector and to lobby government for media policy reforms in favour of the sector; and, secondly, that even before the movement of its head office to Gauteng, NCRF’s initial national office was located within the premises of Bush Radio in the Salt River. Based on their discussions and decisions under the platform of NCRF, over 100 applications for community radio licenses were submitted to IBA in 1994.

Leonard further indicates that Bush Radio has a long history of participating in any form of policy discussions that affect the media. Sometimes the discussions could be on the reviews of ‘statutory’ and ‘non-statutory’ media laws. Other times they could be on basic conditions of employment that would impact indirectly on community media organizations. For her, the station’s recent policy engagements are most often in response to policy discussion documents issued by media regulators or by government departments.

From the point of view of community television, Thorn of CTCTV (Western Cape) speaks about the social and political processes that provided an enabling legal environment for the emergence and growth of CTVs in South Africa. She admits that she was part of the anti-apartheid movement in the 80s and early 90s. She was then the National Coordinator of the Forum for Allied Workers Organization (FAWO), an anti-apartheid cultural organization that mobilized filmmakers against the apartheid authorities. Under FAWO, media activists that were concerned with the formal

recognition of CTVs in the country were able to mobilize and organize themselves at various forums to engage with government.

Thorn explains that because she came into that organization “in the early 90s when things were really starting to change in the country”, her main task then was to “engage with a broad section of stakeholders [...] to develop a democratic policy and regulatory framework for cultural communication in the broadest sense”. She maintains, firstly, that the process of negotiations was a long and tedious one. Secondly, that the first primary concern was to establish an independent regulatory authority that could work to transform SABC. For her, the fact that SABC could not be transformed that much provided the context for the struggles to deregulate the broadcasting sector to enable the growth of CTVs.

Describing part of what made the process of deregulation in favour of CTVs long and tedious in the early-90s, Thorn notes that prior to 2004, community broadcasting in South Africa was primarily tied with community radio. CTV was generally never considered by government and academics “to be a viable medium for the so-called development communication” for developing countries. And because community radio was considered as the most appropriate developmental tool (precisely because of its low cost and affordability), government’s concentration was solely on the growth of that sector. This situation, she admits, made FAWO to become “the lone voice” advocating and lobbying for the democratization of television in South Africa. She admits that the struggle for the realization of “the right of every citizen to communicate through CTVs was a huge appeal struggle”.

Outside FAWO, another valuable deliberative platform was the series of workshops organized by the Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre (LINK) of Wits

University, Johannesburg. The most outstanding, Thorn admits, was the October 8, 2004 workshop titled, “From Special Event to Main Event? Community TV & Video in South Africa”. She observes that, among other things decided at that workshop, was the need to strengthen the advocacy-base for community broadcasting and video productions in the country, provide a collective response to ICASA’s ‘Position Paper’ on the establishments of regional televisions, intensify research strategies to strengthen growth in community televisions, commence test transmissions across the country by already formed community television studios, and heighten the formations of “loose coalitions” across the regions to mount pressure on government to recognize and license community televisions. Thorn maintains that she was very much part and parcel of the decisions made at that workshop. And, after the formal licensing of CTCTV in 2008, the management of station has never ceased struggling for reforms, not only through CTCTV programming, but also at various conferences.

Recognizing the ironic twist in social events, Thorn however maintains that it wasn’t any of these public deliberative efforts and negotiations that eventually led to the provision of space for the licensing of grassroots CTVs in ICASA’s ‘White Paper’ of November 30, 2004. She maintains that what actually opened up that ‘space’ was a private meeting between her and her brother-in-law who was then an adviser to Mandla Langa, the then Chairperson of ICASA. Thorn admits “it was actually that little incidence that resulted in ICASA finally putting out in 2004 a Position Paper on community television. That in itself is a lesson on how things work sometimes in South Africa: “We set up a national organization that represented 30 groups on the ground; that had a democratic representative structure. We engaged at stormy discussions with government at different forums. They never listened to us. I went to my brother-in-law



who happened to be an adviser to Mandla Langa at a Friday night supper and that's how things got done in this country which is very sad".

Just like South Africa, the Nigerian community media broadcasters have diversity of deliberative gatherings that enable joint articulations of media policy positions for onward submission to governments. But the most prominent are those organized by NBC (Abuja), NCRC (Lagos), and by 'Africast', in partnership with a host of other stakeholders.

Alumuku admits that, over the last couple of years, the management of the 'Good Shepherd' (Abuja) has made contributions into media policy themes through paper presentations at two different conferences: NBC-organized conferences and 'Africast'. He maintains that, at the 'Africast' of 2010, he enlightened the representatives of African governments on the prospects that lay ahead for African nation-states, if they get seriously involved in operating community radios. He admits that he has also been involved with Late Professor Alfred Opopor in running advocacy for the growth of the sector in Nigeria. Such advocacy initiatives entailed paper presentations, visits to Information Ministers (e.g. John Odeh and Dora Akunyili) and to parliamentarians, encouraging them to bring community radio issues to the front burner in their official policy discussions.

He observes that, though a lot has been achieved on personal and institutional levels, the broader social platforms for actualizing community radio broadcasting in the country are those provided by NCRC and supported by AMARC-Africa. He admits that, through such conferences, community broadcasters and academics have contributed immensely to policy developments in the country. For him, the only strange thing about the Nigeria's situation, compared to other West African countries where community

radios thrive, is how bureaucratic bottlenecks, orchestrated from within the presidency and NBC, delays implementations of decisions for the growth of the sector in Nigeria.

Corroborating Alumuku's views, Akingbulu of NCRC notes that the Coalition was formed in 2005 to sensitize and mobilize stakeholders and heighten advocacy to address the monopolization of the broadcasting landscape by government and private commercial media, undermining the potential contributions of local communities to democratic and national developments. The Executive Secretary explains that NCRC is a direct outcome of the Initiative on Building Community Radio in Nigeria, launched in November 2003. This Initiative was launched through the collaboration of three organizations, namely, the Institute for Media and Society (IMS), the Panos Institute of West Africa (PIWA), and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). After the establishment of the Initiative, the three organizations put in place "an action plan" and a "small stirring committee of eleven members" to help drive the process for electronic media democratization in the country.

Akingbulu explains that, because the running of an "awareness programme" on the value of community radio for development had become top on the "action plan" of the Initiative, the stirring committee organized series of Seminars and Workshops at geopolitical and national levels. These sensitization programmes, carried out through the use of volunteer experts and audio-visuals, did enable participants better understand issues and raise questions; provide for the Coalition the necessary platforms for consultations and consensus-building across diverse civil society groups; and enable the building of a solid activist 'Collective' from across the country. And, based on the need to put in place an umbrella body that could bring together on regular basis the different interest groups to keep the pressure on the Nigerian government going, NCRC was put in place. Since then, the capacity of the Coalition has expanded, in terms of the list and

quality of members and the degree of its discursive engagements with civil societies and with governments.

NCRC's deliberative efforts at different forums are also streamlined in the "Media Policy Briefings" (No. 4) issued by the organization. The document highlights the following as the most significant social, deliberative, and political events that have provided the environments for broadcast policy reform advocacy:

- The June 2004 review of the *National Mass Communication Policy* initiated by the Federal government, which draft Report was submitted by a 24-member committee to government in November 2004. Stakeholders were drawn from different national regions and civil society groups. NCRC, acting under the banner of Community Radio Initiatives, also made its own representation.
- The design of a *National Community Radio Policy* in August 2006, which Report was submitted in December 2006 by a 17-member Working Group to government. Again several members of NCRC were part and parcel of the organization of the conference. Some of NCRC's policy positions were eventually incorporated into NBC Code.
- The stakeholders' forum of January 2010, organized by NBC to kick-start the formation of a *National Broadcasting Policy*. Stakeholders' inputs were duly distilled, strung together, and handed over to government through NBC and the Ministry of Information and Communication.
- Additionally, NCRC has made inputs at the biennial International Conferences of African Broadcasters (Africast). The 9<sup>th</sup> Edition was held in Abuja between 23 and 25 October 2012, under the auspices of NBC. The theme was "Content Rules!" The primary focus of the 2012 edition, among others, was to streamline on "shapers of

content regulations” for the transition from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting.

A personal study of NCRC “Media Policy Briefings” (No. 4) makes it explicit that, at all of these conferences and social events, NCRC’s policy positions were relatively the same, reflecting the concerns of media activist organizations for broader access and pluralism in technology and in content productions for social development at the grassroots. The policy vision is generally grounded in leftist, equitable, and cultural philosophies that also reflect the life and communication experiences of Nigerians.

Akingbulu confirms, firstly, that NCRC’s advocacy goes beyond community radio development to the broader concern for the development of media pluralism in the country. Secondly, that government, regardless of delays, is responding to civil societies’ demands for a more progressive and inclusive media environment.

NCRC’s core activities across national and transnational regions are, however, guided by a document called “Stakeholders Charter” that was formed in April 2005; and by *Communiqués* issued at different stakeholders’ forums organized by the body. The Charter, which is a structured codification of the core demands of community radio stakeholders emanating at various workshops, seminars, and consultation forums in the country, contains 10 articles on numerous aspects of media democracy (NCRC’s *Media Policy Briefings*, 01/03).

While the Coalition from Nigeria plays a highly significant role at deliberative forums, to provide the resources for informed decision-making for the Nigerian people and governments, empirical data further reveal that GCRN (Accra), the coalition organization for community radio broadcasters in Ghana, is performing a similar role. The only difference is contextual.

GCRN was established by three community radio member associations – Radio Ada, Radio Peace, and Radio Progress. Both NCRC and GCRN are, however, active members of AMARC-Africa and Panos Institute of West Africa. Both occasionally have reciprocal activist interests and activities. There is evidence of reciprocal collaborations between the two organizations at International Conferences and at national Workshops and Seminars. This reciprocity often comes in the form of representative attendance, paper presentations, and exchange of strategic information and research materials.

GCRN was founded in December 4, 1999 at the lecture studio of Radio Ada. The seed money for its formation was provided by UNESCO and the Ford Foundation of West Africa (FFWA). The ground for its formation was laid as far back as June 1999 at a seminar on community radio development held in Nigeria and chaired by Late Professor Alfred Oporbor. The motivation drawn from that seminar was carried through into a one-day seminar held in September 1999 at Radio Ada, where the plan for the formal establishment of GCRN was finally put into motion by representatives of the three community radio stations that were present. While the Constitution of the Network, adopted on March 24, 2004, recognizes Chief Alex Quarmyne (Radio Ada), Chief David Ghartey-Tagoe (Radio Peace) and Mrs. Wilna Quarmyne (Radio Ada) as some of its founding “Elders”, the list of its legitimate community radio members has grown to 12; with 12 others yet to be licensed by NCA.

Among some of the deliberative forums where the Network has made valuable contributions, include the following:

- The national dialogue on the developmental role of the media in Ghana, organized by NMC in partnership with UNDP between December 11 and 12, 2006.

Participants at the two-day conference unanimously acknowledged the positive contribution of a free, independent, and pluralistic media environment in national development, in capacity building for employment, and for improved social living standards (NMC, Proceedings of a two-day conference, 2006).

- GCRN-organized conferences, undertaken in partnership with the Coalition for Transparency of the Airwaves (COTA). COTA was launched in November 15, 2011 to carry forward at the national level advocacy for media pluralism, equity, and transparency, as well as for broadcast media law reform in Ghana.
- The GCRN-organized conference of 2008, undertaken in partnership with the OURMEDIA, an international organization established in 2001 by Clemencia Rodrigue and others to facilitate dialogue on citizens' media initiatives across different countries.

### **7.3 Horizontal and Vertical Linkages**

While the three 'platforms' for campaigns (programming, capacity-building, and deliberative forums) are highly significant for activism by community media groups, respondents' statements from across the three African countries further indicate that the force for successful campaigns also rests, fundamentally, on the kind of horizontal and vertical linkages established and sustained over the years.

Respondents, in varying ways, agree that in order to establish deeper conversations, sustain collaboration, and broaden campaigning impacts, community media groups consciously sustain 'links' with broader cross-sections of national and transnational individuals, communities, and groups. They identify three dimensions of such cross-relationships: the horizontal links with civil right organizations, NGOs, donor agencies, and civil society organizations; the vertical relationship with government departments;

and the vertical (and sometimes horizontal) relationship with mainstream media institutions.

While some of the organizations are merely programming partners, others are simply funding, training or lobbying partners. Again, while deliberation, cultural practice for the purpose of visibility, philanthropy, and social interactions still remain the primary defining qualities of the three modes of cross-partnership, the networking ability of community-based journalists has, however, changed irrevocably over the years with the advent of the World Wide Web and the surge in demand for internet access and for virtual community and membership.

### **7.3.1 Partnership with Civil Organizations**

Respondents from Media Trust (Abuja), Insight Services (Uyo), and Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) are in agreement that their institutions, respectively, maintain only a business relationship with civil organizations and NGOs. Muhammed of Media Trust notes that, because of the difficulty they have in sustaining a cordial relationship with government, Media Trust strives to strengthen its business relationship with civil society organizations. This it does by providing spaces for NGOs and students to write on various issues. Though he could not list the specific NGOs, Muhammed, however, maintains that it is these organizations that largely engage with them on grassroots and e-reporting, to bring to the front burner issues that have remained underreported.

Just like Media Trust, Insight Services (Uyo) also provides ‘spaces’ for civil organizations and NGOs to publish their articles and air their views. Augustine, the Editor-in-Chief, observes that, outside the provision of spaces for programme visibility, the company does not maintain any long-term networking with NGOs. That is because, compared to Abuja or to Lagos, many NGOs function “at a very low capacity level

within Akwa Ibom State”. As a result, though the management of the company knows NGOs can be of great assistance in terms of capacity-building and funding, the company has little link with them. He observes that the company, however, has it in mind to explore the possibilities of maintaining stronger and long-term partnership with some NGOs for the purpose of training.

Lowveld Media does not, at the moment, have any direct link with other civil society organizations for the purpose of activism. The institution has only business and social development relationships with such bodies as SANPARK, the parastatal responsible for the management of all national parks in South Africa; the American Cancer Association for the promotion of sport events (e.g. Cancer Relay for Life); and with local soft-drink bottling companies. The nature of the business relationship, just as it is with Media Trust and Insight Services, is simply for Lowveld Media to give visibility to the activities and programmes of these bodies within the province.

Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada) notes that, outside GRCN and COTA, the community radio station also feeds into the resources of other influential NGOs and civil organizations, such as AMARC-Africa, the Panos Institute of West Africa, the Institute of Policy Alternatives, the Personnel Development Associates that conducts researches and do monitoring for the World Bank and government, as well as the Legal Resource Centre (LRC) that enables the local communities of Big Ada and Ada Foah “have a bigger legal mouth at the national level”. The radio station, because of its membership of GCRN, works with a host of other organizations to exert greater policy impact at the national level. The station also has a strong link with Professor Karikari’s MFWA, as it provides alert services to the Media Foundation to help it shape some of its media policy positions for government at the national and transnational levels.



Painting a similar scenario, Louw of Bush Radio (Western Cape) maintains that, because of its need to stay connected with its earlier activist roots, Bush Radio still partners with a host of civil society organizations and NGOs across and outside South Africa. For example, the radio station partners with NCRF and other community media organizations across the Western Cape, to formulate a joint policy position. There are the Canadian Development and Peace Organization and the German Friedrich Ebert Tiftung (FET) that fund media projects for the station. There are also the Museum of Design Innovation Leadership & Arts (MODILA), the Clothing Workers Union, and the Missing Children group that help in the design of programmes. Others are long-term partners in public campaigns: AMARC-Africa, The-Right-to-Know-campaign, the Community Policing Forum, the Authentic Information Development Council (AIDC), Women's Net, Gender Links, Children Resource Centre, The Moisingolo (a child's right civil organization); just to mention a few.

Akingbulu of NCRC (Lagos) also admits that, as a result of the broad community-based national consultations and consensus-building carried out by the Coalition between 2003 and 2005, the population of civil society groups that partner with NCRC has gradually expanded. He confirms that NCRC now has about 500 voluntary and registered non-governmental members listed under different categories: civil organizations, NGOs, academics, media professionals, etc. It is from these members that insights and fee donations are drawn annually to inform and fund the activities of the Coalition.

Additionally, he observes that NCRC relates to NGOs and civil groups on two levels: local and international. On the local level, it maintains links with the Institute for Media and Society, Media Rights Agenda, Women Information Network, the Centre for Free Speech and a host of others. On the international level, NCRC keeps strong contact with

AMARC-Africa, Panos Institute of West Africa, the African Languages Technology Initiative, and a host of other international institutions.

Just like NCRN, GCRN (Accra) partners with a host of civil organizations both at local and international levels. On the international level, it has a strong link with the Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI) and the Free Voice Foundation of the Netherlands that fund some of its programmes, as well as with AMARC-Africa and Panos Institute of West Africa that occasionally provide expertise for training and advocacy. On the local level, it has strong relationships with COTA, MFWA, and others.

Explaining the relationship with COTA, Mrs. Quarmyne notes that COTA was formed to harness civil society's efforts to sensitize Ghanaians on the importance of community broadcasting and to draw government's attention to the difficulties community radio stations face in getting approvals for operational frequencies from NCA. The organization currently draws strength from many civil society allies. Mrs. Quarmyne further notes that the process for the formation of COTA began as far back as 2004 when advocacy for a comprehensive broadcasting law that could also favour the cause of community broadcasters had become a bigger policy issue. Drawing from its available resources, the Network then went into partnership with four other organizations (MFWA, LRC, GJA, & TUC) to establish COTA.

As a strong member of COTA, MFWA interfaces with GCRN and other human rights and media activist organizations. Retired Professor Karikari, the CEO of the foundation, explains that MFWA was founded in 1997 and at a time when there was a popular movement in the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa for multiparty politics and liberalization of the airwaves. Karikari maintains that it was within the environment of information repression, abuse of human rights, and of the growing new environment of independent

media pluralism of the late-1990s that MFWA was set up to work alongside the West African Journalists Association (WAJA), to expose violations of rights, monitor and canvass for media freedom on a regional basis.

In this regard, MFWA works in six programme areas in all West African countries: (i) the day-to-day monitoring of abuse of media rights and the rights of journalists and creative persons, using “correspondents” and an “alert” system that motivates activists and human rights organizations to plan public campaigns; (ii) the use of a network of lawyers in the legal defense of journalists brought before regular law courts or ECOWAS court with allegations of criminal offences that are work-related; (iii) the strengthening of media to support democracy through the training of journalists and the promotion of election transparency through the media; (iv) helping journalists who are trapped in conflict situations by returning them to “safe haven” and by encouraging the media not to fan the flame of conflicts, but to work to promote peaceful resolutions of conflicts (e.g. Congo and Ivory Coast); (v) the promotion of media law reforms by organizing conferences and calling on national and/or regional governments to review existing laws or enact new laws to enhance freedom of expression and pluralism; and (vi) embarking on research-related activities.

Though it partners sometimes with community and mainstream media institutions to do programmes to promote participatory democracy and media policy reviews, the foundation does not engage in any practical media production. The institution remains primarily an advocacy organization for press freedom and for the realization of the right of citizens to public information.

### 7.3.2 Partnership with Government

Respondents from Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) and Coastal TV (Cape Coast) are in agreement that their community media institutions maintain only a business relationship with the provincial or regional offices of some government departments. Nyormi of Coastal TV notes that their business link with government's departments is purely for the purpose of sponsored programme productions. Outside this, the television station has no other direct link with government for the purpose of media policy-related campaigns. The institution, however, receives funding and technical assistance from the Danish Embassy in Ghana.

Kinnear of Lowveld Media also indicates that their vertical relationship with the Departments of Education and Health is for the purpose of giving visibility to their programmes, through news publication and advertorials. He maintains that generally Lowveld Media does not sustain partnership with government departments for the purpose of media activism; as these departments cannot stand against their own public policies.

But for Media Trust (Abuja) and Insight Services (Uyo), the picture is relatively different, yet interconnected. Muhammed of Media Trust, on the one hand, notes that since the beginning of democracy, the newspaper company has never had a smooth relationship with politicians and government (Federal or state); that is because the company aligns more with its local readership. He admits that government and politicians do not find it easy with their company because of the kind of information they make public; and that their newspapers are often perceived within the political sector as anti-government and as being too much of a populist establishment. As a result, the company finds it difficult to access news and even advertisement from government offices and ministries. He maintains that, because of its pro-readership

information orientation, Media Trust currently operates “under a harsh political climate”.

The relationship of Insight Services (Uyo) with governments of South Southern states, on the other hand, is cordial and at the same time difficult. Though community papers published by the company are highly critical of state governments, they still enjoy some level of toleration. Augustine observes that their criticism of governments does not mean their papers take sides irrationally. Rather it does require that their journalists and editors remain objective in reporting news and commenting on events and policy issues. For him, the company’s problems with governments (or ministries) often come during political elections when their papers make deliberate options to be on the side of the citizens. He maintains that during those moments in particular, their journalists and editors are often threatened and harassed by politicians and agents of the ruling political party.

Lahweh of Radio Ada (Big Ada), Louw of Bush Radio (Western Cape), and Akingbulu of NCRC (Lagos) are also in agreement that their institutions maintain relatively good relationships with their respective governments and with the national offices of UNESCO and EU. Lahweh notes that Radio Ada has indirect links with government through a number of channels. Depending on the social resources at their disposal, the urgency or the sensitivity of the issues at stake, Radio Ada could link with government to influence media policy decisions, through any or a combination of the following routes: the chiefs or paramount rulers working in council as opinion leaders; the District Assemblies that represents the policy interests of the District to government; government’s information agencies and departments (e.g. the Bureau of National Investigation); and the GCRN (working either singly or under COTA). He admits that, as a result of the stations ability to link up with government through multiple channels,

the radio station has been visited a number of times by delegates from parliamentary committees in a bid to find out more about their experiences. He maintains that, generally, the radio station does not use political parties to impact on policy developments.

With regards to Bush Radio, Louw indicates that the radio station maintains vertical engagements with government mostly through letters or submissions sent to government through ICASA, MDDA and PCC, expressing their critical views on certain media-related policy positions of government. It can also come through programme partnership with UNICEF and GCIS. GCIS, for example, assists the radio station occasionally to arrange interviews with the officials of government. Louw is of the view that the radio station's relationship with government, on the whole, is "quite good. It is on a par with their relationship with civil society organizations. That is because Bush Radio has a reputation of being fair with everybody". He maintains that it is this reputation for fairness (grounded in the station's understanding of broadcasting ethics) that has partially helped the station in its drives for reforms.

NCRC (Lagos), in turn, relates to government only as a key policy player in the same way it interacts with other stakeholders in development communication within and outside the country. Akingbulu notes that "government sometimes might not know what we know; because as a stakeholder we will have gathered knowledge and experience from different parts of the world. And it is important to make this knowledge and experience available to government", to enable it formulate acceptable broadcast media policy. He explains that NCRC interacts with the Nigerian government through various channels: the media regulators (NBC and NCC); the Ministry of Information as the supervising authority for the broadcast sector; the Ministry of Communications &

Technology as the supervising ministry for telecommunications; the two houses of the National Assembly; and others.

### **7.3.3 Partnership with Professional Media Organizations**

Coastal TV (Cape Coast) has “purely advisory” and professional relationships with other mainstream TV stations in Ghana, such as GBC, Channel 3, and Metro TV. Nyormi notes that if he visits these other TV channels, he goes there only “to see what their facilities are like” or to invite some of their staffs to organize workshops for the staff members of Coastal TV. Coastal TV also rebroadcasts news programmes from these mainstream stations. Outside these, there is no other relationship.

Alumuku of the Catholic Archdiocese of Abuja also admits that the Catholic Television Studio and the Catholic Veritas Studio of the Archdiocese maintain cordial and formal relationships with some friendly mainstream media institutions in Abuja, where they are granted “natural windows” to broadcast their pre-recorded faith-based programmes and to reach a wider audience. Such friendly stations include AIT and Hot FM.

But for Lowveld Media (Nelspruit), the company has a ‘formal’ relationship with their sister national daily (The Citizen), whereby Lowveld Media virtually functions as a “bureau office for The Citizen”. The relationship is valuable because it enables journalists from Lowveld Media contribute to the breaking of national news. In this way, The Citizen provides for them a broader platform for campaigns, job motivations, and opportunities for improvement in professional skills.

But the company’s relationship with other mainstream media institutions within and outside South Africa, Kinnear admits, is strictly “loose and informal”. What this means is that Lowveld Media exchanges information and photographs, which could be further edited and published, with friendly mainstream papers (e.g. The Sowetan and a few

foreign newspapers). Kinnear maintains that such external relationships are, however, always handled with caution, as it would be unethical for Lowveld Media to supply their full stories to those other media institutions or to reveal to them their information sources. The standing policy of the company is to provide only insight information; in the same way it expects to receive only insight information from these friendly media establishments when the need arises.

Respondents from Insight Services (Uyo) and Media Trust (Abuja) are in agreement that their respective company has ‘formal’ links with professional media organizations in Nigeria, such as the NUJ, the NPAN, and the NGE, all of which have links with other trade unions and movements, lobbyist, and activist organizations across the country. Both Augustine and Muhammed admit that these professional organizations, from time to time, do provide the enabling environments for their respective company to make inputs into collective debates and unified media policy decisions.

Augustine is, however, negatively critical of their relationship with the NPC. For him, “the Press Council is not just functioning as it ought to function”. He is emphatic that, as far as he is concerned, the Council is non-existent; and that, compared to NBC, the Council lacks the efficiency and the kind of power that can enable it bring about policy reforms for effective organization of the newspaper industry in the country. He explains that, because the Council does not organize Workshops and Seminars regularly as NBC does, journalists hardly know what the agency is doing or planning to do. Augustine attributes the problem with NPC to the internal power struggles among its constituent organizations (NGE, NUJ, and NPAN), which makes it difficult for the body to sustain unified policy positions (outside the professional *Code of Ethics*).



Outside these professional bodies, a few respondents from across the three countries, in varying ways, indicate that their institutions also draw on the benefits of New and social Media to give visibility to their stories, record feedbacks, and campaign for reforms.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

From the above comparative data, it could be inferred, firstly, that community media organizations from across the three African countries draw on diversity of platforms (programming, capacity-building, and deliberative and social forums) to campaign for media policy reforms. Secondly, the formation of ongoing alliances and collaborations (regardless of the depth and nature) holds significant force, not only for joint programming, for the articulation of shared policy values and for campaigns, but also for the very effectiveness and survival of community media groups in the Sub-Saharan African region.

The value of the different modes of cross-networking and collaboration could also be evaluated against the statement of Negt and Kluge (1983) that proletarian consciousness can never succeed alone when carried out on the broader national level. For it to have any extensive impact, rural movements requires some form of integration with elite and professionalized movements. Negt and Kluge's critical comments highlight the importance, not only of rural mobilizations and campaigns to highlight the experiences of disadvantaged groups within nation-states, but also of cross-linkages with *bourgeoisie* and trade union movements to ensure the recording of extensive and lasting positive outcomes. However, as Negt and Kluge also rightly observe, such cross-partnerships should never be carried out in such a way as to compromise the defining emancipatory and humanist objectives of grassroots consciousness.

## Chapter Eight

### **Media Policy Activism: Achievements and Challenges**

In this chapter, I present data that reflect and indicate the level of participation of alternative media institutions and coalitions with governments in media policy-making, with specific emphasis on some of their achievements and setbacks.

#### **8.1 Achievements**

While it would be unrealistic to assume that all the achievements of community media groups of the three countries could be completely captured in this small chapter, it is nevertheless important to stress that they have, in varying ways, recorded significant victories over the last two decades. Respondents from across the three countries admit that, regardless of the existing hostile political and economic conditions, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and delay strategies of their respective governments, community media institutions are recording successes in their engagements with their respective government in media policy reforms.

Three distinctive criteria have been used to assess and measure their achievements, namely, the number of Awards and trophies received; the level of participation in policy debates and decisions; and the positive policy outcomes recorded. But, generally, respondents admit that the successes recorded are indicative, not only of the strength and relevance of their adopted mediatory and campaigning processes, but also of participatory management and production structures, as well as of organized civil society streets activism to influence media policy changes at all levels.

Kinnear of Lowveld Media (Nelspruit) evaluates the achievements of their community newspaper institution in terms of the number of Awards won by “The Lowvelder” between 2002 and 2009. He admits that six times the community newspaper has

received Caxton Excellence Awards under the category of the “Best Sold Newspaper with circulation of 8,000 and more”. Three times it has received Nissan Capro Awards under the category of the “Best Newspaper with circulation above 10,000”. And once (2009) it received Cronwright Award for the “Best sold community newspaper”. For him, these Awards are indicative of their socio-political impacts and of their fidelity to readership. He maintains that, though working with the community newspaper company is less rewarding financially when compared to working for mainstream establishments, it is nevertheless emotionally satisfying knowing that they are creating impacts within the province and are bringing about changes in favour of citizenship.

Also speaking about the Awards received by Radio Peace (Winneba), Kwesi Gharthey-Tagoe notes that the radio station was first recognized by government as “The Second Best Akan Radio Station”. The second time it was awarded “The First Best Akan Radio Station”. And the third time it received a trophy as “The Best Community Radio Station”. He acknowledges, however, that beyond Awards, Radio Peace has also contributed towards media freedom under COTA and GCRN. The station, for example, challenged government’s proscription of any official engagement with Multimedia Corporation, simply because a panelist constituted by “Asempa FM” (Accra) in 2011 criticized the ruling political party.

Respondents from South Africa admit that community media institutions in the country have achieved a lot in terms of formation of loose coalitions and networks, training and research, representations at conferences and in terms of policy outcomes. They have contributed, by lobbying for changes in legislations under CODESA, FAWO, OWN, LINK, SASFED, and NCRF, for media democratization in the broadest sense, the establishment of a diverse sector in community media, the formations of MDDA to promote media development and diversity and of an independent media regulator

(ICASA), just to mention a few. Louw, Leonard, Mhlongo, and Thorn are in agreement that the outcome of their recent reform effort, for example, is the *Electronic Communications Acts (No. 36) of 2005* that came into force in April 18, 2006. The ECA was formed to replace the IBA Act (No. 153) of 1993 and the Telecommunications Act of 1996; as well as to provide amendments to some sections of the interim Broadcasting Act of 1999.

Some of the major amendments that came into force with the ECA (2005) and that were informed by civil society and community media activism include:

- The incorporation of IBA and SATRA into ICASA; the empowerment of ICASA to deal with the regulation of all electronic media and communications in South Africa; and the insulation of the independent regulator from commercial and political interferences;
- The provision of new technical details on the transmission power of community radio stations which now allows for flexible radius coverage that is relative to the geographical needs of each station and for the use of a maximum of 250Kilowatts transmitters for broadcasting;
- The opening of “two periodic windows” in a year (April & October) when applications for licenses could be forwarded to ICASA. This has removed the painful process of having to wait till a call for license applications is made;
- The requirement that ICASA responds to all license applications within 60 days after those applications have been submitted; and where ICASA fails to offer notifications within the set period, licensees must assume on the 61<sup>st</sup> day that their licenses have been granted. This amendment has removed the pain of having to

wait for years without hearing from the regulator and without any valid license to work with;

- The specification of community radio licensing conditions not in terms of the traditional distinction between “geographic community” or “community of interest” stations; but rather in terms of radio stations “not-for-gain”; and
- The formation of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA); a body that deals with the compliance of broadcast stations to their license conditions and with language-related complaints (especially hate speech, vulgarity and profanity of broadcast languages). BCCSA is also required by ECA to formulate a Code (subject to the approval of ICASA) to which South African broadcasters should voluntarily subscribe to for the purpose of self-regulation.

Thorn of CTCTV maintains that, though the ECA may have a few shortcomings here and there, “it is not a bad piece of legislation”. The problem with the Act, she explains, rests mostly in its implementations. But for Leonard of Bush Radio, the ECA is still deficient in the area that deals with the “Universal Services Access Fund”. The section of the law requires all broadcasters to pay annually a fee into the ‘Access Fund’ which could be upset against their payment to MDDA. Leonard explains, firstly, that community radio stations do not make payments to MDDA which could be used “to upset their fees”; rather they are beneficiaries of MDDA. Secondly, since community radio stations depend on MDDA for survival, expecting them to make contributions into the ‘Fund’ is simply a contradiction in terms. Leonard maintains that Bush Radio is pushing for this contradiction in ECA to be amended.

Outside ECA, Leonard and Thorn further note that the managements of Bush Radio and CTCTV have independently made submissions to ICASA and to the Portfolio Committee in relation to the high cost imposed by SENTECH on signal distribution.

They admit, in varying ways, that as a result of the volume of complaints and accompanying negotiations, SENTECH is currently working to review the situation.

There are also indications, at the time of my visits, that the managements of community broadcast media institutions are preparing documents for independent submission to ICASA on digital broadcasting. The submissions on digital migration, according to respondents, are made in response to ICASA's invitation in December 2011 for written representations on digital convergence which are to be handed in before the end of March 2012. The aim of the submissions is to enable community broadcast media groups in South Africa influence in some ways ICASA's legislation on digital and New Media.

Outside the digital media, Leonard of Bush Radio indicates that the management of the station is also pushing for changes in laws that deal with music copyrights, payment of royalties to SAMRO for music played by radio stations and laws that govern music organizations in South Africa. Leonard notes that so far South Africa is still governed by the laws of 1976 and 1978.

Louw of Bush Radio also notes that, in view of the challenges the station has faced over the past two to three years in terms of sustainability, the management of Bush Radio is gradually "going back to that original level of lobbying and activism" it has always been associated with in the past. The justification for this return, he argues, rests, firstly, on the fact that "people still see us as a pioneer station. And if we are going to keep quiet about issues, other people might tend to do the same. So we need to participate at all levels to build the sector". Secondly, the NCRF that ought to co-ordinate the entire community radio sector "is not very active at the moment". The other body, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) that has a community radio arm has more

commercial radio broadcasters as members, which prevents the association from working effectively for the interest of community broadcasting sector as it should. There is also the Christian Broadcasters Forum (CBF) that caters purely for the welfare of Christian community broadcasters. Louw maintains that it is CBF limited scope that makes it difficult for *Bush Radio* to work under their platforms for the purpose of policy changes in South Africa.

Making a similar comment about the contributions of FAWO and the management of CTCTV into media policy developments, Thorn notes that FAWO played a crucial role in the advocacy for the setting up of CTVs in South Africa even as far back as 1995. And in 2000, at the “Community Media Conference” held in Cape Town, it launched a national network of emerging CTV stations known as Open Window Network (OWN). OWN’s initial campaigns was to convince the new democratic government to interpret the provisions of IBA Act (1993) on ‘community broadcasting’ in terms of radio and television. But because government gave a deaf ear to those appeals at that time, OWN encouraged the setting up of CTV initiatives all over the country “with really community-based structures”.

These initiatives, she notes, were funded at the early stage by foreign donors and were mostly operated illegally because “IBA never saw it fit to start the full-licensing of CTVs”, even though it issued a license for the establishment of a national private television now known as *etv*. The full-licensing of CTVs at that stage was, therefore, low in government’s agenda. What had been in operation since 1995 was a one-month “special events” kind of licensing, provided by IBA (and later ICASA), which was later changed into one-year “special events” experimental licensing for a few community television stations. Thorn argues that if government had a plan for grassroots CTVs before 2004, they “never really came around to implementing it”. The vacuum left by

that apparent lack of good will from government, she admits, “was really demoralizing”.

The second thing that OWN did to encourage the growth of CTVs was to strengthen negotiations with SABC for “a natural partnership” between existing nascent CTV studios and SABC. Though the “natural partnership” arrangement had first been decided and negotiated as far back as 1996, it needed to be pushed through by OWN when it became clear that grassroots CTVs would never be licensed the same way community radios had been licensed since 1994. The idea behind the “natural partnership” scheme, she notes, was to get SABC to give “a window” to CTV studios to enable them start building production and broadcast capacity so that when licenses were eventually issued they could be better prepared to engage in television productions. Thorn observes that that arrangement never took off, due to lack of leadership potential in OWN to take full advantage of the opportunity.

Yet, regardless of these setbacks, she admits that OWN was “well ahead of its time”, compared to the developments in other African countries. However, by 2004 when ICASA’s ‘White Paper’ for the licensing of CTVs was eventually published, Thorn observes that OWN had collapsed, due to the combination of a number of factors; including loose of enthusiasm in the struggle for the licensing of CTVs; lack of leadership potential to move the organization forward; and lack of funding to sustain the organization which caused some members to end up pursuing other interests. For Thorn, the funding issue was probably the main issue behind its folding up. Thorn, however, admits that most of the submissions made by OWN to government before its demise were made in partnership with NCRF. The two bodies, she notes, worked closely together to influence policy changes in favour of community media.



Thorn further admits that even after ICASA's 'Position Paper' for the licensing of CTVs was finally issued, there was still that strong sense that those in the higher echelon of government did not want CTVs to come alive. She notes that legally CTV might have found its way into IBA Act (1993). Strategically, a "little window" was eventually opened for them to get licenses after 2004. But "there has been a kind of resistance on the part of government for community television to come about".

She is emphatic that CTVs were set up in South Africa to fail. She admits there are "two conspiracy theories" in this regard: The first theory is that government is scared to put "the powerful medium of television into the hands of ordinary citizens where they will have little control over" and which accounts for why government is slow to champion its growth the same way it championed the growth of community radio. The second theory indicates that, though some people in government (including President Jacob Zuma) think it is a fantastic idea to have grassroots CTVs, government has so far failed to bring out any official position on the matter. This leaves the impression that either government does not know what to do or it does not want community television in South Africa. And because of that, she admits, the struggle for the recognition, establishment, and sustainability of CTVs "has been a fight all the way". Because community television in South Africa did not emerge as government's initiative in the same way community radio did, Thorn admits that the sector does not have the kind of success story that community radio sector has. She observes that it is as a result of this development that the management of CTCTV, working in partnership with other stakeholders, continues to 'push' to ensure there are behavioural and policy changes from government in favour of the sector.

Thorn notes that "even though it has been an incredible uphill struggles and it has taken a long time for them to get where they are today", at least CTCTV "has been extremely

effective at influencing the regulatory environment” in the Western Cape Province, through paper submissions and the provision of “people with access to government’s information to empower communities to play a central role in influencing the laws that affect them in their communities”.

Thorn gives a 10% score to the success achieved so far through the use of CTCTV’s participatory programming to influence the politics of media policy-making in the province. For her, the percentage is low precisely because of the challenges the station is facing in terms of financial resources which makes it difficult for the station to bring on board more discursive and political programme initiatives. Thorn maintains that the station’s contribution in terms of programming will remain limited until that time when they are able to “have more money to produce more contents”. But in terms of paper submissions, she admits that the management of the station makes contributions at every stage into every media policy formed in the country after the Apartheid era and that has a direct bearing on the well-being of CTVs in the country.

Thorn, however, observes that in order for CTCTV to be able to do a lot more to influence media policy developments, government still needs to publicly recognize their role in promoting participatory democracy; in popularizing the processes for the developments of new laws; and in giving “people opportunities to give their feedbacks” and to engage with government around media law themes – whether it is a ‘local by-law’ or a ‘national law’ considered at the parliamentary level. For her, CTCTV is committed and is well positioned to facilitate a two-way flow of communication between government and the citizens in these respects. But that role needs to be continuously and publicly recognized and strengthened by government.

If so much has been achieved by community media institutions in South Africa in terms of policy outcomes, a similar scenario is recorded by respondents from Ghana. Lahweh of Radio Ada explains, firstly, that there is a strong cross-relationship between Community Radio Initiatives and GCRN which strengthens the base for training and research, as well as for policy impact at the national level. GCRN, therefore, provides a “bigger voice to speak for them”.

Secondly, under GCRN, the Initiatives have been able to make recommendations towards the formation of a comprehensive broadcasting law for Ghana. The first recommendation made to the Ansu-Keyremeh-led committee on the formation of a comprehensive broadcasting law, he explains, has to do with the use of local language for programming and broadcasting. This recommendation, he observes, was also taken up by MFWA and NMC to inform their different local broadcast policy mobilizations in the bid to save local languages and cultures. The general position is that where it is necessary to use English in media discussions, there should be a simultaneous translation into local languages. In response to this linguistic concern, Lahweh notes that both NMC, as the regulator of media contents, and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), as an industry organization, have both provided guidelines (or “Language Code”) on the use of local languages for the purpose of cultural preservation and to prevent politicians from using bad languages on opponents through the media.

A personal study of a copy of the NMC 2009 *Guidelines for Local Language Broadcasting*, made available to me at NMC Secretariat in Accra, outlines the core ethical values that ought to inform local language broadcasting. These include the need for accuracy, objectivity, and avoidance of incitement. Among others, the document also offers the necessary ingredients for local language news productions such as the use of local stringers, language proficiency and cultural mores. It outlines the defining

values of local language use and programming to include decency, cultural rites and morality, non-portrayal of violence, cruelty or horror. It also establishes the requirements for local language news coverage and broadcasting particularly at the time of elections.

The second recommendation of the Initiatives to the committee, Lahweh admits, is the need for broadcast media regulation to be backed by strong “local traditional values” to safeguard the morality of interpersonal communications in the media and to check against offensive sex-related values, vulgarity in language, as well as excessive alcohol and tobacco advertisements in broadcast contents. Lahweh explains, firstly, that there is need to protect “local traditional values” against the negative impact of the neo-liberal policies entrenched in the country by the public service strategies adopted by the NDC-led government. Secondly, that the emphasis of community broadcasters on low alcohol and cigarette advertisement is sensible because it could help reduce the problem of alcoholism and its concomitant health and financial challenges in the country, as well as redefine concerns for commercialism in the mainstream media in Ghana.

For him, there are a number of people out there that value the ethical concerns community radio journalists in Ghana have put out for integration into a national broadcast policy. But how government responds to these issues over the years depends entirely on the disposition of the Executive leader and the political party in power in line with their project agendas. He observes, however, that it is necessary for the ruling government in Ghana (regardless of their political orientation) to move beyond mere “lips service” and learn to respond to development challenges from the point of view of the rights of the marginalized and not only from the perspective of the elites.

Outlining other specific policies and laws which reforms have been impacted by community media activism across the country, Lahweh points to the negotiations with government for “the waiver” on taxation for the importation of equipment for community broadcasting and with NCA for lower licensing fees for community media.

He explains firstly that, based on GCRN’s argument that the importation of community radio equipment should not be taxed but should be placed under non-profit category of social services, government was able to respond positively to that demand. Secondly, that the lowering of license fees was made possible by the local resistance of Nabina Radio (under the Directorship of Fr. Rex). The station was initially required to pay 2,000 Cedes as licensing fees. But the community was only able to raise the equivalent of \$100 US Dollars for NCA. Motivated by their resistance in sourcing for additional money, GCRN was able to take up the matter and argue for government to grant a lower licensing tariff of \$100 US Dollars for community radio stations in Ghana. Lahweh further notes that, while government has responded positively to those policy demands, it has failed to respond positively to the demands that community media institutions be given a reduced frequency utilization fee charges (lower than the current \$200 US Dollars) and be relieved of the requirement to pay VAT for services offered to the public.

Providing additional information on the achievements of the Initiatives in Ghana, Chief Alex Quarmyne, one of the founding “Elders” of GCRN and of Radio Ada, notes that in January 2005 NCA unilaterally came out with a Guideline on community radio broadcasting in Ghana. Three clauses in that Guideline became the cause for new agitations: the clause on negative political broadcasting and commentary; the clause that prevents community radio stations from generating revenue; and the clause that limited the coverage radius of community radio to 5kms.

Chief Quarmyne explains that, though the Guideline contained some of the proposals made by GCRN (such as the recommendations on campus radio and on clearer definitions of ‘community’ and of ‘community radio’), its “cut and paste format”, its unilateral imposition, and the attempt to regulate campus radio separately were all rejected by media activists. Also the power of NCA to regulate on issues bordering on content was questioned. Broad-based consultations were then undertaken by GCRN and other stakeholders working under COTA to push for reforms.

NMC, as the legitimate content regulator, eventually came out with a new Guideline which was later accepted by NCA and integrated into its own Guideline on community broadcasting. In the new Guideline issued by NMC, NCA’s ruling that community radio stations in Ghana could not generate income or do any political programming were overturned to allow community radio generate minimal income on their own and to do political programming in a non-partisan and non-sectarian manner. The only issue that remained, Chief Quarmyne notes, was the 5Kms coverage radius, a principle that was drawn directly from Ofcom’s Guideline on community broadcasting in the UK, without any consideration for Ghana’s particular terrestrial and linguistic challenges. Chief Quarmyne notes that this specific issue was eventually resolved only when NCA accepted to add an “exceptional clause” to Section 3.1 of its 2007 Guideline, noting that a 25Kms radius could be given for community broadcasting only under exceptional terrestrial circumstances. For Chief Quarmyne, this was a big victory for the community media sector and for COTA, as it worked against NCA’s implicit aim of strengthening effective monopoly of the broadcasting sector by government and by private commercial media.

The Quarmynes (Alex and Wilna) are also in agreement that under COTA, a couple of street actions (e.g. the ‘Voice Walk’) that ended at the Ghana International Press Centre

(Accra) have been undertaken recently to force government and the regulatory agencies to have a rethink on some media policy proposals and to work together with NGOs to strengthen press freedom and media pluralism in the country. Thus, over the years and working in partnership with COTA, the Network has conscientized local communities on the value of community radios for development and for democracy. The duo explains that the national advocacy project undertaken by COTA at different forums and through street actions is done, firstly, in the belief that the Airwave is a public resource. Secondly, it is grounded on a philosophy that recognizes that for democracy to be sustained in Ghana it requires a media environment that is truly independent and pluralistic, both in terms of access and voice. Mrs. Quarmyne further notes that so far COTA has succeeded in getting government to integrate the policy position of media activists into the National Communications Plan of Ghana.

Still from Ghana, Retired Professor Karikari of MFWA confirms that under GCRN and COTA community media groups in the country are very active and vocal; that they have been part of the search for freedom of expression, broadcast legislations, and the ‘push’ for community radio rights and the actualization of the Right to Freedom of Information Act. But he would not put any percentage score on their activist role.

He also recognizes the positive contributions of the Media Foundation to media policy developments, not only in Ghana, but also across the West African region. Karikari explains that his institution has worked with a number of civil society organizations and with governments (including the governments of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, and Congo) to establish media oversight bodies or facilitate the passage of new media laws. A good example is the policy proposal for ECOWAS regional legislative framework that will provide “a regional protocol to determine the passage of laws on the media and rights to information”. Karikari observes that, historically, this would be

the first time such a “protocol for media legislation” would be approved; and that the initiative first originated, not from government, but from media activist associations. He explains that, so far, the Ministers of Information and Ministers of Justice from ECOWAS member countries have, respectively, studied, amended and approved the proposal. The final passage of the proposal into law to bind all ECOWAS signatory countries will be made soon at the Heads of State Summit.

And from Nigeria, respondents also admit that the community media sector has also recorded some achievements in activism for policy reforms. Alumuku of the ‘Good Shepherd’ newspaper (Abuja), Professor Andrew Moemeka of Covenant University, and Mark Ojiah of NBC acknowledge that, under NCRC, Community Radio Initiatives have assisted NBC in clarifying and documenting the modalities for the practice of community broadcasting in the country, in the definition of ‘community’ and of the values that underpin community media practices. They have assisted in the establishment of participatory frameworks for the organization and management of campus media to ensure avoidance of bureaucratic and clientelistic tendencies in editorial contents. They are working to encourage broader engagements of citizens in programming and the management of grassroots community radios as soon as the licensing of the sector begins.

Akingbulu of NCRC (Lagos) notes that it will not be too easy to place a percentage scoring on the participatory role of NCRC and Community Radio Initiatives in media policy reviews in Nigeria. Such task, he admits, is most appropriate for outsiders. He maintains, firstly, that NCRC and community radio broadcasters in the country “have done a good job within the realities of the environment”. Secondly, that government’s response to their advocacy, so far, is favourable. The only negative thing is that government’s reactions to review recommendations have been very slow. For him, such



delays have their own negative effects. They continue to raise questions about Nigeria's leadership position among other African countries. Corroborating these positions, Alumuku admits that, under NCRC, Community Radio Initiatives have done a lot of advocacy through newspapers and conferences. But that the impacts they are making are not seen in the society because of the way government continues to offer a deaf ear to their appeals. He admits that government's specific responses remain the big problem the sector is facing in Nigeria.

From the community press sector, Kinnear of Lowveld Media and Kennedy Mudzuli of the Johannesburg North Community Newspapers note that alternative journalists of the press sector contributed to the formation of the current South African Press Code. In a similar way, Muhammed of Media Trust (Nigeria) admits that the newspaper company is giving a 50-50% active engagement with policy experts to bring changes into certain newspaper policies. For him, the fundamental problem with policy development has to do with awareness. He maintains that there is little awareness among ordinary citizens with regards to the contents and meanings of some government policy documents. He argues that a similar scenario surrounds the various Reports that have been submitted by *ad hoc* committees to the Nigerian government. The contents of these Reports are hardly known to the public and their findings are never followed through by government or questioned by the citizens.

For him, the alternative press sector has always remained a valuable channel, through which government can educate the citizens on its public policy positions. But because the Nigerian government has a history of minimal engagement with these institutions and with the people to increase policy awareness before policies are implemented, good numbers of alternative publications in Nigeria have been forced to play less than 50%

role in policy-related awareness formations. For him, it is here that the question of self-censorship should be seen as highly relevant to strengthen investigative journalism.

Empirical evidence from across the three countries, therefore, suggests that community media groups are recording tremendous victories and that the various achievements of community media have, in varying ways and degrees, been assisted by the spread and expansion in community media development, the prevailing participatory methods of organizations and managements of community media establishments, the participatory approach to programming through effective active audience developments, as well as by the available legislative frameworks and funding mechanisms that inform and influence alternative productions, capacity-building, and policy deliberative engagements with national and regional governments.

## **8.2 Challenges**

Regardless of the high level of achievements recorded, a few challenges that impact negatively on activism for reforms have also been identified by respondents from across the three countries. These challenges, in turn, problematize the additional pressures on alternative media and suggest the themes for future advocacy and policy engagements with governments. Some of these challenges are summarized as follows:

- The difficulty community media groups have in documenting impact on the national level, informed by official limitations placed on their coverage areas and the kind of task they can engage in for the purpose of development.
- The ‘closed-door’ approach adopted by some media regulators (particularly in South Africa and Ghana) to inform their business engagements with small media organizations, which makes shared and quicker clarifications of policy problems

difficult and, at the long run, affect the good working relationship that ought to exist between experimental media and governments.

- The difficulty of getting people in governments to give response to media enquiries before newspaper publications to ensure balance, fairness, and objectivity of views and which can sometimes impact on quality productions by some community newspapers.
- Lack of adequate funding for community media and the concomitant effect of over-emphasis on commercialization over and against socio-cultural and political imperatives.
- Poor social infrastructures and services (electricity, telephone, roads, etc.) that invariably impact on stable and quality programme generations and circulations in Ghana and Nigeria.
- The tendency to use community newspapers as conduits for ethnic and political propagation and blackmail; rather than as tools for the education and empowerment of the citizens of African countries to engage with their respective governments in public policy reforms.
- The loss of trained volunteers at short notice and the use of outdated equipment and unskilled (or semi-skilled) staffs which invariably impact on quality information generation and dissemination.
- Governments' delays in frequency and funding provisions (e.g. Ghana and Nigeria) and in 'contracting' (e.g. South Africa) for the continuous growth and survival of community media.
- Attempts by governments to impose media ethics for political gain, with the concomitant challenge this imposes on effective internal self-regulation and professionalism.

- The increasing alignment of community media with big media corporations to strengthen advertisement bases, with the concomitant effect of undermining investigative journalism that could ensure accountability and socio-political reforms.
- The inability of researchers to link theoretical discoveries with practice challenges, so as to make discussions on community media fields relevant at the grassroots and for policy formations.
- The problem of effective regulation of digital and social media, with the possible effects these can have on content generation, quality, and the active engagements of local people as end-users.

### **8.3 Conclusion**

The empirical evidence drawn from the three African countries, in varying ways, confirm that the dynamics of media policy-making process in contemporary times is becoming very expansive and competitive; and that community media have in the last two decades partnered with the States in media policy reforms. While the States remain the key policy players, community media groups, whose entry into the media policy-making processes is informed by their own policy visions and concerns, now draw on diversity of strategies to exert influences and bring about media policy reforms across the Sub-Saharan African region. Based, therefore, on the available comparative data, it could be validly inferred for this chapter that, though alternative journalists and coalition groups are continuously experiencing varying degrees of setbacks in activism for policy reforms and in media democratization across the Anglophone Sub-Sahara, they are nevertheless recording some victories.

## **The Future of Community Media in Media Policy Campaigns**

### **9.1 Study Contributions & Conclusions**

This study has focused on addressing a range of questions in relation to the interventionist role of community media (press and broadcasting) and alternative media coalitions in media policy changes of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades (1990-2010). The study has also provided an intellectual response to the enduring tensions within scholarship with regards to the marginal or non-marginal role of and the difficulty of mapping and documenting the impacts of grassroots policy actors. The underlying assumption of this work has been that governments and their political departments are not the exclusive players in media policy developments. There are other significant (and sometimes unacknowledged) actors that participate in that process (cf. Humphreys, 1994), including community media. While acknowledging the crucial role of governments and their policy experts as key policy players, this work has advanced convincing arguments, based on available theoretical and empirical data, to indicate that community media institutions and media coalitions are also participating in the political and social processes of media regulations in contemporary times in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa. Within these conceptual frameworks, this study makes the following contributions into knowledge:

The study has reconceptualized media policy in terms of an ‘ethical-political’ integrative framework. This approach has been established as the new media policy vision offered to governments and policy experts by alternative media organizations. While governments’ approaches to media policy configurations in the last couple of decades have tended to place strong emphasis on the ‘instrumental’ and ‘end-driven’ approaches to policy-making, this study establishes the need for a gradual shift towards

the 'ethical-political' approach, whereby policy-making will in the future be approached in terms of the need to balance the objectivity and social responsibility requirement of professionalism with the affective and life world demands of alternative media, so as to ensure the credibility of regulatory and practice processes. While the validity of the 'administrative' approach of government is often premised on the prominence of the State (or its agency) in regulating and deregulating the media, the validity of the 'ethical-political' approach is premised on the prominence of ideological consensus between governments and civil societies, obtained at diversity of conflict resolution venues in policy-making, including community media-organized venues and processes.

This work also locates community media in Sub-Saharan Africa within the framework of the theoretical debates on 'alternative journalism' and on 'shapers' of media policy developments. It recognizes that the concept of alternative journalism has been expanded in recent years to cover a wide range of countercultural and small media practices (individual or community). The study suggests, amidst other existing competing philosophical 'models', the need to draw on the Negt & Kluge (1983/93), Shoelle, (1995), Curran, (1991), and Hackett & Carroll's (2006) revisionist approaches to Habermasian public sphere conception, the necessary model to understand and highlight the essential characteristics of community media that are relevant for the articulation of the activist role of community media of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa in media policy reforms. These revisionist approaches define the value of community media for activism, not only in terms of their role in reportage, but also in terms of their capability in providing diversity of participatory platforms and processes that could enable broader deliberations and opinion-formations, so as to ensure consensus-reaching between governments and ordinary citizens for the legitimization of media policy and for nation-building.

Though the concept of ‘public sphere’ is in itself not new to scholarship, its application to the community media experiences of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa and in relation to the mediatory, social, and political processes for participatory media policy-making offers a significant methodology for articulating the distinctive nature of the causal relationship between community media and media policy developments in Africa.

Thus, one of the central intellectual inputs of this study into scholarship is in highlighting and documenting the valuable contributions of community media to media policy decisions and the platforms under which such contributions have been made. Through theoretical and empirical data analysis, this study has, therefore, been able to establish that community media and activist organizations do engage regularly with national governments and mainstream media professionals in policy-making to impact on media democratization, drawing extensively from their general policy visions and countless specific emancipatory policy proposals that sometimes arise from long-term or short-term practice challenges.

The validity of my argument about the interventionist capability of community media, of course, rests firmly on the study’s ability to establish in chapter three, firstly, that the media regulatory environments of South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria now favour growth in community press and broadcasting media. The only exception is in Nigeria where external policy still prevents growth in ‘grassroots’ broadcasting media. The current dearth of community press in Ghana is by far a product of dirty party politics than it is of a lack of constitutional provision to encourage the growth of the community press sector in the country.

And because there are now, generally, better legislative opportunities to strengthen media pluralism and encourage growth in community media practices, this study has

been able to acknowledge that there now exist across the three African countries more participatory opportunities to enable ordinary citizens to engage with their governments (national or provincial) in the debates about the media; and secondly, that community media could be considered as a vital component of the discourse on ‘shapers’ of media policy making in Africa, amidst the diversity of other factors (including rapid technological changes, political economy of communication, colonialism and modernization, democratic politics, international development supports, African ethics and traditional values, and others).

This study has also, through comparative data analyses, addressed in chapters five to eight other themes and questions raised at the beginning of this work in relation to media policy changes and the interventionist role of community media. These include the themes on the current state of community media in Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa (diversity and political economy), the constellation of influences on community media, the democratic processes that ensures audience participation in the organization and management of community media to ensure accountability and stronger impacts on public policy decisions, the kind of funding arrangements available to community media institutions to ensure sustainability and strengthen frameworks for activism, the policy concerns of alternative media groups, platforms for media policy activism, as well as the successes and challenges recorded over the years. Based, therefore, on the enormous empirical materials obtained from ‘field’ investigations and on data analyses in relation to these themes, the following general conclusions have been drawn for this work:

- There are substantial media policy changes with progressive effects across the countries of Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades; with an



average of 76.8% of those who provided valid responses to a written questionnaire supporting this position.

- Regardless of these policy changes, there are still specific policy concerns of community media groups that underline what brings additional pressures to these institutions and why these should be redressed through ongoing activism for policy reforms.
- There is a robust and complex culture of community media in the English-speaking countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The complexity takes cognizance of diversity of types, technology, size, contents, and practice imperatives and philosophies.
- Community media organizations in the Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa, drawing on their specific policy vision and the diversity of participatory platforms (programming, capacity-building, deliberative and social forums, and horizontal or vertical alliances) available to them, are exerting significant impacts on media policy reforms; with an average of 65.5% of those who provided a valid response to the questionnaire supporting this position.
- While storytelling in the form of news and news analyses, as well as different formats of discursive programming, generally set in motion the processes of dialogue, negotiations, and collective decisions to affect official media policy positions, community media journalists now conceptualize themselves not so much in terms of ‘originators’ or ‘negotiators’ of media policy ideas, but as the ‘gatekeepers of news’, ‘facilitators’ of opinion-formation, and the ‘moderators’ of debates and dialogue that can ensure media-related reforms.
- The degree of their radicalism and effectiveness for media policy reforms is affected by a host of factors, including the spread and expansion in community media, the degree of their rootedness in the local communities, the degree of participation of

audiences in the management and production initiatives, availability and structures of funding and social infrastructures, the different ideologies that inform and drive productions, as well as the presence of official attempts at information suppression.

- The growth of ‘active’ audience, which holds strong potency for successful campaigning for reforms, is now defined by a three-fold patterns: the engagements of different cadres of audiences in the ownership and management of community media stations through diversity of representational structures; the provision of access to technologies and technicalities of productions and programming; as well as the strategic and partial delivery of audiences from the informal economic sector to advertisers or to their agents.

However, in view of some of the emergent constraints on community media practices across the Anglophone Sub-Saharan region, there is the need to suggest some ways forward, whereby community media organizations could be made more actively involved in the reform initiatives of governments in the future. What then are the prospects for activism and for the effectiveness of community media in media policy reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa in the next few decades?

## **9.2 Prospects for Activism for Reforms**

In envisioning the future of community media for activism for reforms, the following practical suggestions are made. These recommendations are drawn against the backdrop of some of the challenges still confronting the small media sector and that have been reviewed in varying ways in the preceding chapters.

### **9.2.1 Adoption of the Ethical-political Policy Framework**

The first challenge confronting alternative media and their effectiveness for future media policy reforms is the need for government, policy experts and radical groups to

reconceptualize media policy and to broaden policy-making processes along the logics of the ‘ethical-political’ and ‘venue-based’ approaches proposed in chapter two of this work. The proposed ‘ethical-political’ approach suggests a new integrative framework for media policy conception and policy making; something different from the mere ‘end-driven’ and ‘administrative’ approaches that have prevailed for decades within different world regions.

The call for a more integrative approach rests, fundamentally, on the need to recognize, not only the significance of indigenous philosophical traditions and ethical values to policy decisions, but also of the need to balance government with civil society processes in media policy-making. Secondly, the ‘ethical-political’ conceptual approach is important because of its openness to diversity of policy actors and to decentered points of discourse, interaction, and decision-making; as well as because of its capability in accommodating the ‘critical-rational’ and the ‘affective’ modes of citizenship in public policy discourses of liberal democratic and capitalist societies. Thirdly, the focus of the ‘ethical-political’ is on the affirmation of human rights, human education, frameworks for justice and liberty, and on the reduction in sub-cultural marginalization through media policy-making.

As noted by Srinivas Melkote & Leslie Steeves within the context of their study on communication for human empowerment, ‘the most pressing moral imperative in policy making is a calculus of pains and deprivations’ (2001: 334). This understanding invites policy makers to re-examine, not only the normative, but also the moral basis in media policy decisions. Seen in this light, I am convinced that, apart from offering an integrative approach to media policy conception, the ‘ethical-political’ framework can serve policy makers as a theoretical frame for self-examination and for the review of media policy contents and the dynamic processes for policy making in line with the

painful and exclusionary experiences of marginal groups. In this way, media policy will become more relevant to every sector of the African society and other world regions, whereby the mechanisms of participation in national developments and in the reduction of suffering will be gradually transformed from their centralized elitist perspectives to decentralized citizenship perspectives.

### **9.2.2 Adoption of ‘Open’ Administrative Approach**

The second big challenge to community media activism is in the way media regulators (especially ICASA in South Africa and NCA in Ghana) remain remote from dialogue that could ensure mutual understanding and progress in policy-making. Against the challenge of ‘closed’ administrative approach to policy-making, this work recommends conscious attempts by governments and their political institutions to institutionalize ‘open’ media administrative systems in Sub-Saharan Africa; systems that can ensure a more direct entry into policy-making threshold by disadvantaged groups, as well as joint efforts in the resolution of competitive viewpoints in a way that is dialogic and transparent. ‘Closed’ administrative approach, firstly, constitutes a deliberate attempt by the States and their political agencies to restrict access to deliberations or entrance into the political processes of media policy-making. Secondly, it is clearly an indirect effort to strengthen centralization, authoritarianism, bureaucratization, and a culture of ‘spiral of silence’ (Noelle-Neumann, 1974/1993) within the public spheres of African nation-states. For effective campaigning for reforms to continue this negative situation requires corrective policy actions.

A powerful lesson on the value of an ‘open’ administrative process can be learnt from Humphreys’ (1994) account of how different social actors were enabled entry to affect media policy developments of the Federal Republic of Germany in the post-1990s. Humphrey’s analyses of the power politics that shaped and transformed the media

institutions of that period highlight how the formation of ‘policy community’ and ‘policy network’, as structural entrance frameworks, assisted the media organization processes. While ‘policy community’ denotes the formal and durable structures (e.g. ‘official rules of the game’) that enable complex web of interactions and resource dependencies between government and policy actors or among the various groups closely associated with the policy process, ‘policy network’ refers to the less official and less durable mode of relationship between government and policy actors or among various groups involved in policy-making. Generally, ‘policy network’ becomes more effective when negotiations need to be made outside the broader ‘policy community’ or when political, administrative or commercial considerations or even the entrance of a new political actor destabilizes the functionality and the merits of ‘policy community’, informing the need for a new and informal frame for regulatory negotiations between official policy-makers and other policy groups.

These patterns of relationship, as recognized by Humphreys, holds tremendous advantage for the continuity of policy-making processes themselves, for the avoidance of suspicions, as well as the strengthening of political frameworks for inclusion, for mutual understanding, and for a fair redistribution of decision-making power between agencies of the State and otherwise marginalized sectors. The value of the ‘policy community’ and ‘policy network’ for Sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, rests on how they can be drawn upon, on the basis of the political and historical experiences of each African country, to free policy processes from being tightly circumscribed to elite groups, corporate institutions and political parties that may have extensive control over media power, as well as to ensure the transparency of the policy-making process and the inclusion of marginal groups.

### 9.2.3 Use of Social Media

One other big challenge facing alternative journalists in Africa is their inability to document impact at the national level. In view of this, this work recommends extensive use of Social Media and Networks that now offer better prospects for wider and faster outreach for community-based journalist (Bailey et al., 2008; Atton, 2007). Social Media are internet-based public spheres or online community platforms. Cultural and political expressions are increasingly being enclosed in and shaped by computer-mediated communication and social interaction spaces, as activists and educational reformers are extensively using this media form as a political and emancipatory tool (Rheingold, 2006). And, Social Media is becoming extraordinarily diverse, targeting either specific audiences or the entire global audience of internet-users.

As noted by Bailey et al., (2008), the force of social media for activism rests, among others, on the fact that they ‘potentially stimulates civic cultures, mobilizes and sustains civil society networks, or can be a platform for passionate debates’ (2008:105). Other positive things about social media that inform their value for future campaigns for reforms include the following: Their audiences themselves are their scriptwriters, storytellers, performers, and the end-users of their stories. They offer opportunities for the redefinition of identities and interests. They are becoming increasingly interactive, creating numerous layers of virtual communities and intra-movement networking. And, they are becoming increasingly convergent - open to diversity of cyberspace sub-cultures (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Walkman devices, WELL, Network TV, Network Radio, Cable Network, Indymedia, etc.).

These qualities, among others, now make social media easily accessible and valuable for activism, through mass production of information and organized virtual relationships for discussions and decision-making. Regardless of their inherent limitations in terms of

required high level of skills for usages, ability to engage directly and strategically with expert participants, high degree of legitimation of information sources, and fear of internet-based ethical implications, their potency for activism at the national, local, and global levels is therefore immeasurable (Bailey et al., 2008; Castells, 2006).

This work, therefore, recommends that social media be more broadly utilized by media activists and community media groups in Sub-Saharan Africa to strengthen available participatory frameworks for media policy discussions, decisions and reforms. This recommendation is logical in view of the challenges imposed by global political economy on alternative practices that requires more capital-spending to sustain community media and that can potentially lead to the folding up of small media that function within economically disadvantaged communities where these challenges will become more difficult to contain. Also, the possibility that social media can bring about face-to-face interactions for policy decisions, beyond their value for virtual community discussions, further suggests their importance in providing global basis for broader social outreach, negotiations, and consensus-building to push for reforms.

#### **9.2.4 Digitalization of Community Broadcasting**

Digitalization, the compression and transmission of sound and images through multiple electronic transport modes (satellite, cable, terrestrial conventional broadcasting system, computer, mobile phones, iPods, etc.), which breaks down the traditional barriers among electronic media services - telecommunications, computing, and electronic mass media (Østergaard, 1998; Kleinsteuber, 1998), offers new technological trends that are fundamentally reshaping broadcasting media and media regulatory landscapes worldwide. With the gradual coming to an end of the traditional analogue era, digital media initiatives now hold enormous benefits (as well as challenges in capitalization,

budgetary appropriations, and policy directions) for community media in Africa (Yisa, 2002; Kleinsteuber, 1998; Truetzschler, 1998; Østergaard, 1998; Steemers, 2000).

The reports issued by the Digital Future Initiative Panel (DFI) of North America in December 15, 2005 strongly confirms that the future of public service broadcasting systems (albeit community media) now rests fundamentally, among others, in the growing transition from analogue to digital media initiatives, whereby the technology is contributing in bringing to an end the predominance of one-way and over-the-air broadcasting, as well as enabling the convergence of commercial and non-commercial broadcasting systems and national and local model of service delivery into the same national media markets. While the convergence potency is now a great gift of the rapidly expanding New Media technologies, the unique potential of the digital media to community broadcasting rests, fundamentally, in their educational and empowerment values. Secondly, apart from its capability to enhance the variety of mediated platforms, devices, and quality programme contents that can be accessed anywhere and at any time, the new digital technological initiatives have strong potentials to enhance intensive skill delivery, civic engagements in local and national affairs, health care, emergency preparedness, and other pressing public service interests (Barksdale & Hundt, 2005).

This study, therefore, recommends ongoing digitalization as a significant alternative technological platform through which community broadcast media institutions in Africa can continue to strengthen their interactive and interventionist role for media policy reforms. Apart from the question of providing leverage for the information needs that remain unmet by commercial and state-owned media, the New Media platform will enable the resolution of the frequency scarcity arguments often advanced by media regulators to slow down community media developments; as well as help in resolving



the difficulty community media groups currently have in documenting impacts at the national communication and policy level.

However, the ability of community media groups to take full advantage of this new broadcasting technology to enhance their activist role for reforms, will depend on the realistic plans put in place by official regulators and that are commensurate with the challenges of the new digital era; on the ability of community media broadcasters to put out contents that can address the literacy and awareness crisis still being faced in the African continent and that threatens democracy, economic productivity, and the basis for informed public policy choices; as well as on the adequacy of the human and funding resources at their disposal. In order for community media establishments to keep pace with the growing need and challenges of digital integration, it is therefore necessary that resources (capacity developments, charitable contributions, and official financial appropriations) that are sustainable and that are commensurate with their public interests service goals be made available to them through proactive national or local policy.

#### **9.2.5 Expanding Protective Frameworks for Small Media**

Beyond the question of expansion in the common law ‘defenses’ available to community media journalists in the face of growing challenges of defamation law suits, this work recommends the need for other mechanisms to be put in place to guarantee the continuity of the emancipatory projects of community media in Africa. These other mechanisms include constitutional and legislative *integrative* protection of community media as a *third tier* of public service communication to ensure media pluralism and their effectiveness for quality cultural and educational services; comprehensive policies that promote and ensures good official support for community media in terms of sustainable funding arrangements (mixed funding or otherwise) and waivers on

taxations imposed on the importation of equipment for community media organizations; effective planning and management of the broadcast spaces to reduce concentration and other forms of elitist political and commercial influences which intention is to exploit community media for selfish capital and political gains, so as to bring about the eventual subversion of the transformative agenda of small media; as well as improvements in social infrastructures (e.g. electricity, telephone, and road services) to enable community media perform its educational and empowerment functions more effectively. When these elements are placed within the general and integrative framework for the protection of community media institutions, they can go a long way in offering stability to community media organizations, improvements in their investigative and advocacy services, as well as the strengthening of their democratic bases to engage ordinary citizens with governments in the reviews of public policies.

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## APPENDIX A

### (LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION)

- Edinburgh Napier University – Prof. Chris Atton
- Edinburgh Napier University – International Support
- Emmanuel Agbor – Catholic Parish Ficksburg



20 May 2011

To whom it may concern,

**Patrick Edem Okon**

Patrick is a research student under our supervision at Edinburgh Napier University. He is investigating the role of community media and alternative journalists in media policy reforms in sub-Saharan Africa. He is particularly interested in the ways in which you and your organisation approach these matters.

We are writing to ask whether you would be willing to be interviewed by Patrick on this topic and, if appropriate, whether you would be willing to share any relevant and non-confidential information with him.

If you are willing, Patrick will supply you with a copy of the topics and questions he would like to explore with you. Any information will be treated confidentially and anonymously, and only used in Patrick's thesis, should you so wish.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

We thank you for considering this request.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Chris Atton  
Professor of Media and Culture  
c.atton@napier.ac.uk

Alistair Scott  
Senior Lecturer, Film and TV  
a.scott2@napier.ac.uk



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Ghana High Commission  
104 Highgate Hill,  
London N6 5HE

17 January 2012

To whom it may concern:

**LETTER FOR SHORT-TERM TRAVEL PURPOSES**

<b>Student Name:</b>	Patrick Edem Okon
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	15/Jul/1965
<b>Programme of study:</b>	PhD Research
<b>Start date:</b>	04 October 2010
<b>Expected end date:</b>	04 April 2015
<b>Expected graduation date:</b>	June 2015
<b>Programme information:</b>	Full-time degree level

The above named student is planning to travel as detailed below.

<b>Proposed destination(s):</b>	Ghana
<b>Reason for visit:</b>	Fieldwork related to studies
<b>Proposed departure date:</b>	13 March 2012
<b>Proposed return date:</b>	30 April 2012
<b>Approximate duration:</b>	6 weeks
<b>Term-time address:</b>	Flat 2, Southbridge House South Bridge CUPAR Fife KY15 5HQ

The information provided is an accurate reflection of the information we hold as at the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Hannalie Barnard**  
International Support

## **CATHOLIC PARISH FICKSBURG: DIOCESE OF BETHLEHEM**

**Physical Address:**  
141 Fontein Street  
Ficksburg 9730

**Postal Address:**  
P O Box 209  
Ficksburg 9730

**Telephone:** +27519332710  
**Email:** emmaagbor@msn.com

---

19<sup>th</sup> January, 2012

Hello, Patrick,

I am writing to inform you of my acceptance to be your guide throughout the course of your fieldwork in South Africa. I will pick you from the airport, help you settle down, and show you around.


Bellow is some information reflecting my identity for the embassy:

Name: Rev Emmanuel E Agbor

ID/ Passport Number: A01652319

Address: 141 Fontein Street, Ficksburg 9730, Free State, South Africa

Phone: +27519332710



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Rev Fr. Emmanuel Agbor, MSP

Assistant Parish Priest of Ficksburg Catholic Parish

## APPENDIX B

### (RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS)

- A summary of themes for oral interviews
- A sample copy of questions for oral interviews
- A transcript of oral interview (Mail & Guardian, South Africa)
  - A sample copy of the questionnaire
  - A sample copy of a completed questionnaire

## **Brief Conceptual Framework for Interviews**

(to be given to interviewees)

**The Research Theme:** The Role of Alternative/Community Media in Media Policy Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

### **Thematic Variables/Issues for Interview:**

- Current practices in community media (understood here in terms of geographic and political interest-oriented print, as well as radio and television broadcasting)
- Community media production before 1990
- Government support for alternative and community media
- Rules that shape and control alternative and community media: including policy, legislative, regulatory and licensing frameworks
- Policy prior to 1990 and any changes since 1990
- Participation of alternative and community media in policy formation
- Implications of the present policy and legislative environment for alternative and community media
- Management structures and institutional policy in alternative and community media organizations
- Influences on content and management of alternative and community media

Patrick Okon

PhD Research Student

Edinburgh Napier University

### **Contact Address:**

**Flat 2, South Bridge House**

**South Bridge, Cupar, Fife,**

**KY15 5 HQ, Scotland**

**Email:** Paokon@yahoo.com

**Mobile:** +44(0)7876485805



## **Oral Interview Questions**

(to guide the interviewer)

### **Introduction:**

As already noted in my letter and that of my Supervisors to you, the primary objective of this research interview is to establish *the role of alternative and community journalists in media policy changes in Sub-Saharan Africa*. In this regard and as indicated in my letter, a few thematic variables are of primary concern to us. The questions that will be addressed to you will aim to address those broad themes. We are grateful that you have accepted to assist us in the course of this research. Your consent to assist us with non-confidential information will go a long way to improve our research data about your organization and its work and enable us find answers to the primary concern of this research.

### **Background Information:**

1. For a start, please could you briefly provide us with a little background information about yourself? For example, when and where you were born; where you were working before you were appointed to serve as the Director General of the Censor Board. When you started your work here as head of the Censor Board. The kind of work you are currently enabled by law to do in the organization.
2. Do you have much personal satisfaction with the work you are currently doing? What are the major challenges you are presently facing in the execution of your public task?
3. In what ways do you intend to overcome some of these challenges and move your agency forward in the next few years?

### **Research Information:**

#### **A. The Current Practice Situation of Community Media (the press, electronic, and cinema):**

1. What is the current state of community media practice in your country?
2. What is your personal feeling about women and young adults' role in the promotion of alternative and community media culture in Africa today?
3. Do you think they are doing enough in this area?
4. What do you think is lacking?
5. How could their engagements with radical media, especially small-scale publications and audio-visual practices be improved upon?
6. What are the major problems that currently confront alternative and community media practices in your country? For example, what is your government's current behaviour towards granting greater licensing access to local communities and non-governmental organizations to have facilities for information production and public communication?

#### **B. The state and situation of community media production prior to 1990:**

1. What was the picture and condition of community media practice like in the years before 1990?
2. Was government's attitude towards alternative and community media practice then different from the way it is today?
3. What are the reasons for government's current behaviour towards community media practice?
4. What specific values do your government and organization attach to alternative and community media practice? For example, does your agency or government consider that community media could provide a better substitution for the extension of satellite systems and services into rural areas?

**C. The national policy and legislative frameworks in relation to the press, broadcasting, and cinema industries:**

1. What are the current operational laws and/or government's policy with regards to public broadcasting, the press, and film/video industry?
2. What were the laws in operation before now?
3. In what specific areas have the laws or policies been changed since 1990?
4. For example, I am aware that the Nigerian National Broadcasting Code was due for revision in 2010. Has the necessary amendments been effected? What are the changes that have been made in the new Code?
5. I am also aware that the controversial Freedom of Information Bill was eventually passed by the Nigerian National Assembly early 2011. Has the new FIB been signed into law by the President? What were the specific changes made in the new Bill as different from the original copy submitted some years back?
6. In what ways will the Freedom of Information Bill benefit both the mainstream professionals and community-based journalists?
7. Another law that was due for amendment was the Press Council Act of 1999. Has the necessary changes been effected by the National Assembly? Which are the new components of the new Act that were not in the previous one?
8. What major political, social, and cultural conditions enabled and shaped the current different policy or legislative positions of the state?

**D. The specific ways in which the current changes in policy and legislation impact on community media and alternative journalism:**

1. In what ways did government intend the present policy arrangements to impact on community media practices and alternative journalism?
2. What are the future implications of the present policy and legislative environment for Community and Alternative Media Practices?
3. How are the community journalists themselves responding to the legal or constitutional opportunities made available to them by government to ensure qualitative information coverage, the civic socialization, the promotion of cultural pluralism, and the overall development of the country?
4. What prospects are there in the present legislative or policy arrangements for the future survival of community media and alternative journalism in your

country? For example, are there any provisions for government's subsidy and subvention or government's support for the training of community-based journalist?

5. What are the primary reasons your national frequency regulatory agency would disqualify radical media applicants from license award where the Constitution of the country permits, under the freedom of expression article, such an applicant to be granted a license?
6. Does government encourage through legislation internally generated websites aimed to promote alternative publications and internet interactivity outside those carried out by the establishments?
7. What are the challenges your national government or agency is currently facing in regulating for independent community media practices or radical internet publications?

**E. The level of participation of grassroots communities and alternative journalists in the new policy and legislation formation:**

1. Was there any direct involvement of media activists in the current or past policy formation?
2. Under what capacity did government involve them?
3. What administrative arrangements do you have in place for the engagement of community-based journalists and grassroots communities in official policy decisions?
4. What are the policy and ethical concerns often expressed by community media practitioners to your government?
5. How is your agency responding, for instance to allegations of 'lack of transparency in frequency allocation' echoed across some public communication sectors your polity, to restore public confidence in the licensing process?
6. What is the nature of government's policy response to such other ethical issues as the increasing level of commercialism/advertising in mass media practices and/or to complaints about the high financial cost placed on licence applications or registration of newspapers?
7. The social role of alternative and community journalists is often interpreted wrongly or rightly in terms of oppositionality to the 'official' establishments. What is your personal feeling about the perceived oppositional role of community-based journalists?
8. Do you consider alternative journalists and small-scale cultural producers to be sufficiently radical in terms of their ability and commitment to oppose and critique the establishments and the political and legislative excesses of the states?

9. What is your personal feeling with regards to your government's willingness to give fairer recognition and representation to community-based journalists in the institutional or administrative arrangements for media deregulation now compared to other years?
  
10. Are there other local or international organizations, outside community media activists, that are exerting great influences on your current approach to national media policies reforms? Could you please provide the names of a few of them?

**F. The Participatory framework for institutional policy formation in the areas of content production and management of community media institutions:**

1. What is the existing institutional structures and mode of operation for information production in your community media organization?
2. What kind of democratic frameworks do you have in place for reaching editorial decisions or making internal policy arrangements with regards to the overall management of the affairs of your institutions?
3. What is the general feeling of your staff or community members about your institutional policy vision?
4. Do the majority of your staff and community members share the same policy vision most of the time with the managers of your community media houses?
5. How do you assess the relationship between community-based journalists and mainstream professional journalists in your country?

**G. The specific 'external' (government) influences on information content and institutional management policies of community media.**

1. Does government in any way influence your internal policy and management decisions?
2. In what ways does government exercise such influences?
3. Do philanthropic organizations, such as the Church and donor agencies in any way influence your policy decisions?
4. In what ways do they exercise such influences?
5. What is your personal feeling about the editorial policies of community media establishments that exist within your country compared to those of mainstream media organizations?

## **Interview with the Mail & Guardian, South Africa**

**Interviewer:** *First and foremost, I want to thank you for accepting to speak with me and within such a short notice. I was really delighted yesterday. I will try my best to keep the conversation within the limit of one hour so as to allow you to face your business of the day. Basically the discussion will be based on the outline. I'll just let you address the issues the way they are in the outline. I will come in only intermittently where I need to ask some questions to clarify certain things.*

**Interviewee:** So you want me to kick-start with the first one?

**Interviewer:** *Yes, Please!*

**Interviewee:** My name is Nicholas Dawes (Nic). I am the editor-in-chief of the *Mail and Guardian* and I have the responsibility for all newspapers printed here and other duties. I report directly to the Board.

**Interviewee:** The *Mail & Guardian* was founded as the *Weekly Mail* in 1985. And the reasons for its birth are very intricately related to the political situation of that time and the media environment of that period. Probably the leading daily newspaper which had taken a clear stand against the apartheid regime at that time was a newspaper called the *Rand Daily Mail*. It was the newspaper that, for example, exposed the truth of the situation and the true circumstances behind the death of Steve Biko. And its reporting was consistently aimed at attempting to discover the truth of what was going on in South Africa. Needless to say, that made it quite an unpopular daily title with the government and was also very established major mainstream newspaper. It increasingly got into financial difficulties during the early part of the 80s, which could probably be directly linked to its political stand. And it eventually went bankrupt in 1985. Staffs of that newspaper, some of them left to form *Business Day* which remained the main daily

newspaper for the financial community and business community. But another group of the staffs pulled their savings and started the *Weekly Mail* very much on a shoe-string, with a very kind of flat democratic structure in the news room; and with the express objective of reporting robustly on apartheid repression, which indeed they did. And quite quickly, the *Weekly Mail* became the leading media voice on what was happening in the climate of intense repression in South Africa in the 1980s. It had a racially mixed staffs and a racially mixed audience. And it did a lot of political reporting and investigations about the state of violence. But also on culture and the growing resistant to indigenous culture that was developing at that time. It wasn't particularly financially successful during that period. And that really impacted on its daily life. But the supporters, donors, and its audience felt that it was really important to have a voice like the *Weekly Mail*, in what was an otherwise pretty wild and repressed media response to Apartheid. So that probably covered the first few years. And one of the reasons we came out was to be able to lunch in the way we did at the time; and because desktop publishing was becoming more widely available, a small newspaper that didn't have access to its own big printing press and that didn't have big typesetting machinery or hot-loader was able to start in very small and inexpensive way the designing of newspaper productions. So technology is not just the only thing; though technology does enable media expansion and recent technologies do blow up the social media. So in its early days, desktop publishing played a huge role in its successes. So that is how the *Weekly Mail* started. Of course, with the end of the Apartheid, the rationale for the existence of the paper started to shift and the need for it, as well as the kind of funding that allowed it to continue. Funding available to it began to dry up and it was run at the loss as soon as donors realized that the battle against Apartheid was won. So, they questioned, 'what do we need this newspaper for now?' Of course, there were still all

kinds of things going on in the country that needed coverage and that needed campaigning journalism. And throughout the course of the early 90s the newspaper started to refurbish its machines. Certainly, in the early part of 1990s and with the formal arrival of democracy, covering the transition became critical, especially covering the not-so-straight-forward politics of the transition and the efforts of the apartheid regime to hang onto aspects of power and to manipulate the process. Then after that the *Weekly Mail* increasingly teamed up with the *Guardian* newspaper on some big investigations. And ultimately it was bought over by the *Guardian* and the Scot Trust. And consequently the name was changed to the *Mail & Guardian*. And part of its tasks became monitoring and writing about the birth of the new democracy - whether the ANC-led government was doing well; whether it was not doing well; and whether it was losing touch with its ideals. And particularly the *Mail & Guardian* began to flag concerns around corruption and bad governance which was an awkward thing in the history of the newspaper which had been a paper quite closely associated with the ideals of the ANC and of the United Democratic Fronts (UDF), etc. It became quite a critical voice and sometimes quite a strident voice on bad aspect of the transition and also about the new economics that ANC had adopted, which were a very mainstream mega-economic policy on physical consolidations and tight management policy, etc. So that is the background. What happened in the last ten years is that the paper had been sold by the Scot Trust to Trevor Ncube, a Zimbabwean newspaper entrepreneur with a string of newspapers in Zimbabwe - *News Day*, *The Standard* which is a Sunday newspaper, and the *Zimbabwean Independence* which is a Friday business-oriented newspaper. He bought the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper in 2002 and over the years has put it in a much more sound commercial footing. So it is no longer losing it money. It does not make big profit; but it is no longer losing its money. It has a lot more of advertising in it

and it is a lot more stable financially. It also sells a lot bigger. And its audience is growing considerably. And the make of its outlay has changed. So that is a short summary of the history of the newspapers.

**Interviewee:** You asked here in the schema the rationale for our transition from an alternative to a commercial mainstream establishment. You know, I am not sure we were really a “community” paper as such. But we were obviously a paper with activist journalism and were funded by a host of donors. And the reason that had to change was that there was no funding for it to ensure its existence after the breakdown of the Apartheid. You have seen what happened to other alternative newspapers at that time, like the *New Nation*, the *Vreybald*, and the others that don’t exist anymore. But what we are doing now as the economics of the newspaper have changed is that of exploring and implementing other high-tech models of funding. So we now have primarily a commercial funding model. But, for example, we have an investigative division which is a separately incorporated company, public benefit organization (non-profit if you like) where donors put money in and where we in turn invest it in powerful investigative journalism, in the training of journalists (not only from South Africa) but around the Southern African region, and also do advocacy around Freedom of information and Media Freedom. So there are areas where we bring in non-conventional funding and non-profit-making methodologies into our current high-tech commercial model arrangement.

**Interviewee:** In terms of the state of community newspapers, there are some great ones that I think serve the communities very well and focus very effectively on local issues, particularly the “waves” in the small cities. But a lot of the so-called community newspapers are actually owned by the big commercial newspaper houses. So there are not many genuine “community” newspapers. Some of them are genuinely of smaller



operations and are owned by individuals or community groups in the townships and rural areas. But a lot of them or the so-called “Community” sector is actually dominated by the big media groups, particularly Caxton, Media 24, and, to some extent, Independent Newspapers. So, one has to be careful to separate these newspapers, if you like, from those that are hyper-local. We call these commercially-affiliated papers “knock-and-drop” or free newspapers. These are papers that do not and are not opposed to things that are of the economically rich in the communities. This is not to say that the “knock and-drop” do not focus on local reporting. But they are quite different from those papers which economic roots enable them to sit with the communities. So that is the distinction that I would make.

**Interviewer:** *Now, while you were talking about the background of the Mail and Guardian you didn't mention anything about your linkages with government and other civil society groups. Which civil society groups are you strongly aligned with?*

**Interviewee:** I don't think we are currently strongly aligned with any individual group in a formal sense, although we receive funding for some of our investigative journalistic activities through the Open Society Foundation, the students of South Africa, the Arts foundation, The Reid Foundation, etc. But we are not directly aligned per se to any civil society group. I suppose that we are seen as a “venue” where discussions by citizens and civil societies can take place. So you might find that we trigger off civil society campaigns. For example, the Council for the Advancements of South Africa Constitution and those other bodies that look at our human right issues and socio-economic policy initiatives and implementations might be interested in our kind of reporting. But we have no formal alignment with any of those organizations. I suppose it is the sympathy with regards to some of our editorial positions around the Constitution that keeps such bodies in contact with us.

**Interviewer:** *And what are the practical challenges your institution is facing at the moment?*

**Interviewee:** There is a range of them. But the most obvious ones are the ever fast changing publishing environment and the resource challenges that this potentially imposes. So money is the perennial problem. But the most complex problem is that audiences are changing and the way they access news. We are managing to grow slowly. Many of the mainstream newspapers in South Africa and, in fact, all of them, except the ones in vernacular languages are shrinking. So those are one set of practical challenges. I think increasingly our relationship with government with regards to regulation is becoming a challenge. And I think the kind of level of education and literacy among our staffs and potential staffs is another challenge.

**Interviewer:** *Could you speak a little more on your relationship with government with regards to regulatory issues?*

**Interviewee:** There has been a tricky relationship between the mainstream press (the print media), which the *Mail & Guardian* is not an entirely a mainstream press. We kind of straddle the divide a little bit. But there has been a little bit of tension, more or less, since the outset, because there has never been a straight- forward government-alliance newspaper. And I think there has been quite a lot of frustration on the part of the ANC in the sense that when they came to power in this kind of bolus-holus moment, coverage wasn't immediately often sympathetic to them; often it was critical. And they felt that was very unfair. They also feel that there is a kind of ideological alignment between print media in general and what they will term as a kind of Western view of the world - more or less capitalistic; more or less individualistic. And so there has been a little bit of friction from the beginning. But it has sharpened very seriously in the last few years.

Thabo Mbeki has thrown a bit of hot utterances at the press; done a bit of re-ordering of the press. But proposals for press regulation are now being made very seriously. At the moment we have a Press Council-type of arrangement. It is a slightly strongest form of regulation than you have in Britain under the PCC. It is basically self-regulation. The proposal that has come onto the scene now is that a statutory Press Council and Media Appeal Tribunal be created at some second layer of press oversight. The Council members are to be appointed by Parliament. The Tribunal is supposed to be the second line of appeal beyond the Ombudsman. The other thing they want to do is that they are looking seriously at print media ownership. And they are talking specifically about print media because they see them as the sources of the most irritating coverage. So they are also looking very closely at ownership and talking about pushing for more regulation of ownership on the basis of demographics (to cover the black townships, for example). It is an issue of big concern. So those two things a kind of basically come together in the push for more control and in what is seen as unpatriotic way of behavior and uncongenial behavior of the print media sector. And that is a big threat.

**Interviewer:** *It sounds to me like government is going back to what they were condemning in the Apartheid era, suppressing critical voices.*

**Interviewee:** Yah! Under Apartheid, of course, there was self-regulation officially and there were all these rules that were promulgated under the states of emergencies that limited what people could say and do. And these would look like softer arrangements. But the effect will be the same - to contain press freedom. But I am always cautious about any comparison to the Apartheid. Because here you are talking about an illegal, racist regime, on the one hand, and the kind of modeled, legalized, somewhat increasingly authoritarian regime but still democratic government. So it is a tricky comparison. But there is no doubt that there is an authoritarian strain emerging in

government and the desperate desire to take control of the environment that is seen as uncontrollably noisy and messy and frustrating and not ideologically on point with government's objectives. So clearly any situation where you have politically appointed Commissars taking care of and overseeing journalistic ethics, you are going to go down very messy road very quickly. And, of course, that has bad implications not only for South Africa but for the entire continent. South Africa is supposed to be seen as a good example of doing things right. You see, we are all seen, from Uganda to Ethiopia, from Mozambique to Ghana, and the conviction is that if you people do it right then we can all be seen as doing it right.

**Interviewer:** *It sounds more to me like South Africa leaders are beginning to copy from leaders of some other African countries; for example, Nigeria as big as it is and with the size of its media government still wants to remain on top of what's happening to the media.*

**Interviewee:** And, of course, we have seen the damage that that does very clearly. Some governments and journalists talk about it as interventions to improve ethics. But if journalists think that ethics ought to be imposed for political reasons from above, the ethics actually becomes worst. Ethics have to be organically present in the newsroom and in people's vocations. But needs to be monitored and managed by the profession. But if it is seen as an external politically motivated imposition, then people just strive against them. And you find worst ethical qualities in many Africa countries where press regulations are imposed merely for political reasons.

**Interviewer:** *Apart from the Mail and Guardian newspaper is there any other publication that you have?*

**Interviewee:** Yes, we have a publication called *The Teacher*. It is a monthly newspaper for teachers; which goes out to about 120,000 teachers mostly in the public sector. The focus is mostly schools. And its aim is quite different from what the *Mail and Guardian* aims at. Its aim is to provide teachers with information and advice for planning and things that has to do with the organization of their lives; with a bit of news on school policy and on curriculum stuff, etc.

**Interviewer:** *Is the Ministry of Education making any inputs towards the growth of the paper?*

**Interviewee:** They advertise in it quite heavily. And we do consult with them on some of the project to be undertaken. We collaborate with them quite closely; a collaboration that extends to the National Teaching Awards ceremony. There is a good relationship there.

**Interviewer:** *Alright! You were briefly on community newspapers. I would like to take you back there.*

**Interviewee:** I have already mentioned that we have this kind of funny dichotomy. There were definitely one or two community newspapers in which individual journalists, individual editors, and titles are finding ways to cover the issues that are most urgent for the communities. And those may be corruption and municipalities, the accessibility of electricity and water, whether local employers are fair to their staffs and those kinds of things. And so one does, from time to time, see that. It is obviously an uneven environment. Sometimes the qualities are really pretty bad. But there are also sparks of vigour there. Not enough, I think. But there could be much more. And it is a very resource-type of environment. There are obviously people who can be regarded as champions of local journalism. They are trying quite hard. One of the things that make

the community environment a bit strange and complex within the context of the sector we are talking about now is that there is a government's agency called The Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). It is run by a guy called Lumko Mtimde who is the main proponent of media deregulation and of restrictions on the media. And the chief government's spokesperson has just been appointed to its Board. Its real mandate is to develop community media and to support it. Mainstream publishers, in fact, pay a levy to the MDDA, to support community media. So the ANC government expresses its desire to open up the community media space and to ensure that the journalists of the big media groups, for example, don't have to compete with the small media guys. And they want more money from the mainstream media institutions to support their activities, which all sounds wonderful. But it does feel a little bit as though there is another agenda at work - whether it is in the form of individual and power-building by the democrats concerned or in the form of what they think is their ability to buy a more positive coverage for government's initiatives in those titles.

**Interviewer:** *And has the process for that started yet?*

**Interviewee:** Yes! It is in the Parliament right now. But you know a good person to talk about community media (I don't know if you know this guy in Cape Town) would be Langa Mandla which is of the left-winged alternative. He is very much pro-community media in the true organic sense. There is a guy called MacCaulberg. He will be really able to point out for you some of the most interesting ones - the ones that are being used by the big commercial media groups as advertisement sheets and the ones being used by government to advance their agendas.

**Interviewer:** *And then how about your own impression, concerning the themes and the local contents of these community publications?*

**Interviewee:** It varies. Like I say often times, there are some you could be critical about their technical qualities. But there are some issues in terms of coverage that some of them do quite well. They pick up issues that are of concern to the communities. They will deal with questions of service delivery, for example, corruption or factory managers abusing some of their staffs. Some of them try quite hard to cover most of these issues. But generally I think the technical qualities of community papers are quite bad - the production quality and some of the writings. Also, the content is often very thin in term of the stories. There are a lot of other messy stuffs that I think are not relevant. But it is a very mixed picture. There are some interesting community radios as well. A lot of the community radios are actually commercial radios, pretending to be community radios. But there are one or two stations that are doing good works that are highly relevant to the communities. And radio, of course, is a cheap and good medium.

**Interviewer:** *Let's quickly talk about the nature of the relationship between the community press sector and the mainstream establishments. I know you have talked about funding channeled through MDDA.*

**Interviewee:** There were already established funding mechanisms. Government simply wants to grow it. We pay levies to government which goes into a fund and is disbursed to some of them on applications. So the nature of the relationship is quite fractured within the landscape; because in some cases the so-called community newspapers are actually owned by the same company as the mainstream newspapers. So, in this part of Johannesburg, if you pick up the *Rosebank Cassette*, for example, it is a community title that is owned by Caxton and that also produces *The Citizen* commercial newspaper and others. In Cape Town, if you pick up *The Forsberg*, it is produced by the Independent Newspaper group. So there is a very intimate relationship in those cases. In other cases,

there is no relation at all. What exists is this stretchy and scratchy sense of independence.

**Interviewer:** *So, like how much do you pay annually as levy to MDDA?*

**Interviewee:** I am afraid I don't know. Print media South Africa will be able to give you those figures. And for me, some of the things that get funded by MDDA are genuinely community media projects. Other things seem to me to be pet projects of particular NGOs or individuals that have some kind of advantaged projects they want to produce; they call them community media and get them funded.

**Interviewer:** *Let's talk now about your newspaper even though you've said it was not originally a community newspaper. But I do believe, in some level because of its concern for advocacy and human rights issues, it could still be aligned with community publications, in terms of themes and objectives and methodology of investigations.*

**Interviewee:** Sure!

**Interviewer:** *Now, what have been the key issues your institution holds against government and other mainstream establishments which you share with other community papers.*

**Interviewee:** Okay! I think that is not so much the case anymore; because the papers are a bit more centralist now than it used to be. But certainly in the 1990s when there was a big debate about economic policies and when the ANC's economic policy was becoming a bit more of the center-right orientation, the *Mail and Guardian* would have shared vision with the community newspapers of the left and the Unionist movements and very sharp critique of the minimal approach that was adopted at the time by the government. I think the *Mail and Guardian*, partly because of my predecessor and



partly because of me, it's a little more mainstream in its economics now. But it is definitely true that we were very much critical of the so-called "Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme" in the 1990s and we would have had shared critique of that with the grassroots publication organizations. I suppose because we are small and relatively thinly-resourced we are much more vulnerable to attacks, through the law, through the courts-related defamation suits and that sort of a thing. And those tools have been used against us quite consistently. Over the years they have managed to stop our effort to reveal official corruptions. And then, I suppose, relative to the big mainstream media houses, one of the hard things is learning to compete for advertising, in a market that is so dominated by the so-called "Big Four". It is hard for us to get on the schedules of the big advertising agencies. It is hard for us to get noticed. Not so much the case anymore. But that is so much of the history.

**Interviewer:** *Now how is government trying to carry out this scheme of preventing you from reporting on corruption?*

**Interviewee:** There are a number of ways they have done this. One of them is to use the defamation framework against us which they have done and to charge us to court. The other way is to confiscate or refuse to hand over information which we requested and force us essentially to go to court ourselves to use the *Freedom and Information Law* to try and access information. And even then, we have been trying to get a report on Zimbabwe 2002 elections for nearly five years now. We have appealed all the way to the Constitutional Court and they kept fighting us every step of the way. The long-term efforts are in the way of new legislations. There is a new intelligence law called *The Protection of State Information Bill* which will criminalize the publications of classified documents with the possibility of 25 years in jail. The other is the *Media Tribunal Bill* which we have already discussed. So these are some the 'hard' methods. The 'soft'

methods are those of failing to provide us with information or failing to answer questions. There was a time in the past when Mbeki went as far as threatening to refuse government's advertising to the *Mail and Guardian*. But that isn't the case now. They have now realized we are reaching influential audiences that do advertising in the paper. The *Mail and Guardian* was actually banned from the Presidency for a while under Mbeki.

**Interviewer:** *Alright, I know you have mentioned something briefly about the state of community media before 1990. Will you still want to talk a little more about that?*

**Interviewee:** It is not something I know a huge lot about. I was still a student at that time. I'll rather leave that for someone else who knows a lot about it. All I know is that there was a vibrant alternative press in the 80s and even before then. Papers like the *New Nation* and the *South*. They weren't community press in the sense that they were serving the neighbourhoods or little villages. But they were a kind of activist alternative press and institutions. And they were very important. But most of them died off after 1990.

**Interviewer:** *And what is the situation now in the 1990 periods?*

**Interviewee:** Now you have much more open mainstream press. And, you have these commercialized community titles. And then you have a few of the other non- or less-commercialized community titles around the place. And then you have activist groups that use *newsdesk* to produce information and circulate, using internet and social media which have taken on a different form. And you have community radio set-ups and emerging synergy. But, by and large, it is not a fantastic landscape.

**Interviewer:** *Now, let's address the issue of policy and regulation. I think that it is the key focus here. What are the specific and current rules that shape community newspaper productions in South Africa at the moment?*

**Interviewee:** Well, really there aren't many. We obviously live with a "common law" framework which governs matters like defamation which limits reporting on matters that may identify children of divorce marriages in a case of sexual alliance, etc. So, there are "common law" restrictions that are mostly about protecting the rights of children and some of the rights and dignity of adults. There are fairly standard and obviously flexible legal environment, I would say. We have some of the better *libel* regimes in the world. Certainly better than Britain; better than Australia, not quite as completely free as what is in America. But it is very reasonable and flexible. And the same goes for other laws around - protecting children and setting up the legal processes and those kinds of things. So there are those "common law" restrictions. And that's really about it. And there are, of course, laws that affect all South African companies, including media companies around; for example, the laws around the demographic transformation of company's ownership and employment policies. So, we tend to comply with the "Code" of good practice and transformation. That means we try and hire "black" people in preference to "white" people where we can. We try to hire "women" in preference to "men" where we can. And so, we are governed by those rules just like anybody else. That's about it really. The proposals that are coming are much more problematic. And there are some laws in the books which we think limit media freedom a little more too much and which we are concerned about. So the "Protection of State Information Bill" is working its way through the Parliament right now which we are quite unhappy about, because that will have a serious effect on restricting reporting particularly about the security agencies; but potentially about government's departments

with regards to obtaining what is considered as “classified documents” on security grounds. There is another one coming called the “Protection of Personal information Bill” which will restrict the collection and analysis of information about individuals. It is designed to protect privacy of information. But it could be used against journalists. But the really big stick that is coming is the plan for more regulation of ownership and the regulation of Ethics through Media Appeal Tribunal. But right now, legislatively, we have a pretty good and open environment. The self-regulatory arrangements which hold the major (mainstream and community newspapers are signatories to different self-regulatory regimes) implies that different newspapers belong under different associations – community press belongs under different ranks of association; mainstream newspapers belong under the Press Council. And the Press Council has a body called the Ombudsman as you know. And that works by assembling panels of both journalists and non-journalist to assess allegations of violations of ethics of journalism and recommend sanctions. There are also voluntary restrictions on advertising that are managed by the Advertising Standards Board of South Africa. That doesn’t affect us as journalists; but clearly it has some impacts on the regulations of our advertising contents.

**Interviewer:** *Would you like to take a little look at these legislations and policies and how they, in your views, are going to affect locally-oriented publications?*

**Interviewee:** One of the strange things about regulatory debates in South Africa is that the people who purportedly ought to be champions of locally-oriented and community media at the MDDA and in the government are the people who are most aggressively driving plans for tighter regulations of the press. And they claim to be doing that on the basis of getting more resources into community publications. And secondly on reining in and controlling what they see as a problematic press – a press which doesn’t support

the development objectives of government. The noise that you hear in protest against these regulatory plans comes loudly from the mainstream press. But I personally believe that the impact on locally-oriented and community publication will potentially be a great deal worse than it will be for the mainstream press. And I mean that both in terms of the impact on the ways that money will be managed in an expanded MDDA and in the way the regulation itself will impact on the sectors. My concern is that money will be managed in a way that rewards compliance by local publications that are oriented to the needs of government (ones that carry government's messages) rather than to the needs of their readers and of the communities. And I think when it comes to the implementation of ethical regulations by statutory bodies, small community titles that have fewer resources will find it harder to contest those regulations than bigger organizations will - on a sliding scale, from tiny community titles, through the *Mail and Guardian*, to *Media 24*. The sliding scale is on the basis of their ability to have financial resources to battle the implementations of the regulations through the courts, as well as the capacity to stand up to it. So the potentially destroying effects on smaller community publications are in many ways worse than it is for some of the bigger guns. So it is a perverse environment in which what is described as a set of mechanisms to protect and promote community media actually vitiates the purpose fundamentally.

**Interviewer:** *Would you like to briefly talk about number 9 question?*

**Interviewee:** I am not sure the *Mail and Guardian* has made a specific intervention in favour of locally-based publications; except where we are engaged with industrial bodies on industry platforms, like the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the Print media Association of South Africa, and others or when we see proposals for changing the ways things are managed in the country that seem to work in favour of the big groups and that limit our ability and the capability of small titles to compete, then we try to put

down our weight and make sure we use our punch lines to make sure those rules are fair for small publishers. That's just about it on commercial stuffs. I think we have a better relationship politically with smaller titles than many of the big commercial groups and titles. We share a little more solidarity with smaller groups on some of those politically-motivated issues. It is a bit hard to concretize that. But it seems to me to be present. One of the things that the Right-to-Know-Campaign group, which is a board network of civil society groups, is opposed to is the "Protection of State Information Bill". They think it will hurt the ability of the communities to fight bad governance. One other thing they say is that if there are any more regulations to come they should be regulations that can create more *Mail and Guardian*; not more government publications. So there is a bit of political resonance there. But the difficulty and why we have not made much intervention in favour of small publications is that it is difficult to go around the government control of MDDA as the primary vehicle for strengthening small-scale media. And that is something we are not comfortable with at all. And more generally I think because we remain independent (and our independence is very important for us) and that we work independently of the big groups means we do set a particular standard around independent media practices. That is a very important model. And that is a value on its own.

**Interviewer:** *Now, the next question could be a little confusing. I am actually looking for the central management or coordinating body for community productions. You have talked about MDDA. You have talked about PPC which is for the mainstream groups.*

**Interviewee:** There is a thing called "The Community Publishers Association" which is the main coordinating platform for community press. You can get those details from the Print Media Association of South Africa as well.

**Interviewer:** *The next question has to do with the democratic frameworks within your own institution that encourages a certain level of participation of your staffs in editorial and management policy decisions.*

**Interviewee:** Obviously this is something that exists along a sliding scale. Right now at the *Mail and Guidance* we have an unusually high degree of internal participation in editorial policy decisions. For example, our news conferences are open to everyone that wants to attend. The same is true of our editorial conferences where we discuss what our editorial lines are going to be. So, those conferences are open, not only to the council of editors and deputy editors, but are open also to our news room. Anyone who wants to come and sit in these conferences and make inputs, whether he is junior or senior staff is welcome to do so. And the same applies to our post-mortem discussions on the newspapers. Everyone from our interns to the chief reporters and to the editor-in-chief can have a say on what form news lines should take.

**Interviewer:** *How often does that meeting take place?*

**Interviewee:** We have three news conferences a week; we have one editorial conference and one post-mortem conference - five all together in a week. We are increasingly looking for ways to foster more external inputs into our thinking from the wider community of our readers. That is something that even the big international mainstream papers are beginning to consider. The *Guardian* in UK, for example, has an open news room. Some of the papers in Sweden are actually able to make their audiences to be physically connected to their newsrooms. So we are looking for ways of broader participation. It is quite complicated for us because of the nature of our paper. And some of the things we have to talk about are very sensitive and we have to protect our sources and the things that we can't reveal. But we have to try and find ways to break

down some of those rules a little bit and open up some of our decision-making processes. We are already doing it in an informal way. I think we are increasingly being guided by watching our readers' reactions as published in some of our social media. We are very active in Facebook and we listen to them. And there is already a kind of external inputs in that form. But we are working on a plan to open it up a bit more. We haven't quite figured out exactly how to make it work. But we are getting there. Once there is a will there will always be a way.

**Interviewer:** *How about the ability of the public to scrutinize some of your reports?*

**Interviewee:** I think that is something that is quite interesting. That is something that is continuous; but it has a kind of changed for the better in the new media environment broadly. In many ways we always talk about State regulations. But that is now increasingly beside the point, because the regulatory character of the public's own ability to respond and to interact is becoming quite profound. So, if you publish something, you are going to know about the public's response via the available social media within minutes. If people like something you have done or they don't like something you have done, they will be picking it apart online very soon. And we've got a very vibrant community of readers; very lively set of people that respond to and scrutinize our decisions. And I think we are quite open in discussing how we reach them (our decisions). The other more traditional structures that we have: we do have an in-house meeting of editors and internal ombudsman that give response to our readers when they raise concerns.

**Interviewer:** *So generally, in your opinion, what do you think is the public's mind about your paper?*



**Interviewee:** It is very mixed up. On the one hand, the *Mail and Guardian* is seen as a very heroic crusading voice for good governance and for freedom of speech and for democracy - the rule of law. There are some people, including the members of the public, that think that the way we do that means that we are anti-government and that we are anti-black businesses in particular. That we think black business people are way up in corruption and that they are the ones supporting corruption. And because government is black-led now and trying to uplift and grow black business, there are areas that things go wrong and we report on them. So, it looks to some people as though we have an agenda about suppressing black business. We don't. We really don't. But that is the perception. There is something we've not been able to do as we should in managing a turn-around about that kind of stuff. So some people hold that perception. They are mostly people who are aligned with the ruling party, of course; but not only. So, there is a bit of the dichotomy. There is the heroic thing and there is the one that is a bit sour. Then there is a different kind of politically-related perception. There is the perception that we are a very high brand, serious, and elite paper; and not accessible. And yet, again the flipside of that is that we are of very high quality and trustworthy.

**Interviewer:** *Incidentally, if I may chip in, I tend to have that feeling too. I don't know may be because I haven't really read much of your papers. But I have seen a few editions. Like yesterday when I came I was given a copy and I went through it. I know you are doing a good reporting. But my feeling is that there is the tendency to focus so much on the political arena, on the elites. And the question that came to me as I tried to bring to mind Habermas' notion of reporting in salon and coffee shops of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; reporting that draw on the discussions and the lives of elite citizens.*

**Interviewee:** Well, you know last week's paper, I wasn't really very happy with it. Don't base the assessment on last week's paper. I wasn't particularly happy with it from

that point of view. I think you find, if you look at the ones of the last six months, you will find a lot more of reporting on the life of ordinary citizens - especially the reporting on social justice issues or odd jobs issues. But, on the other hand, we are a political newspaper. We are always going to report on high politics which is fundamental to who we are. But making assessment on last week's edition is not a very good example. The reports from the Cape Guard are much more reports from the countryside and reports from the poorer areas. I think if you do a deeper analysis of our contents for the last six months you will find more of countryside reporting and coverage of the poor and local areas. But you will always find a lot of forensic investigative journalism and lots of high politics. People are also deeply concerned about all of that stuff because the environment is not what it is. But it is something that we have to continue to push and strengthen, not only from behind the desks.

**Interviewer:** *Let's talk about the possible external and bureaucratic influences on your paper contents.*

**Interviewee:** You know we are pretty remarkable in the degree of insulation of our editorial team has from commercial or bureaucratic influences and interferences. Our proprietor, for example, does not know what are in the papers until he reads them on Friday morning when they are out on sales. He doesn't phone me and ask me. He doesn't complain if he sees nasty things about his friends. If they phone him to complain, he gives them my number. And we have actually distanced our advertising department from our editorial department. The one way you can buy coverage of an area you care about is to get into this area of "Supplements and Special Projects". We try to make sure that it is declared and explained upfront the reasons why you are trying to give us the money and all of that. This is an advertorial feature and we reflect it as such. That is one slightly grey area - the "Supplement and Special Projects" which we

flag clearly that he doesn't know what we are looking at. In terms of government influences, it is not beyond the ability or skill of the individual politician to try to influence journalists with the facts about our reporting. But in terms of influential telephones from the proprietary or political side, there is absolutely none.

**Interviewer:** *How about the Brown Envelope stuff on a private level to your staffs?*

**Interviewee:** This is not something we have ever encountered. In fact, the *Mail and Guardian* is the newspaper that exposed one Brown Envelope case in Cape Town. And we don't have a culture of Brown Envelope reporting in this country. I am not aware of any of the *Mail and Guardian* staffs being involved in it. I have been here for more than eight years. We have a policy on that. It is not like the Nigerian thing whereby you've got to get your taxi-fare. We don't have that stuff. We take the newspaper cars to conferences. We don't have to collect taxi-fares. None of that stuff. What does happen in the broader industry circle is that you can get a car ticket for six months or you get a lunch or a nice gift. They can give you one. Or you get invited to a company's annual retreat and they give you accommodation at a nice hotel; that softer stuff that happens anywhere in the world. We have a policy that any gift that is above a certain value (one hundred and fifty rand) has to be handed in and we auction it out for charity at the end of the year. We also have a register of journalists' interests where you have to declare to me if you have any external work. If you report on business where you have shares, you have to declare it and something like that, so that we can do a complete check.

**Interviewer:** *Before the free personal comment I just want to know about the organogram of your institution. Who appoints the chairman of the Board?*

**Interviewee:** Well the board does.

**Interviewer:** *Then who appoints other officers for the Board?*

**Interviewee:** I suppose it is the share-holders. I am not sure exactly what the process is. But I think the Board selects new directors. Representation on the Board is not limited to the share-holding. The main share-holding is Ncube. Then there is a bank which is called IMB (International Media Bank). They have a seat. The *Guardian* in UK at the moment owns 10%; so they have a seat. The CEO is on the board. And the rest are academics and people from the industry. The proprietor is the deputy chairman of the Board.

**Interviewer:** *That means he doesn't influence who should be a member of the Board?*

**Interviewee:** No! I think he does influence it. I am not sure how it works. But he does. Broadly, he consults with the Board on new appointments. But recently the chairman of the Board was removed. He got into a big fight with me. He is the chancellor of a well-known university. He is a very controversial figure. And we reported completely straight on that controversy. And he took us to the Press Ombudsman. So, it became a completely unsustainable conflict of interests. And because the rest of the Board supported the editor-in-chief, so he left the position.

**Interviewer:** *Do you have any documents you would like to give to me?*

**Interviewee:** It is all on our website; the ethical stuff and that kind of a thing. It is quite easy to download them from our website.

**Interviewer:** *Thank you Nic for finding time to speak with me. If you don't mind, I should love to get photographic impressions of you and me together, and of your departments.*

**Interviewee:** You have my permission. But the production section will not be open for you. That had not been arranged with the person managing that section.

**Interviewer:** *Thank you once more.*

## Questionnaires

I am a Research Student at Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland. My research interests are on the changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and audio-visual) in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades and on the participatory role of community media journalists and media activists in that process. I should be pleased if you would answer the following questions. *The questionnaire should take about 10 minutes to complete.* Your answers will be invaluable and will be used strictly for the research purpose. If you do not intend your name to be mentioned in my dissertation, you may kindly indicate below:

A. **Personal Details** (*This data is needed only for Statistical Comparison*)

**Name:**

**Name/Address of Organization:**

**Rank (within the Organization):**

**Telephone/Mobile:**

**E-mail:**

**Gender:** Male [  ] Female [  ]

**Age Category:** Under 20 [  ] 20-35 [  ] 35-40 [  ] Over 40 [  ]

**Privacy Data:** Would you like your name to be mentioned in my dissertation?

Yes [  ] No [  ] Don't know/Not Sure [  ]

B. **Media Policies:**

1. In your opinion, have there been any substantial changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and cinema) in the last two decades that are impacting positively in the life of ordinary citizens in your country? (*Tick only one response*) Yes [  ] No [  ] Don't Know/Not Sure [  ]

If 'yes', please give an example of a change in policies or regulations with positive impact (*Please write in*)

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2. In your opinion, have there been any substantial changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and cinema) in the last two decades that are impacting negatively in the life of ordinary citizens in your country? Yes [  ] No [  ] Don't Know/Not Sure [  ]

If 'yes', please give an example of a change in policies or regulations with negative impact (*Please write in*):

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3. Did you make any personal inputs into any of the new policies made between 1990 and 2010 through any of the following platforms? (*Please tick as applicable and write in to indicate the Month/Year and the Place*)

<b>Platform:</b>	<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Place</b>
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Newspaper	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Radio	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Television	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Private Video-making	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Local Council/Assembly	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Street Actions (e.g. Strikes)	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Parliament	_____	_____

4. If your inputs were made through your representative in the Parliament, were you satisfied with his/her representation? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure
5. Would you have preferred a more personal and direct participation in the deregulation process rather than working through your representatives in the Parliament? Yes  No  Don't Know/Not Sure
6. Do majority of the new policies (or laws) made between 1990 and 2010 reflect your true desire of how the media should be regulated to work well for the good of ordinary citizens? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure
- If 'No', which law or policy does not satisfy your desire of how the media should be regulated? (*Please write in*):

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7. What are the specific issues you feel should be reflected in the media policies (or regulations) in your country in the twenty-first century? (*Please tick or write in as appropriate*)
- Profit-making Programming
- Non-Profit Making Programming
- Greater Community Involvement
- Private Ownership
- Limited Censorship
- Strong Censorship
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

### C. Media Participation

8. Are you familiar with the term ‘Alternative Journalism’? Yes [ ] No [ ]
9. Are you familiar with the term ‘Community media’ (radio, television, newspaper)?  
Yes [ ] No [ ]
10. Compared to government and private commercial media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving your cultural interests ( e.g. promotion of local language and cultural heritage) better? Yes [ ] No [ ]  
Don’t Know/Not Sure [ ]
11. Compared to government and private media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving your educational interests better? Yes [ ]  
No [ ] Don’t know/Not Sure [ ]
12. Compared to government and private media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving democracy (e.g. encouraging citizens’ participation in public and media governance) better? Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t Know/Not Sure [ ]
13. Do you think community media journalists in your country have contributed in any significant way to the formation of national policies on the media? Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t know/Not Sure [ ]  
If ‘yes’, do you consider their level of participation in media policy formations between 1990 and 2010 satisfactory? Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t know/Not Sure [ ]
14. Do you know on what platforms (e.g. local councils, trade unionism, parliament, media debates, national deliberation forums) alternative journalists participated in media policy reforms in the last two decades? If so, please list:



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15. Do you think government is presently doing enough to encourage the participation of ordinary citizens in media policy decisions? Yes  No   
] Don't know/Not Sure

16. Which of the following periods do you consider as the most significant in media policy changes in your country? (*Please tick as appropriate*)

Before 1960

1960 – 1990

1990 – 2010

After 2010

17. Which of the following periods do you consider as the most significant in community media practices in your country? (*Please tick as appropriate*)

Before 1960

1960 – 1990

1990 – 2010

After 2010

Thank you for finding time to answer the questions

## Questionnaires

I am a Research Student at Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland. My research interests are on the changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and audio-visual) in Sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades and on the participatory role of community media journalists and media activists in that process. I should be pleased if you would answer the following questions. *The questionnaire should take about 10 minutes to complete.* Your answers will be invaluable and will be used strictly for the research purpose. If you do not intend your name to be mentioned in my dissertation, you may kindly indicate below:

A. **Personal Details** (This data is needed only for Statistical Comparison)

Name: Emmanuel Odu

Name/Address, of Organization: Catholic Television of Nigeria

Rank (within the Organization): General Manager

Telephone/Mobile: 08023165419

E-mail: emadun777@yahoo.com

Gender: Male  Female

Age Category: Under 20  20-35  35-40  Over 40

Privacy Data: Would you like your name to be mentioned in my dissertation?

Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

B. **Media Policies:**

1. In your opinion, have there been any substantial changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and cinema) in the last two decades that are impacting positively in the life of ordinary citizens in your country? (Tick only one response) Yes  No  Don't Know/Not Sure

If 'yes', please give an example of a change in policies or regulations with positive impact (*Please write in*)

Privatization of Electronic Media has helped Nigerians have objective opinions

2. In your opinion, have there been any substantial changes in media policies (print, broadcasting, and cinema) in the last two decades that are impacting negatively in the life of ordinary citizens in your country? Yes [  ] No [  ] Don't Know/Not Sure [  ]

If 'yes', please give an example of a change in policies or regulations with negative impact (*Please write in*):

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3. Did you make any personal inputs into any of the new policies made between 1990 and 2010 through any of the following platforms? (*Please tick as applicable and write in to indicate the Month/Year and the Place*)

<b>Platform:</b>	<b>Month/Year</b>	<b>Place</b>
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Newspaper	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Radio	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Community Television	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Private Video-making	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Local Council/Assembly	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Street Actions (e.g. Strikes)	_____	_____
[ <input type="checkbox"/> ] Parliament	_____	_____

4. If your inputs were made through your representative in the Parliament, were you satisfied with his/her representation? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

5. Would you have preferred a more personal and direct participation in the deregulation process rather than working through your representatives in the Parliament? Yes  No  Don't Know/Not Sure

6. Do majority of the new policies (or laws) made between 1990 and 2010 reflect your true desire of how the media should be regulated to work well for the good of ordinary citizens? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

If 'No', which law or policy does not satisfy your desire of how the media should be regulated? *(Please write in):*

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7. What are the specific issues you feel should be reflected in the media policies (or regulations) in your country in the twenty-first century? *(Please tick or write in as appropriate)*

Profit-making Programming

Non-Profit Making Programming

Greater Community Involvement

Private Ownership

Limited Censorship

Strong Censorship

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Media Participation**

8. Are you familiar with the term 'Alternative Journalism'? Yes  No

9. Are you familiar with the term 'Community media' (radio, television, newspaper)?

Yes  No

10. Compared to government and private commercial media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving your cultural interests ( e.g. promotion of local language and cultural heritage) better? Yes  No  Don't Know/Not Sure

11. Compared to government and private media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving your educational interests better? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

12. Compared to government and private media stations, do you think community media in your country is serving democracy (e.g. encouraging citizens' participation in public and media governance) better? Yes  No  Don't Know/Not Sure

13. Do you think community media journalists in your country have contributed in any significant way to the formation of national policies on the media? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

If 'yes', do you consider their level of participation in media policies formations between 1990 and 2010 as satisfactory? Yes  No  Don't know/Not Sure

14. Do you know on what platforms (e.g. local councils, trade unionism, parliament, media debates, national deliberation forums) alternative journalists participated in media policy reforms in the last two decades? If so, please list:

trade unionism,  
national deliberation forums

15. Do you think government is presently doing enough to encourage the participation of ordinary citizens in media policy decisions? Yes [ ] No [] Don't know/Not Sure [ ]

16. Which of the following periods do you consider as the most significant in media policy changes in your country? (*Please tick as appropriate*)

[ ] Before 1960

[ ] 1960 – 1990

[ ] 1990 – 2010

[ ] After 2010

17. Which of the following periods do you consider as the most significant in community media practices in your country? (*Please tick as appropriate*)

[ ] Before 1960

[ ] 1960 – 1990

[ ] 1990 – 2010

[ ] After 2010

Thank you for finding time to answer the questions

## APPENDIX C

- A list of documents obtained from the 'Fields'

## Documents Obtained From the 'Fields'

### A. South Africa

- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ghana 1992
- The Caxton Editorial Stylebook
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- CTP Limited. *Sandton Chronicle*. Johannesburg North. Week ending 24 February 2012
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- CTP Limited. *Randburg Sun*. Johannesburg North. Week ending 24 February 2012
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## **B. Nigeria**

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- National Broadcasting Commission (2002), *Broadcast Regulation in Nigeria*
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