COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFRICA: SELECTED CASE STUDIES

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THEORY ON DEMAND

THEORY ON DEMAND
A SERIES OF READERS
PUBLISHED BY THE
INSTITUTE OF NETWORK CULTURES
ISSUE NO.:
55

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIALCHANGE IN AFRICA:

SELECTED CASE STUDIES

Theory on Demand #55
Communication and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies

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Design and EPUB development: Maja Korczyńska

Published by the Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam 2025.

ISBN: 9789083412542

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been the result of multiple months of collaborations, meetings, and emails. So many individuals and institutions made it possible and to them, we owe our thanks. When we conceptualized this project, we wanted to have a book that captured the multifaceted nature of communication, mass media and social change in the African context, and it has been a reality through the collaboration and understanding of our editors, reviewers, chapter contributors and publishers.

We specifically want to thank all our contributors, for submitting case studies and chapters, we appreciate them for working with us through the editorial process. We also want to express our appreciation to all our reviewers; this book has been possible because of your knowledgeable opinions and expert guidance.

Finally, we would like to thank the Institute of Network Cultures for working with us to publish this manuscript. Especially, to Geert Lovink for having the patience to work with us to make this monograph a reality.

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PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

Communication and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies is a crucial text for scholars and practitioners of communication, media and social development alike. The uniqueness of the book lies in its decolonial impetus to foreground communication engagement narratives emerging from the Global South, specifically Africa. In so doing, the chapters in the book offer a critical lens on both the historical acceptance of Global North conceptualisation and top-down implementation of communication-for-social change initiatives. As such, the book draws together a variety of studies that are strongly oriented toward the reinterpretation and application of communication theories, concepts and approaches to practical cases in an African context. The selected chapters examine case studies ranging from advocacy programs focused on youth development and family planning to communication campaigns for mental health and improved dialogue between healthcare workers and the communities that they serve. The book also includes chapters that interrogate communication concepts and their relevance to a contemporary African society, thus furthering the argument that these concepts require contextually specific adaptation - be it in relation to film, general media practice or indigenous communication systems. Organized according to the key themes of communication for social change – social action, transformation and alternative media – the book offers accessible navigation through the text whether the intention is to read from start to finish or to identify a few key chapters specific to one's interest. Overall, this book is a useful resource that I would highly recommend to a diverse audience comprising academics, postgraduate students, NGOs, people working in community/social/digital media and communication activists.

Subeshini Moodley, PhD. Associate Professor, Department of Media and Communication, School of Language Media and Communication, Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

This book is a timely investment in documenting a rich tapestry of attempts at engineering and engendering social change and improvement in African societies and communities. Through its country-based case studies, the book paints a picture of social change efforts across Africa as being pursued by development actors or organically generated by community members. Three windows are presented to the reader to understand evolutions in social change in Africa, pivoted on communication. The first, 'Communication, social action and social change', explores the supply side dynamics of using communicative social action to engineer social change. Presented mostly through the prism of health interventions, the chapters in this section take the reader close to the factors that underlay enduring social fault lines in health, and those that facilitate their removal. The second window offers a conceptual mapping of key issues in communication and social change. It contends with the value indigenous communication systems inherent in indigenous cultural institutions, the role of social listening in a 'noisy' world and the power of the media in fostering national stability. Finally, the third window explores the meeting point between alternative media and social change through case studies on community media, and archives. Altogether, then, the book offers a close to 360-degree engagement with 'Communication and Social Change in Africa' that should serve scholars, development professionals and students well.

Abena Animwaa Yeboah-Banin, PhD. Associate Professor in Communication Studies, School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon

Dive into the transformative world of African communication with *Communications and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies.* This compelling volume responds to the growing demand for authentic African perspectives on the dynamic interplay between communication and social change. It is a vital source for African-focused communication researchers and academics to showcase their profound insights and groundbreaking research. The book's primary mission is to bridge the knowledge gap by presenting diverse case studies illuminating Africa's unique socio-cultural landscapes. Through these meticulously curated studies, readers are invited to explore a rich tapestry of issues and arguments that shape the communication landscape across the continent. Ideal for the African academic community, students, and global scholars alike, this collection fosters a deeper, more nuanced understanding of Africa's communication dynamics. It challenges conventional narratives and highlights the innovative ways communication is leveraged to drive social change in various African contexts. Whether you are a seasoned academic, a curious student, or an informed global citizen, *Communications and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies* offers invaluable perspectives that will enrich your understanding of the intricate relationship between communication and social transformation in Africa. Embrace this opportunity to engage with pioneering research that underscores the importance of context-specific knowledge in the global discourse on communication.

Dr. Kealeboga Aiseng, Senior Lecturer in Journalism and Media Studies, School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, Makhanda, South Africa

FOREWORD

FRANZ KRÜGER

The calls for the African experience to be properly acknowledged have become louder and harder to ignore. In the field of communication studies, as in many other areas, the realization has grown that it is high time for African scholars to present their own insights and understandings. African media must be understood on their own terms, not as somehow just following trends in the Global North. Introducing their recent collection, *the Routledge Handbook of African Media and Communication Studies,* Mano and Milton write that the volume is "a call to action for centering African approaches which have thus far been understated or ignored as legitimate knowledge. The study of Africa without Africa has become a dangerous pattern not only in Western universities but also in Africa itself." (2021, p1) Imbalances of power in communication and in the generation of knowledge about communication are the ongoing legacy of coloniality and are being increasingly challenged.

The collection offered here answers this call, bringing an African perspective to bear on the study of African communications. The editors and contributors have done the hard, careful and detailed work of studying African communications on their own terms. The use of case studies serves to unpack the rich variety of experiences across the continent, where shared historical experiences meet a range of differences in context. The scholarship is grounded in the specific, offering fine-grained and textured insights from a range of cases.

The contributions come from different national contexts, including places which do not often draw scholarly attention like lusophone Guinea-Bissau. Attention is focused on several forms of communication, with radio strongly represented. The emphasis is unsurprising, given the medium's enduring importance on the continent. Despite the growth of new media technologies, traditional FM radio continues to play a central role in bridging the information gap for millions of people. Several contributions focus on community radio, with its ability to act as a platform for information and the discussion of local issues. The medium's comparatively low cost and facility for accommodating local languages and dialects are among the factors ensuring community radio's importance. Nevertheless, as some contributions show, the sector faces challenges around sustainability, community involvement and other issues, which may affect communicators' ability to achieve their developmental ends.

The authors draw on both traditional and new theoretical frameworks and methodologies to tackle a range of knotty issues, including tensions and distortions that may occur in supposedly community-centric modes of communication. Particularly striking are the contributions that look closely at communication issues in traditional African cultural and political systems, institutions and language. As some authors show, these traditional forms are meeting new technologies and platforms, giving rise to a rich and complex dynamic that offers a fruitful field of study. For instance, new media forms are being used to challenge gender stereotypes in the Yoruba language, while another contribution maps communications elements in the traditional Akan political system.

Though the examples may seem to explore diverse areas, they are unified by a common theme. The emphasis on Communication for Social Change (CSC), an important area of focus in African communication scholarship, centralizes a field of study concerned with the use of communication for the improvement of social systems, and ultimately the living conditions of ordinary people. CSC involves governments, development NGOs, local actors and others, using different tools to raise awareness and empower people. Scholarship can and does offer an important contribution to fundamental questions that often revolve around issues of effectiveness. The contributions offered in this collection present socially engaged scholarship, far from the traditional ivory tower attitude that pursues knowledge for its own sake. This is information that matters.

The African Journalism Education Network (AJEN) was set up to support teaching and scholarship in the field of media, communications and journalism on the continent, recognizing that graduates from our institutions must emerge with the skills necessary to meet the specific demands of African newsrooms and communication environments. They need to have the resilience and adaptability to deal with an environment that is changing rapidly. But teaching needs to be informed by knowledge of the specific ways in which media landscapes are changing in Africa.

The editors and authors of the present volume deserve our thanks for making an excellent contribution to our understanding of the field. The collection illustrates how much of value is emerging from African scholarship. It will be of interest to anyone wanting to understand African communications better, but also adds African perspectives to global understanding of communication issues.

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INTRODUCTION: ON COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

MANFRED ASUMAN, THEODORA DAME ADJIN TETTEY, AND MODESTUS FOSU

The dominant modernization and diffusion communication paradigms grew in prominence in the 1950s, where the Western-inspired typology of a world of hierarchically differentiated groups of nations – characterized as First World and Third World held sway. During this period, global actors (Bretton-Woods Institutions and the UN) and scholars alike considered communication and mass media as an important instrument for the transformation of 'traditional' societies, especially those of the newly free and independent states into functional geopolitical entities[1]. Development was framed by these scholars and institutions not as a cultural phenomenon, but rather as a set of interventions. These interventions were broadly based on applicable technology solutions and were intended to supply and transfer necessities to a particular group that was in need. The interventions were 'inseparable from the particular architecture of global aid'.[2] The role of communication in this linear process was to broadcast the interventions and facilitate their adoption among the populace.

In the 1970's, critics of the dominant modernization and diffusion paradigms of development, such as Paulo Freire advocated for participatory paradigms through communication that emphasize the active involvement and empowerment of communities in the development process[3]. The critics contended with the prevailing centering of the institutions, technologies, and thought of the Global North in the transformation of the 'undeveloped' Global South. They also argued for pulling in the voices that have been relegated to the margins into the mainstream to add to the ongoing transformation narrative for more holistic development and change.

Consequently, a novel concept called 'Communication for Social Change' (CSC) was developed with the primary goal of fostering behavior change through the dissemination of information, with some involvement from the impacted communities in the project design.[4] CSC was modeled to address the shortcomings of the linear models that guided pro-development behavior modification activities in the 'undeveloped' world. It was also theorized to guide research and practice. Markedly, local communities are frequently included as participatory spaces for carrying out development initiatives by CSC, which incorporates culture and grassroots participation.[5] CSC frames grassroots participation and empowerment as strategies

1 Melkote, Srinivas R., and H. Leslie Steeves. *Communication for development: Theory and practice for empowerment and social justice.* New Delihi: Sage 2015.
2 Waisbord, Silvio. 'Three challenges for communication and global social change.' *Communication Theory* 25, no. 2 (2015): 144-165.
3 Servaes, Jan. *Communication for development. One world, multiple cultures*. Hampton Pres 1999.
4 Waisbord, Silvio. 'The strategic politics of participatory communication.' *The handbook of development communication and social change*. Malden, MA: Wiley (2014): 145-167.
5 Dutta, Mohan J. 'Decolonizing communication for social change: A culture-centered approach.'

for transferring the burdens of development into the hands of local communities. Research contends that these novel approaches to intentional social change communication, which are rooted in stories of local empowerment, community-based engagement, and entrepreneurship, actively obliterate underprivileged populations.

Besides, a key tenet of the CSC, participation, has seen varied definitions with inconsistent meanings. It has been reported that, of CSC scholarship measuring design and evaluations, different typologies were identified including, conventional (without any participation in design), consultative, collaborative, collegial, and local.[6] More so, CSC, as a sub-field of communication research, is in itself also variously defined, having evolved across a range of philosophical trajectories.[7] This demonstrates its fluidity and potential for further theorizing while considering various socio-cultural and economic factors.

According to the conceptual model and methodology for CSC, communities and societies can go through positive and transformative social, cultural, economic, and political transformations by utilizing communication processes, tactics, and technologies. It acknowledges the influence that communication has on attitudes, actions, and social norms and takes advantage of this influence to deal with urgent social issues, encourage inclusivity, and strengthen marginalized groups. We contend that although there is value in placing a premium on local expertise and traditional ways of doing things and acknowledge that responses to social problems are more likely to be effective when they are informed by the perspectives and lived experiences of those who will be impacted (as proposed by the concept), there is still a great deal to be learned from the African perspective. This is because modern African communities are characterized by long-standing wide socio-economic gaps, a variety of deeply ingrained beliefs and traditions, and, more recently, widespread digital gaps that coexist with highly connected communities, making it particularly difficult to apply ideas developed without considering the specifics and the histories of the African environment. It is not shocking that a scoping review of peer-reviewed journal articles on international participatory development interventions that aim to promote social change found that there was a dearth of compelling justifications for the connections between participation, communication, empowerment, and social change[8].

In recent times, scholars have added to the continuous critique of the many power dynamics at play in academic disciplines, which are symptomatized by the stark differences in scholarly knowledge creation between the Global North and the Global South.[9] These scholars contend

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Communication Theory 25, no. 2 (2015): 123-143.

6 Thomas, Pradip Ninan, and Elske Van de Fliert. *Interrogating the theory and practice of communication for social change: The basis for a renewal*. Singapore: Springer, 2014.

7 Kogen, Lauren. 'Communicating for social change: A model of communicative power.' *International Communication Gazette* 84, no. 7-8 (2022): 591-612.

8 _____. 'Communicating for social change: A model of communicative power.' *International Communication Gazette* 84, no. 7-8 (2022): 591-612.

9 Ekdale, Brian, Abby Rinaldi, Mir Ashfaquzzaman, Mehrnaz Khanjani, Frankline Matanji, Ryan Stoldt, and Melissa Tully. 'Geographic disparities in knowledge production: a big data analysis of peer-reviewed communication publications from 1990 to 2019.' *International journal of communication* 16 (2022): 28.

that the Global North's overrepresentation in academic publications and knowledge production, as well as the colonization of academic curricula, has led to the development of norms, ideas, and epistemologies that have come to be regarded as the 'gold standard' for what constitutes high-quality research in a certain field. The marginalization of the methodological, theoretical, and empirical contributions made by the Global South to the scholarly discourse frequently results from their underrepresentation. As a result, scholarly perspectives from the Global North are mainstreamed and hegemonized without the supporting and occasionally opposing voices that are genuinely present in the African realities of the phenomenon under study.

For a discipline such as Communication for Social Change which centers communication in development, the voices present in African realities are a critical component of scholarship. In *Communications and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies*, we add to the responses to the call for increased African-based perspectives on communication and social change. The primary objective of this book is to provide a platform for African-focused communication researchers and academics to share their insights with the African academic community, students, and the global academic community at large. By doing so, we aim to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse issues and arguments raised within the field of communication, situated within the socio-cultural contexts of Africa. The book contributes to the existing body of knowledge on communication theory, methodologies, and research practices, specifically focusing on the African context, and taking into cognizance the dynamic, diverse, complex, and intricate nature of African societies, including their mass communication and media ecosystems.

To achieve these objectives, this book covers a wide range of topics within the intersections of communication, society, and social change. Contributions in the form of case studies, reflective essays, and original research, address the following key thematic areas: Concepts and Theories of Communication; Communication, Media, Social Action, and Social Change; and Mass Communication, New Media, and Digital Media.

By addressing these thematic areas, the book contributes to a deeper understanding of communication's role in shaping African societies and driving social change by centering scholarly voices and perspectives from Africa serving as resistance to narratives put forth by the Global North. It brings to the fore, scholarship that speaks to the unique cultural, and socio-economic African contexts which do not merely test traditional CSC conceptualizations but extend and give space to new narratives, developments, and complexities of African societies.

The contributions in this book have been meticulously crafted by 23 authors across seven countries who have supported their ideas with verifiable facts, including seven cases from Tanzania Nigeria, Malawi, Ghana, South Africa, Guinea Bissau, and Ivory Coast. As indicated earlier, we have tried to classify the diverse contributions under three thematic areas, even though some of them may cross over into more than one. Now, let's guide you through each of the book's contributions.

Theme 1: Communication, Social Action, and Social Change

The first thematic area we cover has a collection of four chapters that speak to cases of communication, social action, and their influence on social change. It begins with Catalin Brylla and Rose Reuben's contribution in **Chapter 1**, Communicative Interfaces for Social Change: Two Case Studies of Youth Advocacy in Tanzania. In this chapter, Brylla and Rose make a good attempt at formulating a conceptual framework for studying the 'communicative interfaces' established through the work of the Youth Disability Advocacy and Research Network (YDAR) and Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) in Tanzania. Their work is motivated by the precarious situation of young people in Tanzania marked by the lack of access to quality education, vocational training, and job opportunities, which particularly affects young people with disabilities and women. By way of context, the Youth Disability Advocacy and Research Network is a collaborative project between Bournemouth University and ADD International, a global disability justice organization. This project facilitates communication between activists, academics, campaigning organizations, and disability networks to challenge the stigma of disability and change practices and policies that have marginalized the youth disability community in Tanzania and globally. The second case, the Tanzania Media Women's Association, is a non-profit organization that promotes the rights of women, girls and children through the use of media. It has advocated for women's well-being, gender equality, and the stigmatization of women through different tools to engage with and educate the public about a variety of issues, such as Female Genital Mutilation. These cases provided Catalin and Rose with the foundations to formulate a conceptual framework for studying the 'communicative interfaces', which we believe you will find fascinating.

Chapter 2 is a skilfully multi-authored contribution by Stanley Ukpai, Hassan Aliyu Karofi, Kareem Abdulrasaq, and Judith-Ann Walker. The chapter assesses the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded development Research and Projects Centre's (dRPC) project to develop a localized advocacy communication program on family planning with models and strategies responsive to the cultural context of Kaduna and Kano states of Northern Nigeria. Stanley and his colleagues were motivated to look into this because this project took a different turn, unlike other advocacy communications in public health that set the agenda for most donor-funded interventions seeking to influence policy change on sensitive health issues. Their findings are intriguing because they both question and support important recommendations in the research on advocacy communication in the West.

The third contribution under this theme in **Chapter 3**, is titled, Communication Matters: Investigating the Tension Between Healthcare Workers and Community Members During Disease Outbreaks in Malawi. It is authored by Flemmings Fishani Ngwira, Kings Ferrels Kondowe, Mary Kamwaza and Andrew Chimpololo. The chapter considers Malawi's healthcare workers who face ethical tensions and open conflicts with the healthcare workers and the community when they try to manage patients and dead bodies during infectious disease outbreaks. Flemmings and his three co-authors sought to better understand the possible reasons behind this tension, by conducting in-depth interviews with 21 community members and 14 healthcare professionals involved in the handling of patients and dead bodies during infectious disease outbreaks of COVID-19 and Cholera in clinics where such tensions

and open conflicts had occurred. The results indicated that healthcare workers' ineffective communication, the community's lack of proper knowledge of signs and symptoms of the pandemic, the procedures for patient care and disposal of the dead, and healthcare workers' disrespectfulness of people's social, cultural, and religious norms were the main contributing factors to the violence against healthcare workers. The concerns of community members and healthcare professionals in this study underscore the importance of effective risk communication and community engagement during pandemics.

Concluding the first theme is **Chapter 4**, authored by Toyosi Olugbenga Samson Owolabi and Noeem Taiwo Thanny. The chapter is anchored on Agenda Setting Theory and the Social Ecological Model for Health Promotion and attempts to discuss the probable causes of mental illness, misconceptions about mental issues, and other factors and their implications on mental health promotion connected to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Toyosi, and Noeem are motivated by the fact that the negative impacts of mental illness are a cross-cutting issue that affects a significant part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on the evidence gathered, Toyosi and Noeem recommend that the mass media as potent tools for communicating mental health campaigns should be targeted at different stakeholders to remove erroneous beliefs and stigmatization associated with mental illness.

Theme 2: Concepts of Communication in Africa

Similar to the first theme, our second theme has four chapters. The chapters under the theme, Concepts of Communication in Africa, critically interrogate concepts in communication that might guarantee social change or, if misused, could perpetuate the underdevelopment cycle. The first chapter under this theme, **Chapter 5**, is titled, Harnessing the Power of Listening for Social Change in a Disrupted Media Ecology, authored by Theodora Dame Adjin-Tettey and Anthea Garman. Motivated by the fact that voice has been seemingly projected above listening when it comes to democratic participation, Theodora and Anthea map the literature on the listening theory to establish how the concept of listening can facilitate discourses in three contexts – public discourse, journalism, and social media. They argue that public discourses that take listening into account could yield better results if all parties are ready to listen to the different perspectives of an issue and find common ground. The two kinds of listening related to journalism - receptivity and recognition - were found to ensure that media content, editorial, and production processes are power-sensitive and responsive to the inequalities and conflicts that shape speaking and listening relationships. Theodora and Anthea also attempt to examine other dynamics of listening among individuals and corporations in the digitized participatory media sphere in light of the listening theory. Consequently, they propose another mode of online media listening – interface listening.

Chapter 6, Negotiating Media's Role in Unstable States: Media System Transformation in Guinea-Bissau is authored by Johanna Mack. Johanna's contribution uses the 2023 political crisis in Guinea-Bissau to explore the position of media in a fragile state, where they frequently experience influences of various forms and scarcity of resources. Among the Lusophone African countries, Guinea-Bissau is especially marginalized, which is a continuation of the country's peripheral position in the Portuguese empire during colonization. Johanna analyses

how the 2023 crisis has impacted the media as they face a new flare-up of ongoing socio-political conflict and suggests aspects that should be considered when researching the media system of Guinea-Bissau and countries with similar experiences. The chapter is important because little, unstable nations in the Global South are still rarely used as case studies in media systems research. This results in a lack of know-how, to contribute to the body of media systems research and over-use of Eurocentric models. The chapter's use of Guinea-Bissau as a case study is therefore valuable.

Chapter 7 is written by Khadijat Adedeji-Olona and is titled The Nigerian Film Industry and Societal Transformation: A Reflective Analysis. Films are widely recognized for their ability to galvanize support for social, cultural, and political causes, resolve conflicts, and transform societies in positive ways. Khadijat examines the Nigerian film industry's capacity to foster societal change. Drawing upon a synthesis of academic and non-academic literature, she explores the extent to which Nigerian films, including feature films, short films, and documentaries have been deployed for socio-cultural and political commentaries while striving for positive societal change. Through an examination of the industry's developmental trajectory and its interaction with Nigerian society, the chapter highlights moments where films have effectively driven transformational agendas. It also pinpoints the industry's challenges, notably its commercial orientation, which can sometimes hinder its potential impact. Emphasizing the significance of the Nigerian film industry in driving social change, the chapter advocates governmental collaboration with filmmakers to harness this potential effectively.

The second theme ends with a contribution by Abena Kyeraa Duah whose work in **Chapter 8** is titled, Conceptual Map of Communication Patterns of Traditional Akan Institutions—Extending The Indigenous Communications Literature, Abena contends that while African communication scholars have conducted ample inquiries into the various sub-disciplines of fields like Mass Communication, Advertising, Public Relations, development communications, and others, much of the inquiry has been done in institutions of exogenous paradigms. Thus, the dearth of African communication scholarship on the communication practices in indigenous traditional African institutions and the social changes they affect and are affected by motivated her to look into these institutions as they continue to be relevant in contemporary African society due to the dual worldview of living on the continent. The chapter uses the context of the traditional political system of the Akan as a case to map out conceptual areas of communication that scholars of the field may attend to populate the communication scholarship with indigenous African communication, practices, symbols, modes, genres, and speech acts. Wilson's taxonomy of traditional African communication systems and Ansu-Kyeremeh's Indigenous communication infrastructure are synthesized and used as a framework in the analysis.

Theme 3: Communication, Alternative Media, and Social Change

Our final thematic area, Communication, Alternative Media, and Social Change, contains chapters that interrogate the use of alternative media for social change. The section opens with ***Manfred A.K. Asuman's contribution in Chapter 9,*** Exploring Community Media as a Strategy for Social Change. The chapter explores the concept and practice of community radio broadcasting in the Global South. Manfred offers a contextual background of community media in the global south and how the concept has been practically explored through small, community-owned broadcast media ventures such as community radio. It argues that through interactive participation in local community radio stations which improves the capabilities of community members, community members can pool their agency to pursue other communal actions which can lead to the achievement of community development goals. Manfred reports that community radio creates a forum of participation between community members, people in authority and external development partners which can be a means to the inclusion of the views and opinions of marginalized and underprivileged community members in communal decision-making. He uses case studies and examples from Sub-Saharan Africa to discuss community broadcasting and community radio practice in the Global South. He also provided a critique of community broadcasting and how sustainability challenges and the need for funding can lead to outside interests having control over the program production.

Emmanuel Essel And Eliza Govender follow this with their contribution in Chapter 10, Voice, Listening, And Dialogue in Covid-19 Communication in Ghana: Community Radio and Hegemonic Resistance. Their chapter explores community radio's (CR) dialogic structures for communicating COVID-19, particularly the structural arrangements for activating voice and listening among CR stakeholders. They employ qualitative techniques to collect data from CR host community members and staff. They find that Radio Peace's COVID-19 oriented discourses were designed from a dialogic perspective, allowing meaningful participation by all stakeholders, particularly community members. Thus, every community member could express their ideas via the CR platform. They consequently propose exploring the possibility of communicating COVID-19 via CR using its inherent dialogic strategies among resource-limited communities.

Ending the discussions under the third theme, Africanus Lewil Diedong, Lydia Darlington Fordjour, and Kwabena Badu-Yeboah do an amazing job of exploring the contribution of Radio Progress to the improvement of sanitation in Wa Municipality in Ghana in **Chapter 11**. Their chapter is titled, Exploring the Contribution of Community Radio to Improvement of Sanitation in Wa Municipality, Ghana. In recognition of the limitations of the diffusion of innovation theory by itself, they employ the theory of participatory development communication to assist in explaining how a community radio disseminated an innovation involving all relevant parties. Through a qualitative research approach, they selected three communities for the study: Kagu, Dandafuri and Mangu. They also used face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and observations to examine the nature of collaboration between the community radio, Radio Progress, and its stakeholders on sanitation issues in Wa Municipality. They found that the involvement of community members in the production of sanitation programs on sanitation is quite low. Their data also revealed that community members have limited interest in san-

itation broadcasts. Additionally, community members' inability to appreciate the outcome of the sanitation broadcast was because of their limited involvement in the issues discussed. Lewil, Lydia, and Kwabena therefore conclude that Radio Progress needs to adhere to the tenet of participation by ensuring that the inputs of stakeholders are integrated into sanitation programs to create the expected improvement of sanitation in targeted communities.

In this introduction, we've provided you with a preview of the book's contents, along with a synopsis of its context and motivation. While acknowledging that several themes and topics could be covered, we also believe that this collection has helped to fill a gap in the knowledge that is sorely lacking in the Global South regarding communication and social change.

Our appreciation goes to all the amazing scholars, scholar-practitioners, and practitioners who have made this dream a reality. We believe that you will find their excellent contributions useful and significant.

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SECTION 1:
COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL ACTION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

1. COMMUNICATIVE INTERFACES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: TWO CASE STUDIES OF YOUTH ADVOCACY IN TANZANIA

CATALIN BRYLLA AND ROSE REUBEN

Introduction

How does positive social change relate to 'communicative interfaces' in advocacy initiatives that aim to improve the wellbeing of marginalized social groups? This chapter defines a 'communicative interface' as a nexus of contact through connection and interaction between different social groups, which results in the bidirectional production, consumption, and exchange of information. In terms of our case studies of advocating for the rights of young people with disabilities and young women in Tanzania, communicative interfaces have been used to challenge rigid, binary structures of identity and belonging, [1] in particular the binaries of ability-disability, European-African, privileged-disadvantaged, heard– silenced voices, and men-women. Such structures pose significant obstacles to social change, which is why our case studies demonstrate that rigid social group categories do not have to be singular and fixed but can be intersectional and transient. In this sense, interfaces of communication can strategically mediate dynamic configurations between different groups that connect and communicate with each other [2]. This is a prerequisite for social change that benefits the youth population in Tanzania.

The situation of young people in Tanzania is influenced by a variety of factors, including historical, economic, and social aspects. Tanzania has a relatively young population, with a significant percentage of the population being under the age of 30. This youthful demographic presents both opportunities and challenges. While it signifies a potential workforce, it also highlights the importance of addressing youth issues. The youth population aged 15 to 35 represents 34% of the total national population[3], but much of this youth faces economic marginalization due to high levels of unemployment and underemployment [4]. The lack of access to quality education, vocational training, and job opportunities contributes to their economic vulnerability. These barriers particularly affect the two vulnerable communities addressed in our case studies: people with disabilities and women.

1 Francis B. Nyamnjoh and Ingrid Brudvig, eds., *Mobilities, Icts and Marginality in Africa: Comparative Perspectives* (Cape Town, South Africa: HSRC Press, 2016).

2 Cees Leeuwis and Noelle Aarts, 'Rethinking Communication in Innovation Processes: Creating Space for Change in Complex Systems', *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* 17, no. 1 (2011): 21–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/1389224X.2011.536344.

3 Rogers Rugeiyamu, 'The Tanzania Housing and Population Census 2022: A Panacea for Local Service Delivery and Development Drawbacks', *Local Administration Journal* 15, no. 1 (2022): 1–13.

4 Edwin Philbert, 'Factors Influencing Youth Unemployment in Tanzania' (The Open University of Tanzania, 2016).

The education, employment opportunities, and chances in life for people with disabilities are adversely affected in an ongoing vicious cycle of poverty in East African countries.[5] Low awareness and sensitivity to disability issues by government policy makers and other stakeholders intensifies this, alongside a lack of political will [6]. This is exacerbated by a social stigma based on misconceptions, underpinned by traditional cultural and religious beliefs [7] that result in marginalization and discrimination. This is analogous to women in Tanzania. Despite young women representing a higher youth population of 18.1%, compared to 16.5% of young men,[8] they face limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities due to patriarchal structures.[9] Early marriages and teenage pregnancies contribute to disrupting their educational and economic prospects.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, when considering the intersection of age, gender and disability, young women with disabilities face amplified social challenges and marginalization[10] because the mentioned negative implications overlap incrementally. This is particularly the case in rural areas, where access to basic services, infrastructure, economic opportunities, quality education and healthcare are lacking, in contrast to urban areas.[11] Tanzania has made efforts to tackle these issues and reduce youth marginalization through initiatives that center on education, healthcare and employment generation in tourism and agriculture. An example is the 'Building a Better Tomorrow Youth Initiative in Agribusiness' (BBT-YIA) which services young men and women, including those with disabilities. However, there is still work to be done in creating an inclusive and equitable society where all youth, whether male, female, with or without a disability, have equal opportunities and can actively contribute to the country's development.

Our first case study is the Youth Disability Advocacy and Research Network (YDAR),[12] on which co-author Brylla is Co-Investigator. This is a 2023-2024 collaborative project between Bournemouth University and ADD International, a global disability justice organization. Funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), this project facilitates active

5 Department for International Development's Annual Report and Accounts 2018-2019: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-to-2019

6 Brigitte Rohwerder, 'Disability Stigma in Developing Countries. K4D Helpdesk Report.' (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2018).

7 Mojdeh Bayat, 'The Stories of "Snake Children": Killing and Abuse of Children with Developmental Disabilities in West Africa', *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* 59, no. 1 (2015): 1–10, https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12118; Lily Kpobi and Leslie Swartz, '"That Is How the Real Mad People Behave": Beliefs About and Treatment of Mental Disorders by Traditional Medicine-Men in Accra, Ghana', *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 64, no. 4 (2018): 309–16, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764018763705; Rohwerder, 'Disability Stigma in Developing Countries. K4D Helpdesk Report.'

8 Rugeiyamu, 'The Tanzania Housing and Population Census 2022'.

9 Iffat Idris, 'Barriers to Women's Economic Inclusion in Tanzania. K4D Helpdesk Report.' (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2018).

10 Julie King, Nicole Edwards, and Hanna Watling, 'Leadership for Change: Pathways to Activism for African Women with Disability', *Disability & Society* 38, no. 7 (2021): 1164–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2021.1994373.

11 Idris, 'Barriers to Women's Economic Inclusion in Tanzania. K4D Helpdesk Report.'

12 https://www.youth-disability.org/

communication between disability activists, academics, international campaigning organizations and disability networks in order to challenge the stigma of disability and change practices and policies that have marginalized the youth disability community in Tanzania and globally. The focus in this chapter will be on YDAR's support of two disability advocacy campaigns through the pioneering model of participatory grant making.

The second case study is the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA),[13] of which co-author Reuben is Executive Director. This is a membership, nonprofit and non-partisan organization registered under non-government law to accelerate national and global initiatives that promote the human rights of woman, girls and children through the use of media. For 36 years TAMWA has been an influential organization in Tanzania, advocating women's wellbeing, gender equality and the destigmatisation of women through various communicative interfaces by strategically employing different platforms and tools to engage with and educate the public. In this chapter we will focus on TAMWA's 2015 anti-FGM advocacy campaign.

The aim of this chapter is to formulate a tentative conceptual framework for studying the communicative interfaces established through the work of YDAR and TAMWA, all of which have facilitated participatory research, knowledge exchange, networking, mentorship and capacity building in the pursuit of social change. These interfaces have been connection and interaction points between a variety of social groups based on different demographics, such as institution (e.g. universities, NGOs, broadcasters), geography (e.g. West, South, rural, urban), nationality (e.g. British, American, Tanzanian), culture (e.g. European, African), bodily affordances (e.g. people with and without disabilities), age (e.g. young, middle-aged, old), gender (e.g. male, female) and profession (e.g. academics, activists, media makers).

The Communicative Interface

According to Galloway,[14] an interface is generally an autonomous zone of activity with particular effects. Thus, interfaces need to be studied not as a thing but as an effect. As such, communicative interfaces can be considered 'spaces of change' at which information and communication flow between a range of different stakeholders.[15] Such interfaces can include a wide range of types, such as technological, social, material, immaterial, virtual, objective-driven and process-driven interfaces. They can have a range of aims, such as knowledge exchange and capacity building, and they can have various constitutive factors, such as affordances, physicality, space, time and permeability. Understanding these cannot only illuminate the relationships between the components, but also how these relationships are generated, negotiated and constantly redefined, and how ultimately social change results from this. Thus, our focus is to analyze communicative interfaces in terms of how the participants on each side of the interface undergo some kind of change through interacting, and how that generates an overall change for the target community. After all, interactivity at the interface is transforma-

13 https://tamwa.org/a/

14 *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

15 Leeuwis and Aarts, 'Rethinking Communication in Innovation Processes', 5.

tional, relational and generative.[16] To explore this, we need to map the *social groups* involved in an interface and the change they experience.

Individuals tend to categorize themselves and others as belonging to various groups, based on gender, ethnicity, profession, religion or any other significant affiliation. Therefore, group belonging is an essential part of a person's sense of social identity distinguishing them from another person's social identity [17]. However, people are amalgamations of multiple, intersected social identities, such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity and religion. This is especially pertinent when considering the heterogenous, lived experiences of young, marginalized Tanzanian communities, and how overlapping social identities can exacerbate the stigma (e.g. young, disabled women) or can provide opportunities to challenge stigma (e.g. young, disabled activists).[18]

Furthermore, social identity formation is always contextual, based on how a particular situation crystallizes the perception of contrasting or matching social identities in the situation's participants [19]. For instance, in her work for TAMWA's FGM project, Reuben's interaction with young girls resulted in salient identities of her being middle-aged, a journalist, a researcher and an activist, in contrast to the girls. However, the overlap of their female identity, and the resulting sharing of numerous lived experiences, played a significant role in facilitating the interaction. In the YDAR project, Brylla's encounter with his Tanzanian collaborators was framed by disability advocacy in Tanzania. This meant that during this encounter and all related interfaces, he was aware of his social identity categories of white, Westerner, academic without disabilities, in contrast to the Black, Tanzanian, activists with disabilities.

Thus, interfaces are mediators of social identity formation,[20] generating the sense of social group belonging and by implication generating social borders that distinguish groups.[21] Social groups are formed and perceived in relation to either shared innate and immutable characteristics (e.g. being a woman) or shared common interests (e.g. having liberal values) or a combination of the two (e.g. engaging in Black activism).[22] It is the task of social-change-driven interfaces to carefully consider and instrumentalize intra-group characteristics and

16 Celia Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, International Library of Sociology (London: Routledge, 2004).

17 Henri Tajfel and John Charles Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict', in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1979), 33–47.

18 see Richard Crisp, 'Prejudice and Perceiving Multiple Identities', in *The SAGE Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination*, ed. John F. Dovidio et al. (SAGE, 2010), 508–25.

19 Galen V. Bodenhausen and C. Neil Macrae, 'Stereotype Activation and Inhibition', in *Stereotype Activation and Inhibition*, ed. Robert S. Wyer, vol. XI, Advances in Social Cognition (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998).

20 Lury, *Brands*.

21 Amalia Sabiescu, 'Assemblage Theory, Communicative Assemblages and Problematising the Notion of "Borders" in Community Communication', 2021.

22 Marilynn B. Brewer, Ying-Yi Hong, and Qiong Li, 'Dynamic Entitativity: Perceiving Groups as Actors', in *The Psychology of Group Perception: Perceived Variability, Entitativity, and Essentialism*, ed. Vincent Yzerbyt, Charles M. Judd, and Olivier Corneille (New York: Psychology Press, 2004).

common interests, as well as to align these across interacting groups in relation to the desired social goal.

Regarding our case studies, this precarious alignment challenges the binary social structures of "non-disabled vs. disabled" and "men vs. women", which have created and maintained the social stigma of people with disabilities and women. At the same time social boundaries are the very root of social identity formation, and sometimes binary social structures can be even conducive to successful cooperation and advocacy.[23] More so, significant intergroup differences in group proclivities and interests can be drivers for social change, as long as some level of coherence and complementarity is negotiated.[24] For instance, as observed in most interfaces of the YDAR project, a social division between scholars and activists is arguably necessary to design and execute successful cooperation between these two groups, whereby both fulfil different roles and functions that are nonetheless complementary and synergetic in the goal of social change. In the case of TAMWA, its workers are media professionals, whilst most women whose issues they advocate are not. This has enabled TAMWA to instrumentalize multiple media platforms and channels to raise awareness on social inequalities.

Of course, depending on context, group divisions can be more or less rigid, such as media scholars who are also disability activists. This is addressed by the permeability of the interface [25]. Low permeability maintains the distinction of social categories, whilst high permeability fosters the integration or blurring of social categories. Both instances can pose obstacles or opportunities for cooperation towards social change and thus require careful consideration. In addition, the symmetry of interaction is important to evaluate. Although interfaces by default enable contact and bi-directional exchange of information between different social groups, this exchange is not necessarily symmetric,[26] and the (a)symmetry plays a crucial role in social identity formation, permeability and the overall goals of social change.

The overall social change elicited through communicative interfaces needs to be analyzed by considering the change for each individual group involved in the interface and how (or if) these group changes align with the overall change pursued by the project goal. Measuring any social change requires the actual perspective of the group that is supposed to undergo the change. Without collecting data about their lived experiences, any conclusion about change is at best speculative, at worst wrong. Therefore, many advocacy projects do use robust models to measure the social impact on lived experiences of the group whose interest they advocate. However, they rarely pinpoint the smaller-scale changes for all groups connected by the project's communicative interfaces, and it is the amalgamation of these that enables overall social change in the first place. We therefore suggest that group changes through interfaces are captured and evaluated, either more precisely through surveys, focus groups or interviews, or more heuristically through team reflections and informal discussions.

23 Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Unabridged, 25th anniversary ed (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

24 Leeuwis and Aarts, 'Rethinking Communication in Innovation Processes', 6.

25 Erin Holmes et al., 'The Work-Family Interface', in *Cross-Cultural Family Research and Practice*, ed. Kim Halford and Fons Van De Vijver (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2020).

26 Lury, *Brands*.

In conclusion, mapping interfaces for advocacy and social change in relation to how they impact on all involved social groups can prove highly efficient in understanding the design of interfaces, which allows the strategic replicability of such interfaces in different contexts. With this in mind, we propose a tentative framework of questions to analyze one particular, or a set of communicative interfaces, which we will use in our case study analyses:

Project Goal

- What is the intended social change of the project?
- What is the overall advocacy goal to elicit that social change?

Interface Type

- What technology, platform or logistics constitute the interface?
- How does the interface enable communication and transfer of information?

Interface Aims

- What are the main aims of the interface?
- How do these aims align with the project goal?
- How do these aims align with the aims of other project interfaces?

Social Groups

- Which social groups does the interface mobilize and link together?
- What are the distinct characteristics and interests/goals of these groups?
- What are the existing social boundaries between these groups prior to the interface?
- What are potential restrictions to accessing this interface?

Mediation between Social groups

- How does the interface capitalize on the social boundaries between the groups to provide opportunities and mitigate obstacles for its aims and the overall project goal?
- How does the interface's permeability and bidirectionality operate towards its aims?
- How does the interface align intra-group characteristics and interests/goals with the interface aims and the project goal?

Social Change

- How does the interface elicit social changes for all groups involved?
- How do these changes relate to changes generated by other project interfaces?
- How do these changes lead to the project goal?
- What are the methods to evaluate social changes in the involved groups?

Youth Disability Advocacy and Research Network (YDAR)

Project Goals and a Network of Interfaces

The YDAR project has three main goals under the umbrella of disability advocacy. It aims to 1) enable young disability activists to influence governments, international development actors, and the private sector to adopt practices and design policies and services, at a local, national, and global level, which consider the needs of disabled people, 2) challenge the stigma of disability through developing public voice and influencing media outlets to increase and improve the representation of disabled people, and 3) establish a growing interdisciplinary and international network for the study and practice of disability advocacy, which enables the first two goals. These three goals have been pursued through a network of communicative interfaces.

The first interface was the AHRC grant **bid-writing process** itself, which served as a knowledge exchange process and a participatory research approach to involve researchers, the partner institutions, in particular ADD International, and young, disabled activists. The next interface was the four-day **festival** in Dar Es Salaam featuring capacity building and knowledge exchange workshops to connect international partners with grassroots disability activists in East Africa. The festival also set up another interface, which was the development of two ongoing **advocacy campaigns**, led by youth disability activists with support from the network, that advance disability rights and challenge stigma in Tanzania. In parallel to these campaigns, the project established the interface of an **online workshop series** for capacity building and networking, led by disability activists, academics, international campaigning organizations, and organizations of persons with disabilities. Lastly, the project's international and interdisciplinary network is embodied through a **website** that records all project activities, develops training materials and exhibits advocacy toolkits and case studies that can be used by disability activists in Tanzania and across the world. The website is accompanied by two **WhatsApp groups** that connect all network members and allows for quick, ad-hoc communication and dissemination. Due to the brevity of this chapter, we will analyze the communicative interface of the disability advocacy campaigns, examining it through the framework questions formulated earlier.

Disability Advocacy Campaigns – Interface Type and Aims

The advocacy campaigns started with in-person workshops at the festival in Dar Es Salaam. The workshops' aims were to build sustainable capacity [27] for disability advocacy within in the community of young, Tanzanian activists with disabilities. The first two days focused on the boosting of knowledge capacity, featuring knowledge exchange sessions, case study analyses, introduction of toolkits and basic training in media production with smart phones. The last two days focused on leadership capacity through the model of participatory grant making (henceforth PGM). PGM is a method for allocating funding by shifting decision-making

27 see A. N. Mohd Noh et al., 'Elements of Community Capacity Building (CCB) for CBET Development', *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology* 17, no. 9 (2020): 4970–81.

powers from grant makers to grantees.[28] Thus, the very community the funders aim to serve and that is most affected by the social issues, is included or indeed oversees the process of campaign funding allocation, campaign design, execution and evaluation through peer leadership and peer support.[29] This meant that the project team facilitated a group of young Tanzanian activists with disabilities to first form a Youth Grant Task Team that would oversee funding allocation according to their own, formulated criteria. Then, they prepared and submitted campaign applications that were evaluated and awarded by the Task Team.

Two campaigns were awarded the requested funds: The first, "Digital advocacy for youth with disabilities" develops training opportunities for young people with disabilities in Zanzibar to advertise their talents, business and skills by using digital platforms for inspirational and motivational purposes, as well as educating the society on disabilities matters. It is run by Yumna Mmanga Omar, a teacher and activist with albinism, Fakihat Omar Abubakar, an IT assistant and writer with multiple physical disabilities, Jamila Borafya Hamza, a writer and political activist with visual impairment, and Zakia Daudi, a program officer for the Organization of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Zanzibar (JUWAUZA).

The second campaign, "Tackling negative attitudes towards people with disabilities", aims to educate the Tanzanian society about the real lived experience of disabled people, dispelling negative, societal views of people with disabilities, such as perceptions of them being beggars or cursed. It launches a wide-spread awareness campaign in Dar es Salaam, involving meetings with parents of disabled people, radio and TV coverage, flyers and a music video. It is run by Eva Joseph Masanilo, a BA student with visual impairment, who studies Adult and Community Education at the University of Dar Es Salaam.

Both campaigns have been supported by YDAR's local partner, ADD International. The project team has provided mentorship and further knowledge capacity training through the online workshop series mentioned above. The aims of the festival, the capacity building workshops and the two campaigns were closely aligned with the overall project goals. Thus, three communicative interfaces have been working in synergy to directly address the first two goals of improving the lives of and social perceptions of disabled people. Indirectly, these interfaces also address the third goal of expanding the project network to an interdisciplinary and international level. After all, the campaigns constitute case studies that are discussed in several workshops and showcased on the website.

Disability Advocacy Campaigns – Social Groups Involved

The conceptualization process of the advocacy campaigns has linked together the following main groups: 1) Western academics from Bournemouth University and the American University in Washington, DC, 2) East African ADD International workers, and 3) young, Tanzanian

28 Charlotte Timson and Mohammed Awal Alhassan, *Participatory Grant Making Toolkit* (Norsaac, Transform Trade, 2023).

29 Cynthia Gibson, 'Deciding Together: Shifting Power and Resources Through Participatory Grantmaking' (New York: GrantCraft, 2018), https://doi.org/10.15868/socialsector.32988.

activists with disabilities. The Western academics do research in advocacy, disability studies, politics and media studies, and they are the AHRC grant holders, providing the funding for the advocacy campaigns. Their proclivities concern the advancements of research knowledge to conceptualize new models for implementing and studying advocacy interventions. These researchers are not the traditional ivory tower scholars, but they engage in interventional and practice-led research to use scholarly knowledge for social change. For instance, Principal Investigator Dan Jackson's audience research on Channel 4s TV coverage of the Paralympic Games has been used by Channel 4 to inform new disability stigma reduction initiatives.

In contrast, the ADD International workers aim to support people with disabilities in their daily struggles against an ableist society, and to strengthen disability rights activism through resourcing and capacity building in several African and Asian countries. Their interests concern immediate community support, lobbying for disability rights and inclusion, and fundraising. They also aim to give activists greater decision-making power through methods, such as the previously mentioned participatory grant-making. ADD's goals, thus, align well with the overall project goals, which has manifested in the work done by ADD staff on the project. For example, George Sempangi Katumba, the Global Young Leaders Advisor, and Elineca Ndowo, the Inclusive Education Technical Coordinator, have been supporting and mentoring the two campaign teams from the start, helping them with writing the grant proposals and executing the campaigns.

The young activists with disabilities are the grant receivers with the lived experience of the community which needs the social change. They are, thus, the largest stakeholders, and at the same time the most socially and economically vulnerable group in the campaigning interface. Their interests are focused on executing the campaigns and seeing social change that benefits them directly. This pursued change includes not only the actual outcomes of the campaigns, but also boosting the activists' employability and generating job opportunities for them, which is in line with the prevalent key challenges for young Tanzanians mentioned earlier. The selection of these young activists with disabilities to participate in the project has been strategically done by the ADD International workers to consider intersectionality. For instance, a higher proportion of young women was selected, given the higher stigma on women with disabilities. Similarly, the selection included an almost equal proportion of mainland Tanzanians, as well as Zanzibaris, to mitigate social divisions between these two geographically and culturally different locations.

Mediation Between the Social Groups

The communicative interface of the campaigns capitalized on blurred, as well as distinct social boundaries. For instance, regarding the distinct professional roles of the British scholars and the ADD International support workers, intergroup boundaries allowed for a synergetic cooperation. This has been established through yet another communicative interface of frequent team meetings, in which concrete concerns and action plans were mapped in relation to each stakeholder's role and function. But, at the same time, ADD International has been the main support mechanism and local port of call for the young campaigners with disabilities, partly because this support preceded the project and partly because there was no budget for the

UK academics to meet the campaign leaders in-person beyond the festival event. This has resulted in a disconnect between the British researchers and the campaign leaders, which, although a logical and desired outcome of the PGM concept, also posed some challenges in communication and monitoring campaign progress.

Regarding cultural and geographical differences, projects that use Western funding and knowledge to support advocacy campaigns in the Global South, are prone to manifest in social boundaries between the Western academics (grant holders), and the advocacy campaigners (grant receivers). The project's interfaces are thus likely primed in two ways. Firstly, the group boundaries remain solid and result in low permeability. Secondly, a high asymmetry results through the group who controls the funding deeming what kind of advocacy is eligible and how the funding would be allocated, resulting in predominantly top-down communication across interfaces. However, the YDAR academic team, who initiated the project, tried to mitigate this 'white savior' scenario of rescuing the Tanzanian disability community. This was done by embracing the PGM concept, which was suggested and implemented by the partner ADD International, and by the academics deliberately stepping back to a certain degree during the actual executions of the campaigns, which have been mainly supported locally by ADD International workers. This strategy, in terms of the funding context, resulted in a higher permeability between grant holders and grant receivers.

Still, the funding's origin and overall (or at least initial) control has been associated from the start with the British academics – a perception fueled by the colonial history's legacy of socio-economic inequalities and cultural stereotypes. This became apparent when the campaigners asked the academics for additional funding and support during a mid-campaign workshop. After the academics deliberated with the ADD International workers, the joint decision was taken to rather invest the remaining funding in the capturing of the campaign's social impact through short videos, which would allow for a more sustainable pursuit of the overall project goals.

Another instance of low permeability has been the social division between people with and without disabilities. Paradoxically, this is an inherent outcome of PGM, in which funding control is shifted to the community that is supposed to benefit from the funds. As mentioned earlier, this model is crucial for sustainable interventions initiated and executed across social groups that have been traditionally divided by distinct demographic boundaries. The fact remains, though, that from a stigma reduction perspective, the most effective way to reduce intergroup differences and corresponding prejudices is through close cooperation.[30] This was the scenario between the Western academics and the East African ADD International workers, but not between the academics without disabilities and the actual campaigners with disabilities. Therefore, PGM being at the center of advocacy campaign may inadvertently maintain the social boundaries it is trying to overcome in the first place. At the same time, it provides the maximum control and voice to the affected community to pursue a goal that primarily benefits them. Research on such implications of PGM and other forms of participatory research is scant, which is why our follow-up project will engage in a more rigorous study of PGM and the projected social change.

30 Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*.

All in all, communicative interfaces based on PGM and other types of participatory research are ambivalent in terms of permeability and symmetry, which is not to say that the likelihood of actual social change is ambivalent, too. On the contrary, ambivalence of intergroup similarities and differences can be a fertile ground for expanding networks and the mitigation of social boundaries through acknowledging cultural, geographical and dis/ability diversity under the common umbrella of the project's goal of social change.[31]

Social Change

The group changes directly related to the project goal have been mostly and unsurprisingly results of conscious choices by the team in the project's design. The Western academics have gained a unique opportunity to implement their research on disability in an East African context, thus, being prompted to test and adapt any models or approaches to a distinctly different community. Most team members' research previously focused on populations and case studies in a British and American context, so adapting these to an East African context was an insightful challenge. For instance, Brylla's research on the media representation of disability had to expand by media case studies with Black and African screen characters with disabilities. Another change for the academics has been the gaining of knowledge and contacts that has informed new, international and interdisciplinary collaborations and dissemination opportunities. For instance, the team and the local partner are currently working on a bid for a follow-up project that focuses on PGM in Tanzania.

Our partner, ADD International has also benefitted from the campaign interface in several ways. For instance, the AHRC funding helped boost their Young Leaders Program in East Africa through enabling campaigns that don't just pursue social change but also empower the young campaigners to become community leaders. The funding also covered part of ADD International's local staff costs, allowing to offer employment opportunities to several of their young service users with disabilities to work on the project's local administration side. In addition, it provided a good opportunity to pilot PGM, which was used by ADD International for the first time in an East African context. It also opened doors for future collaborations, such as the follow-up project to investigate the implications of PGM.

For the young activists with disabilities who have been involved in the campaigns, this interface allowed them to shape and pursue their advocacy goals in a manner that aligns with the overall project goals. From filmed interviews and discussions with them, it is apparent that they fully embraced the participatory research aspect of the project. They feel empowered to voice their lived experiences and have a stake in controlling the funding and shaping their own campaigns in relation to individual and localized needs. For instance, the campaign in Zanzibar specifically focused on social media skills training, which the campaigners identified as a large gap in the Zanzibari disability community.

In terms of the main project aims of improving the lives of people with disabilities, reducing disability stigma and expanding the YDAR network to achieve this, the project is still ongoing

31 see Crisp, 'Prejudice and Perceiving Multiple Identities'.

and the actual, overall social change needs to be thoroughly evaluated. To do so, the team is currently producing four short videos that will initiate a follow-up project centering on PGM and its real social impact: The first will be a video summary of the project, its research design and the new knowledge for scholars. This video is from the perspective of the academics and will be disseminated in scholarly contexts, such as conferences. The second will be a video summary of the entire PGM process from the perspective of ADD International, which will be used for attracting donors and initiating new advocacy projects. The third and fourth video will illustrate the two campaigns from the perspective of the campaign leaders. The aim is to promote and, thus, expand the campaigns in the local community, and to find new, local funding opportunities for this expansion.

Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)

Organization Goals and a Network of Interfaces

TAMWA is a non-profit organization in Tanzania that advocates gender equality through challenging stereotypes and creating a more inclusive society where women, girls and children's voices are heard and respected, both in the media and in society. This mission is pursued through six goals: 1) *Promoting Gender Equality* within the media industry and through the society at large by ensuring fair and balanced representation of women in media content, addressing gender biases, stereotypes, and discrimination. 2) *Advocacy and Awareness* through public dialogue and influencing policies, laws, and practices to positively affect women's rights and gender equality. 3) *Capacity Building* of women in the media industry through training, workshops, and skills development programs, thus empowering female journalists and media practitioners to excel in their profession and contribute effectively to gender-sensitive reporting. 4) *Research and Documentation* of challenges women face in the media and society through collecting data, producing reports, and publishing information. 5) *Support* for female journalists, media professionals and women's rights advocates, and the fostering of networks and partnerships, both nationally and internationally, to collaborate on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. 6) *Campaigns and Projects* aimed at challenging social norms, promoting women's rights, and fostering an inclusive and equitable media environment.

Some of TAMWA's communicative interfaces are ***traditional media campaigns*** through television, radio, and newspapers to disseminate information, raise awareness about women's rights issues, and challenge societal norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. Others involve ***social media campaigns*** by engaging with a broader audience through platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube. The organization engages young influencers to share stories, campaigns, and advocacy messages, reaching a younger demographic and facilitating discussions on critical gender issues. Another interface is ***community-based workshops and seminars*** to directly engage with local communities regarding the topic at hand, providing education and training within safe spaces for discussions on gender issues. These events aim to foster dialogue and empower individuals to act.

To create a scientific foundation for advocacy, TAMWA uses the interface of ***research studies*** on various gender-related topics and publishes corresponding reports and articles to present data-driven evidence. These publications are used to influence policies and drive change at a systemic level. The organization also uses interfaces of ***arts and culture***, such as art exhibitions, theatre productions, and cultural events, through which it raises awareness and challenges societal norms by using artistic expression as a tool for advocacy. Lastly, the interface of **legal aid services and counselling** directly supports women, who face gender-based violence or discrimination, navigate legal procedures and seek justice to.

TAMWA has used these interfaces to reach a diverse range of stakeholder groups, including governmental and non-governmental institutions to create alliances, share resources, mobilizing support mechanisms and advocating policy and societal changes that promote gender equality and empower women, girls and children in Tanzania. In terms of girls, it has focused on pertinent issues, such as preventing forced marriage, economic empowerment, leadership, political participation, combatting female genital mutilation (FGM), right to education, sexual reproductive health rights and prevention of gender-based violence against girls. Due to the conciseness of this chapter, we will focus on the communicative interface of the advocacy campaign towards zero tolerance for FGM in 2015.

FGM Advocacy Campaign – Interface Types and Aims

FGM relates to all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons.[32] This practice is an abuse of human rights and causes serious health complications, including fatal bleeding. The 2015 TAMWA Zero Tolerance for FGM National Forum report showed that an estimated 100-140 million girls and women have globally undergone some form of FGM, and if the trend continues, an additional 15 million 15-19-year-old girls will be subjected to it by 2030. [33] In Tanzania the number of these girls being circumcised in marriages is considerably higher than the number of boys. In general, one in ten have been subjected to FGM.[34] Of these, 35% were circumcised before the age of one in order to escape prosecution under the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act of 1998,[35] which criminalizes FGM. Substantial regional disparities exist in the practice of FGM with the highest occurrences taking place in the Manyara (58%), Dodoma (47%) and Arusha (41%) regions.[36] FGM is generally more prevalent within traditionalist communities predominantly found in rural, but also in several urban areas.[37]

32 World Health Organization, 'Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement - Ohchr, Unaids, Undp, Uneca, Unesco, Unfpa, Unhcr, Unicef, Unifem, Who', *Eliminer Les Mutilations Sexuelles Féminines : Déclaration Interinstitutions HCDH, OMS, ONUSIDA, PNUD, UNCEA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNCHR, UNICEF, UNIFEM*, 2008, 4.

33 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

34 Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey (2015-16): https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr321/fr321.pdf

35 http://tanzania.go.tz/egov_uploads/documents/The_Sexual_Offence_Special_Provisions_Act,_4-1998_en.pdf

36 https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr321/fr321.pdf

37 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.

The FGM advocacy campaign interface aimed to create awareness of the magnitude of the problem, empowering girls to resist this harmful traditional ritual and change practices, regulations, policies and laws. The main strategy was to develop a clear and concise message that defines the social implications of FGM, highlights its critical importance and fosters the desired change. This message would target different audience segments described by the social groups involved in this interface.

FGM Advocacy Campaign – Social Groups Involved

This campaign linked together the following groups: 1) TAMWA team, 2) Community proponents (including practitioners) of FGM, 3) Community opposers of FGM, 3) Victims of FGM, 4) Young girls who are at risk of FGM, 5) Community leaders, and 4) Anti-FGM activists. The TAMWA team consisted of three women and two men, who were researchers, journalists, lawyers and media content creators. Given their intersecting social identities, their interest was to sustainably raise awareness about the effects of FGM on a community level, a local government level and national government level.

The community proponents of FGM were, not surprisingly, interested in maintaining this practice. Being traditionalists, they were resistant to change. In particular, the practitioners, who carry out the ritual, believed in its prosocial effect. For instance, Ngariba, a former circumciser, explains in the TAMWA report:

> It is our tradition to conduct FGM. Without it a girl will not get married, as FGM in our society means to be clean and ready for marriage. Special knives, scissors, razors, pieces of broken glass, sharp stones or fire were used to conduct it. It causes a lot of blood flow [. . .] but we had our own means to control it, like chewing a piece of charcoal mixed with herbs, which we put on the head of a girl.[38]

The exact reverse was the case for opposers of FGM, who recognize the negative physical psychological and social effects on FGM victims. These include hemorrhage, infections, shock, anxiety, PTSD and depression.[39] As one victim reports:

> I was forced to do FGM. We were many girls. I didn't like it, but we were promised that soon after we will be clean and ready for marriage. They used a razor to cut us all. I experienced heavy bleeding, but they used some herbs to clear it. I can't express the pain I had, and I won't forget.[40]

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38 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

39 Sarah O'Neill and Christina Pallitto, 'The Consequences of Female Genital Mutilation on Psycho-Social Well-Being: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Health Research* 31, no. 9 (2021): 1738–50, https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323211001862.

40 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

In general, victims of FGM and young girls at risk of FGM may oppose, support or simply accept it as a necessary practice and culturally embedded tradition. Acceptance is often based on girls fearing personal and social consequences within their community if they do not conform.[41] These include perceived impurity, perceived immorality, perceived incapability to marry and have children, low self-esteem, feelings of guilt and shame, stigmatization and social sanctions. All these prospects represent obstacles to even interrogating the practice. As traditional social norms can be influenced by community leaders, this group was instrumental in TAMWA's campaign. Community leaders' interests usually lie in maintaining intragroup traditions, which is a strong part of a community's social identity, and improving the wellbeing of the group. Relating to FGM, these two objectives posed tensions, since community leaders in rural areas tended to be traditionalists and conservative. Nevertheless, with adequate intervention some of them did embrace social change.

The group of anti-FGM activists pursued similar interests to TAMWA, which facilitated group alignment and cooperation. Some of these group members were working directly with the communities, whilst others were dealing with law enforcement offices.

Mediation Between the Social Groups

Apparently, all the distinct and diverse interests and intergroup dynamics posed a considerable challenge to how the interface mediated between them and its aim to expose and reduce the practice of FGM. One form of mediation was media content to disseminate the main campaign messages and target all mentioned social groups. Such content involved different media channels, platforms and formats, including radio newscasts, talk shows, TV documentaries, social media videos, talk shows, newspapers articles, editorials, infographics and blogs. TAMWA either directly created or commissioned this media content, collaborating with a network of journalists and media houses.

TAMWA also made use of interactive media platforms to engage the affected communities, thus mitigating interface asymmetry and allowing for more permeability between the groups involved. In this sense they used social media groups, forums, live online chats and email newsletters to encourage critical discussions, the sharing of personal stories and the active building of a collective resistance against FGM.

All mediation channels disseminated not only information but also testimonials of lived experiences packaged in effective storytelling. The TAMWA members, most of which operate within the Tanzanian mainstream media, knew that this would be the best way to illustrate the problems, humanize the issue and emotionally connect with audiences. For example, the invitation of young women to directly interact with audiences in talk shows served as an important contact point of groups that are directly affected by FGM and groups that can initiate social change.

41 O'Neill and Pallitto, 'The Consequences of Female Genital Mutilation on Psycho-Social Well-Being'.

An important aspect of media content, in whatever form, was accessed to reach a diverse audience, such as people with disabilities and people with limited access to media technologies. This clearly enhanced the scope for signing petitions, donating, volunteering, attending events, or spreading the word through social media sharing.

Another form of mediation was through educational programs, which represented communicative interfaces between the TAMWA team, anti-FGM activists, journalists and young girls. These sessions aimed for solution-focused discussions and wellbeing interventions addressing the lived experiences of the people involved in terms of physical and psychological implications of FGM. Here, TAMWA collaborated with multiple, local organizations under the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM)[42]. Whilst TAMWA was overseeing the educational programs in multiple geographical areas and disseminated them in mainstream media, the local organizations were operating directly in the communities to maintain alertness about and swiftly act against imminent FGM ceremonies. This synergy demonstrates again that some social group boundaries are necessary for effective advocacy.

Social Change

The group changes directly related to the campaign goals, and TAMWA meticulously used interviews with the interface groups to map changes. Perhaps the most powerful change concerned some FGM practitioners who abandoned the practice altogether. For instance, Ngariba, the former circumciser, said after the campaign:

> I decided not to conduct any more as I experienced a very bad situation as one among the 5 girls, I was circumcising had heavily bled to the extent of fainting. Later I realized that their other consequences like problems during delivery which was experienced by my own daughter hence I recognized that it is a very dangerous practice.[43]

Similarly, some FGM victims not only came to abandon traditional beliefs that justified FGM, but they also turned into activists themselves, thus demonstrating the permeability of the interface. As one victim stated after the campaign:

> As of now I have learnt that it is not true that being circumcised means being clean so I'm in a front line to speak out on all the evils on FGM and reporting whenever I hear it takes place.[44]

42 https://www.nafgemtanzania.or.tz/index.php

43 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

44 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

Crucially, this change also reached the community leaders, which entails the potential for sustainable impact within a community and across communities. One leader said:

> It is true that there are beliefs justifying FGM in our communities. However, since we were educated about the effects of FGM, we started taking action to influence our community to end it. We conducted awareness raising sessions to inform the general community, and we had some strategies to make sure that we end this practice in our society. This included making FGM a permanent item on the agenda of our local community development committee's meetings.[45]

As media professionals TAMWA members understand and work on the power of information and therefore uses their profession to campaign through the multimedia outlets. The organization's monitoring and evaluation framework maps changes on different micro and macro levels. In particular, at a community level and at a law enforcement level this framework allows effective follow-up investigative and public stories that emphasize an increasing social attitude against FGM and the legal banning of this practice.

Conclusion

We hope that both case studies provided an indicative overview of social change initiatives in Tanzania, based on communicative interfaces that reconfigure traditional and rigid intergroup boundaries. They advocate for two of the most vulnerable groups in Tanzania, young people with disabilities and young girls. At the same time, enabling equitable opportunities for these groups can significantly contribute to the country's overall social, economic, and political wellbeing. Both initiatives are work-in-progress with existing interfaces being either reconfigured, replaced or abandoned, and new interfaces emerging. Communicative interfaces that connect different groups cannot remain rigid, since they may reinforce traditional, or generate new, intergroup boundaries. This transience reflects the fast pace of societal, technological, and infrastructural developments, and is thus paramount to achieving sustainable, yet variable change, to marginalized communities. Our proposed conceptual framework is supposed to be tentative and flexible to cater for the pragmatic conceptualization, as well as the analytical study of advocacy campaigns that can be deployed in a variety of contexts beyond age, disability, and gender.

45 https://tamwa.org/a/images/pdf/Zero%20Tolerance%20to%20FGM%20National%20Forum%202015.pdf

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2. ADVOCACY COMMUNICATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING POLICY CHANGE IN A GATES FOUNDATION FUNDED PROGRAM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA – THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR ADVOCACY IN CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH 2015-2023

JUDITH-ANN WALKER, STANLEY UKPAI, HASSAN ALIYU KAROFI, AND KAREEM ABDULRASAQ

The Story

In 2012, Nigeria joined the global maternal health community in London where family planning programs were recognized as the catalytic factor for reducing high rates of maternal mortality in Africa and other developing countries. Nigeria's participation in the 2012 London Summit spurred Federal and State Governments to roll out a new generation of maternal mortality reduction interventions across the country in the post-Summit days. In Muslim-majority states in Northern Nigeria, where Muslim clerics often spoke out against family planning, state governments chose not to implement family planning programs but to expand or introduce free maternal health services programs. Despite the evidence from the Summit that modern contraceptives save women's lives, state governments in Northern Nigeria stayed away from prioritizing and funding family planning programs. In the three years between 2012 and 2015, health budgets of Northern Nigerian states such as Kano and Kaduna states saw significant allocations to free maternal health services programs within budget lines broadly called - maternal, neonatal, and child health programs. Donors, the media, and researchers alike applauded Northern initiatives as consistent with cultural context and an effective strategy for encouraging women to give birth in hospitals for safe and free delivery.[1] The fact that almost all free maternal health programs failed to incorporate family planning components led many maternal health providers to quietly observe that these free programs were inadvertently driving up birth rates as facility delivery became cheaper, as husbands transferred costs to the state and the high unmet need for more children in the zone could now be satisfied. Against this background, what was required, urgently, was a policy advocacy communication intervention to steer governments' funding away from free maternal health into family planning. In an environment where conservative Islamic scholars identify and call out civil society organizations (CSOs) advocating for health interventions such as family planning, which CSO would dare enter this space to advocate for a policy shift? What advocacy communication strategy would they or should they use? Who should they target? Who will bell the cat?

1 Doctor, Henry V., Sally E. Findley, Alastair Ager, Giorgio Cometto, Godwin Y. Afenyadu, Fatima Adamu, and Cathy Green, 'Using community-based research to shape the design and delivery of maternal health services in Northern Nigeria', *Reproductive health matters* 20, no. 39 (2012).

Roll out of the PACFaH Program

The Partnership for Advocacy in Child and Family Health (PACFaH) rolled out in 2015 in two of Northern Nigeria's largest Muslim-majority states, Kaduna and Kano states. PACFaH rolled out as the first of its kind public health advocacy communication program with specific goals designed to stir up reflection on current maternal health policies and catalyze change towards family planning in the socially conservative zone. PACFaH (2015-2017) and its successor program, Partnership for Advocacy in Child, and Family Health at Scale (PAS), (2017-2022), aimed to challenge the unwritten donor health communication rule for the North – never address family planning directly; rather, come to FP by supporting state governments numerous free maternal health policies and programs.

The policy environment of 2015 was one where both Kaduna and Kano state governments proudly touted their home-grown free maternal health programs as the answer to the states' high and growing maternal mortality rates. Not only were these states' policies blind to family planning they also failed to recognize conclusive evidence linking the use of modern family planning commodities such as injectables and the pill to the reduction of maternal death rates.

Official data from Nigeria's Demographic Health Survey data collected in 2013, just two years before PACFaH showed that for every 100,000 live births in Kano State, 1,600 women died, resulting in a maternal mortality ratio (MMR) of 1,600. In Kaduna state, for every 100,000 live births, 1,025 women died giving birth, resulting in a maternal mortality ratio of 1,025. To put this figure into perspective, this was three times Nigeria's national average of 567 as of 2013 and more than 3 times the 305 MMR in Ghana, and twice the ratio in Kenya.

As of 2013, Kaduna and Kano states were amongst the poorest states in Nigeria, with most of the population living in multidimensional poverty. In a report published in 2012, 72% of Kano's 11 million population lived below the poverty line and in Kaduna, 73% of the state's 7 million population lived below the poverty line.[2,3] Kano and Kaduna states did not compare well to the national average of 69%. Both states were also agrarian with traditional social structures characterized by male domination, female exclusion, and early marriage. The political system of the two states was also shaped and structured by conservative gender norms with men dominating appointive and elective positions in government.

Not surprisingly, donors in the public health space responded to the conservative health policy ecosystem of Kaduna and Kano states by quickly aligning with the free maternal health policies and programs; by providing technical and financial support for maternal and neonatal

2 National Bureau of Statistics, 'The Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 Report' *Press Briefing by the Statistician-General of the Federation/Chief Executive Officer, National Bureau of Statistics, Dr. Yemi Kale,* 13 February 2012, https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-poverty-profile-2010-report.

3 National Bureau of Statistics, 'National Population Estimates', 2006, https://www.bing.com/search?q=National+Population+Estimates+(Kindly+note+that+estimates+are+based+on+population+census+conducted+in+2006+by+the+National+Population+Commission&cvid=a2ce1cf72ab74efea3944ad27a7bebec&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBBzI0MWowajmoAgCwAgA&FORM=ANAB01&PC=U531.

health; and by positioning accountability civil society organizations to track safe motherhood commitments by governments. Communication strategies of donor-funded advocacy civil society groups in the pre-2015 period focused on the analysis of maternal, neonatal, and child health lines in annual budgets without reference to family planning in the budget line. The MacArthur Foundation funding many CSO-led policy advocacy communication projects in Northern Nigeria supported advocates and accountability CSOs with a narrow focus on maternal health budget and clinical activities as explained below:

Community Health and Research Initiative has conducted two analytical projects in the Kano Bauchi, and Sokoto states of northern Nigeria where maternal mortality rates are high (>1000 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births). The first entails an analysis of state level budgets to compare allocations to health in relation to other development sectors. The findings show that the health budget in Kano is less than those of the Ministries of Education and Agriculture. It is also below the 15% commitment made by African governments in the regional Abuja Health Declaration. A second project, the National Midwifery Service Scheme (MSS) Budget Analysis in Kano, compared financial commitments made by different levels of government to actual monthly allowances for midwives. Information is being gathered through interviews with midwives to understand if they received the money and, if so, where it came from. This project also includes a comparison of budget allocations and service provision within health facilities where MSS is being implemented. Both activities are aimed at promoting efficient and transparent use of the limited amount of existing funds according to regulations under the new Free Maternal and Child Health Policy.[4]

The winds of change began to blow against free maternal health and towards a new FP landscape after the 2012 London FP Summit when, for the first time, the Federal Ministry of Health developed a Costed Implementation Plan for the National Family Planning Blueprint in 2014.[5] The FP Blueprint was Nigeria's official road map and funding template for investing in FP. This document called for states such as Kaduna and Kano to directly estimate and forecast the costs of family planning services and programs. By 2015, Kaduna and Kano States both introduced a direct family planning program funding structure. The 2014 FP Blueprint sought to provide a high-level reference point with Federal government backing for a new push for family planning service delivery. The Blueprint also called for a strong advocacy communication component but limited advocates to 'policymakers, advocacy experts, donors, and ministry officials to reflect on what is working and what is not and to correct the latter as appropriate while also documenting best practices. . . .to facilitate learning and build advocacy and support'.[6] While the Blueprint recognized the role of donor-funded data tracking projects such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) funded Track 2020 providing evidence for advocacy communication, there was no mention of an advocacy communications role for Nigerian CSOs.

4 Semillas, 'Accountability in Maternal and Reproductive Health: Experiences from Civil Society from India, Mexico, and Nigeria', 2012, https://www.macfound.org/media/files/accountability_in_maternal_and_reproductive_health-final_report.pdf.%20.

5 Federal Ministry of Health, 'Nigeria Family Planning Blueprint (Scale-Up Plan)', October, 2014, https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/ns/docs/CIP_Nigeria.pdf.

6 Federal Ministry of Health, 'Nigeria Family Planning Blueprint (Scale-Up Plan)', October, 2014, https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/ns/docs/CIP_Nigeria.pdf.

To address the missing voice of local CSO advocates pushing for an FP change agenda through advocacy communication, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which was already funding Track 2020 decided to invest in a new local FP policy advocacy initiative. Guided by participatory programming approaches, BMGF chose to implement this decision by engaging the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) in 2014 using co-creation principles to landscape the local CSO FP environment and to design the PACFaH project. BMGF, with a nascent Nigeria country program and recently opened Abuja office, drew from its evolving theory of influence (ToI) to make a foundational impact investment in the new policy direction to prioritize FP to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity through local CSO advocacy.

PACFaH, therefore rolled out in 2015 to advance FP funding and prioritization in the health space in Kano and Kaduna states. The program aimed to do so by communicating evidence-driven advocacy messages targeted at strategic decision-makers to catalyze them to provide adequate and optimum funding for FP through dedicated budgetary lines. Another objective of PACFaH was to prompt policymakers to release FP funds allocated in the annual budgets in a timely and complete manner. PACFaH was therefore designed to confront the elephant in the room by linking maternal health to family planning, not to free maternal health services.

For PACFaH, the advocacy issue of the day was the low status and indeed, de-prioritization of FP by state governments mainly committed to safe motherhood through free maternal health programs. As a new policy advocacy program, the dRPC mirrored the co-creation participatory model of BMGF by working with Nigerian community development specialists to identify legitimate and influential local organizations; developing messages through open space meetings; and building the most effective communication strategy for advocacy. PACFaH was intentionally designed with a localization focus where all technical advocacy steps especially message development were expected to be co-created expression of local CSO's commitment to the change agenda. For PACFaH, the process of local CSO participation was as important as the FP change outcome. The dRPC's implementation of the localization component revolved around strengthening the capacity of local Kano and Kaduna CSOs and CSO networks to carry out all seven key activities along the policy advocacy communication cycle: 1) defining the advocacy issue and problem by mobilizing evidence on the impact of poor FP funding and releases on maternal health; 2) mobilizing constituencies for action; 3) identifying advocacy targets, influentials, and audiences; 3) framing advocacy messages; 4) developing a communication plan, strategy, and channels of communication; 5) engaging the opposition; 6) conducting advocacy events to deliver the desired policy change; and 7) monitoring and evaluation. Over the 8 years of PACFaH (2015-2017) and the follow-on PAS program (2017-2022), 26 local groups in Kano and Kaduna states were directly engaged, trained, mentored, and supported by the dRPC to deliver the FP change of the programs. These groups, in turn, worked with, trained, and mobilized for advocacy, over 30 additional CSO partners.

Despite adopting localization approaches it is important to note that PACFaH and PAS took their point of departure from Western models in the advocacy communication literature. This literature argues that the starting point of any successful advocacy communication strategy or event is the clear identification and specificity of - the advocacy issue, in this case - FP. This is expressed in numerous manuals and guidelines in the Western literature. An example is quoted below:

The first stage is the identification of an issue for policy action. This stage is also referred to as agenda setting. There are an unlimited number of problems which need attention, but not all can get a place on the action agenda. Advocates decide which problem to address and attempt to get the target institution to recognize that the problem needs action.[7]

While the pre-2015 maternal health advocacy focused on a broad issue area of maternal, neonatal, and child health under the safe motherhood banner, the post-2015 focus on FP was specific. Moreover, the advocacy demand for adequate funding, separate budget lines for FP, and timely and full releases drilled down even further into the bedrock of specificity. While it must be noted that PACFaH and PAS did focus on other advocacy issue areas: routine immunization; nutrition; and primary health care under one roof, both programs were designed such that each issue area was separate, with separate indicators, outputs, primary and intermediate outcomes; separate implementation teams; and CSO implementation team leads.

Tackling the Objective

Given that PACFaH started by zeroing in and identifying FP as the specific advocacy issue and given the localization approach of this project, how did PACFaH adapt and learn from the African reality of Kaduna and Kano states in framing advocacy communicating messages to catalyze change? This is the key objective tackled in this story.

To answer this question, it is first important to define some key terms here. Firstly, policy advocacy is a strategic process of influencing policymakers in government to make decisions leading to policy change implemented with public finance or financial guidance through the executive arm of government. Advocacy for budgetary allocation through the public finance system is, therefore, an essential component of the policy advocacy-making process. Secondly, advocacy events are tactical and crafted occasions designed to drive advocacy targets to commit to policy change through education and information sharing, attitude change, exposure to best practices, and recommendations delivered by advocates and supported by influentials. Examples of advocacy events include visits, dialogues, budget hearings, roundtables, meetings, and media exposures.

Thirdly, advocacy communication is the process of planned and strategic dissemination of messages designed to move decision-makers to act through the selection and use of commu-

7 Sharma, R. R., 'An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide', 2017, https://www.ngoconnect.net/sites/default/files/resources/An%20Introduction%20to%20Advocacy%20-%20Training%20Guide.pdf.

nication channels (formal and non-formal) targeted at different audiences of decision-makers. Advocacy communication translates advocacy change goals into compelling messages backed up by evidence that prompt policymakers to act. Fourthly, advocacy channels of communication can be formal or non-formal; public or private; direct or indirect; singularly directed or reinforced by echo chambers; and can be in-person or virtual.

To answer the question as it relates to PACFaH and PAS, we did two things. Firstly, we reviewed all program records related to program reports; annual submissions to the funder of PACFaH and PAS; the end of program (EoP) evaluation of PACaH; and the pause and reflection report PAS, the responsive feedback mechanism report of the M&C Saatchi facilitated process. Secondly, we did an in-depth analysis by conducting key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), with the CSOs and CSO networks which led advocacies for 5 years of PAS. We also consulted with advocacy targets including Commissioners and Directors in both states. Finally, the dRPC program administrators were also interviewed and participated in FGDs. All FGDs consisted of 5 to 7 key informants of the same demographic. In total 21 FGDs and 19 interviews were conducted. KIIs and FGDs were conducted using structured data collection tools which were analysed using Epi-info statistical software. Table 1 summarizes the in-depth data collection for the PAS years.

The question of how the program adapted and learned from the African programming reality in framing advocacy communicating messages to policy advocacy targets is addressed by exploring how the project built an indigenous African advocacy communication model; the advocacy targets' perceptions and responsiveness to the strategy; and the impact of the advocacy communication model in saving women's lives. These questions are only explored for the PAS period of the project, 2017-2022.

Building an African Advocacy Communication Strategy

In the first four months of the PAS program, the dRPC designed and took the local CSOs and CSO networks in Kaduna and Kano states through a CSO strengthening and capacity building program, the objectives of which were:

1. to increase the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes of participating CSOs on advocacy communication in child and family health; and
2. to develop the PAS program's customized advocacy communication model.

Three members of each of the 7 FP CSOs and CSO networks in Kano and Kaduna states were taken through a series of iterative workshop trainings to achieve these objectives. At the end of the four-month inception phase, representatives of the CSOs/CSO networks reported new skills and knowledge on: the advocacy cycle; the role of communications in advocacy; the concept of evidence-driven advocacy; the ability to identify advocacy targets; and to framing of effective messages. An advocacy communication model was also developed and approved.

The participatory approach to the inception workshop used by the dRPC facilitated a process of adaptation, learning, and infusion of localized knowledge. At the end of the inception period,

the PAS FP CSOs effected significant tweaks to the classical Western advocacy communications model based on the program's environment. While the model was later reviewed, updated, and finetuned in two pause and reflection program meetings in 2019 and 2021, the core of the model remained unchanged. This is captured in Table 2.

This model guided the PAS CSOs as they worked together to formulate and communicate advocacy messages in advocacy events. Tables 3 and 4, summarize advocacy messages delivered at advocacy events (numbers of events are counted), by advocacy target, and channel of communication for both Kaduna and Kano states. The limitation of these tables is that they do not capture the number of advocacy targets reached in each advocacy event. The number of reaches has been difficult to tally as numbers varied widely from as low as 9 members of government delegations met, to as many as 150 officials interacted with, during government-convened budget hearings where PAS CSOs made presentations.

These two tables show that face-to-face advocacy events were the choice channel for communicating advocacy messages for the PAS program. PAS CSO advocates explained this choice during interviews for this study, by saying that they took the decision to meet, greet, and engage advocacy targets face-to-face as a sign of respect. They explained further, that in the African culture, seeing an official, greeting, and interacting in person before making a request was more respectful than just throwing statements at them in the public media. While public channels were also used in PAS, they were mainly deployed to reach potential supporters and inform the media of commitments secured at the end of advocacies. However, by February 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, with restricted access to government officials, PAS advocacy messaging shifted to digital advocacy with webinars, radio shows, and open letter writings as the most appropriate and effective communication strategy to reach advocacy targets.

How Did We Do? Advocacy Targets' Views on the PAS Advocacy Communication Model

How effective were the advocacy communication messages of the PAS CSOs? What did the advocacy targets have to say about the customized messages, communicated over the life of the program? How different was the PAS approach, how African, and did the PAS CSO advocates prompt the government advocacy targets to act? These were the questions put to the 10 government advocacy targets interviewed and the additional 45 government advocacy targets in 9 FGDs conducted. What we found was that overall, government advocacy targets had very positive views of the PAS advocacy communication model. Of the 10 advocacy targets interviewed, 5 in Kaduna and 5 in Kano, all rated PAS advocacy messages very effective. Words such as 'informative', 'enlightening', 'relevant', and 'strong' were used to describe PAS messaging. In addition to positive feedback on the messages of PAS, government officials interviewed had good things to say about the PAS messengers, the local advocates. One respondent, a former Commissioner had this to say:

I think the local groups are important because they provide context when conducting advocacies and they are also people that are in the community, so their observations are a little bit

more realistic and nuanced than foreign donors. Even though the foreign donors have their staff who are the same as Nigerians, they have their own goals and what they want to achieve so even though there is context there is also the framework within which they want to make a difference. So, the locals seem to be better as advocates.[8]

Officials also shared the feedback that the power of the PAS CSOs' advocacy messages was enhanced by the implementation of supportive roles that the PAS CSOs also played in the program, providing technical assistance and conducting field research for government officials. One Director of Public Health, in Kaduna state had this to say:

I recollect some of the issues PAS raised during the advocacy visit….I can recall in Kunchi local government you were even able to go to the facility to assess infrastructure and training of staff. I also remember that we had a lot of out-of-stock at that time that needed state intervention for more funding of FP services. With your support, the allocation improved to about N200M from N20M which was a great achievement for PAS.

PAS Kano CSOs' feedback aligned with this director's observation when they said that: 'one of the strategies we used was embedding ourselves into the technical working groups (TWGs) on family planning. I remember when one of us made a presentation on …. the outcome of that FP research we did, thereafter a lot of government people gave us a lot of support…. Even allies like Options were seeing the importance of that analysis and told us so'.[9] This finding suggests that while the power of the message is important for advocacy communication, other supportive roles enhance acceptance of messaging. This may well be because CSO advocates were not only making demands but were providing support in a resource-constrained African programming environment.

What Did We Do? Did PAS Advocacy Communication Lead to Increased Allocation and Releases of FP in Kano and Kaduna States?

As the leading FP advocacy communication program in Kano state between 2017-2022 advocating for increased budgetary allocation for FP and conducting over 170 advocacy events, the evidence in tables 3 and 4 below suggests that PAS advocacy was successful. From a modest N10,000,000.00 allocation in 2015 in Kano state, and zero releases of funds between 2015 to 2017, to a big 107% release in 2018, PAS succeeded in catalyzing the government to act in Kano state. Kano state government officials interviewed attributed the consistent allocation and release of funds for FP to PAS CSO advocacy.

In Kaduna state, the situation was different and more complex. While Kaduna state allocated more funds to FP than Kano, especially between 2017 and 2019, only 8% of funds were released in 2019 compared to 72% of funds released by Kano state in the same year. By 2021 FP had virtually disappeared from the policy landscape in Kaduna state as FP was

8 Interview with a Former Commissioner of Health, Kaduna state, December 2023, Nigeria
9 FGD Transcription of Kano State PAS CSOs, December 2023

no longer a specific policy issue, nor was there a specific budget line for FP. Rather, FP was integrated into a basket of funds called Procurement of Health Commodities & Consumables for Integrated PHC Services.

Even though PAS CSOs in Kaduna conducted more advocacy events than in Kano state and advocacy messages called for dedicated lines for FP, the government refused to focus on FP as a specific issue. Officials from Kaduna state explained the decision not to treat FP as a dedicated issue and to return to the pre-2015 situation where FP was integrated into a basket of PHC health services by explaining that integration hid FP from opponents. A former Commissioner of Health, Kaduna state put it this way:

I am a great believer in integrating services. There is stigma and pushback if you keep putting FP as a stand-alone. If you keep wanting it to stand alone, you find out some people wouldn't access it, but if you put it as part of the reproductive or maternal health package, then people who want the services will access it since it is not open. However, if you want to do a family planning clinic directly, it becomes a deterrent for some people, and many women will not be free to access it.[10]

Another reason given by a Director of PHC, Kaduna State, was that integration improved the coordination and effectiveness of development planning in the budget process. In his words: 'The integrated system aims to strengthen the coordination and harmonization of development plans, policies, and budgets across different levels of government and sectors. Despite the initial challenges posed by the system, the Kaduna state government remains committed to providing all essential services, including family planning, to its citizens'.[11] It was therefore not surprising to find that in Kaduna state where FP was merged into a basket of services including routine immunization and other services that the annual budgets made little mention of FP and even maternal health. In contrast, the annual budgets of Kano state raised, discussed, and budgeted for FP as a component of maternal health. Table 7 captures these differences.

What Was the Impact of our Advocacy Communication? Did Increased Expenditure Lead to Increased Uptake of Modern Contraceptives and Reduced Maternal Deaths?

The ultimate purpose of public health advocacy communication is to move the government to make decisions, the benefits of which should be traced to public health indicators or metrics in the health facilities and communities. In this case, the evidence that government action benefits women are the indicators - increased uptake of modern contraceptives prevalence rates; and of course, reduction in the maternal death rates. Tables 8 and 9 present the evidence.

Taken together, tables 8 and 9 show that Kano state performed better than Kaduna state on the two indicators. Starting from a low contraceptive prevalence rate of 5.7% in 2016, the

10 Interview with Former Commissioner of Health, Kaduna State, November 2023
11 Interview with the ED, PHC Board, Kaduna state, November 2023.

year before the PAS project rolled out, Kano state more than doubled the CPR by 2021. When compared to Kaduna state which had an already high CRP of 21.9% in 2016, we see a fall of 2.8% by 20121 when the CPR fell to 19.1%. Similarly, while Kaduna state had a MMR of 172, in 2016, the year before PAS rolled out, by 2022 this figure increased by 66% to 286. This means that more women were dying in Kaduna state. While in Kano state, the bassline figure for 2016, was 375 but increased only slightly, by 1.7% to 381.6 in 2022.

Conclusions

What does the PAS story of advocacy communication for family planning funding in two Northern Nigerian states tell us about advocacy communication in the African context? To answer this question, it is important to see how the findings line up. Findings point to a pattern in Kano state where the government consistently allocated funds to FP against a dedicated budget line. Findings also point to PAS CSO's track record of making advocacy messages focused on the FP line. With funding consistently allocated and released in Kano state, findings also showed increased usage of modern contraceptives; and while maternal death rates did not fall in the PAS years, they did not increase significantly. In the case of Kaduna state, findings point to an alternative reality where government allocation was not backed up by releases, where the government failed to allocate funds against a dedicated FP line. While PAS CSOs advocated for dedicated lines, timely releases, and cash backing, Kaduna state refused to depart from the integrated basket public finance system. This was associated with falling CRPs and a 66% increase in maternal death rates.

This lineup of findings supports the priority given to single-issue advocacy in the Western literature. Kano state prioritized and remained focused on FP as a dedicated issue. This enabled PAS CSOs in the state to focus consistently and coherently on budget-facing advocacy messages around which CSOs innovated and built-in flexible messages. These flexible messages interchanged the word FP with child spacing and healthy timing when communicating to different audiences. Overall, the PAS CSO's innovative approach in both states, allowed them to delink FP as an advocacy issue from a policy problem. This goes against the Western literature which suggests that the two should be linked. PAS advocacy CSOs delivered strategic communication messages about FP without arguing against the free maternal health policies and with only tactical reference to the new primary health care under one roof policy. What this tells us is that the PAS program experience in both Kaduna and Kano states points to the effectiveness of a flexible, innovative, and locally-led advocacy communication approach.

The advocacy communication experience of Kaduna PAS CSOs both aligns with and presents challenges to the Western advocacy communication literature. Aligns, because failure to focus on FP as – the advocacy issue – resulted in sub-optimal funding and ultimately poor maternal health outcomes for women of the state. Thus, suggesting the greater the specificity of the advocacy issue the more targeted and successful advocacy communication. Where the Kaduna state experience challenges Western discourses on advocacy communication is that it shows that for communication to be successful it should be more focused on messaging and communication on how to effect change rather than what policy change, we want to see. The Kaduna PAS CSO's messaging, and communication was largely on the **what** – adequate fund-

ing for FP, allocated and released through a dedicated line. The question of **how** to achieve this had more to do with messaging and education communication around the benefits of single-issue versus integrated funding. While the CSOs did address how issues, this was not the focus of their advocacy messaging, especially, given the Kaduna government's strong and almost ideological stance against single-issue vertical programming. The issue was raised but not pushed. What this tells us is that advocacy communication in the African context should include an expanded component to educate government about key administrative principles of how to implement policy change. This story shows that while CSOs' advocacy communication on what policy change needs to be effected is often not controversial when engaging government in Africa, how change is to be done emerges as a worrying issue. This is because **how** questions challenge the way of doing business in government. Addressing this hurdle to policy change may well require a deeper engagement role for local CSOs to catalyze administrative systems change for effective policy implementation. New investment outcomes in communication projects on equipping government with skills and knowledge of best practices in change management may also be required.

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Appendices

Table 1: Summary of FGDs and Interviews

Key stakeholders	Kaduna	Kaduna	Kano	Kano
	FGDs	Interviews	FGDs	Interviews
Advocacy targets	4	5	5	5
CSO & CSO networks	4	2	3	3
dRPC PAS program managers	2	2	3	2
Total	10	9	11	10

Table 2: The Western and Adapted Pas Advocacy Communication Models

Stages in the advocacy and communication cycle	The Classical Western Model	The PAS adapted advocacy communication Model
Advocacy issue identification	The starting point of the advocacy cycle is a specific policy issue, linked to a policy problem.[12]	PAS CSOs identified FP as THE POLICY ISSUE but agreed to call it by another name for different audiences, alternative terms were child spacing, resting between births, and health timing.
Constituency mobilization	Important next step to create a broaden support base including the media for the advocacy effort.	Because of the sensitivity of the FP advocacy issue, PAS argued for the inclusion of a risk mitigation strategy to include education involving the use of different approaches and languages Provision must be made for some constituencies such as the media to speak in their own voices and conduct their own advocacy. PAS will provide data; not funding.

12 Katri Bertram and Madhukar Pai. 'Single-Issue Advocacy in Global Health: Possibilities and Perils., *PLOS Global Public Health,* 3(9), (2023), https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgph.0002368.

Stages in the advocacy and communication cycle	The Classical Western Model	The PAS adapted advocacy communication Model
Evidence generation	Technical data must be generated on the policy issue and policy problem.[13],[14]	The PAS team endorsed data collection but primarily on the state health's and FP and budget performance; no policy-facing data inferences were made, and advocacy will be about budgets & funding; not policy.
Message development & delivery	Messages must make clear demands based on evidences about what needs to be done to address the policy problem.[15]	Messages were pleas, not demand-focused. Messages also ended with undertakings to support government in implementing advocacy recommendations.
Messengers	Select messengers based on the capability to communicate technical content in message.[16]	PAS CSOs agreed that it was not the technical ability to deliver data in messages as criteria for inclusion in the advocacy team, rather the bigger the team the more legitimate.
Advocacy target identification	Identification of targets holding direct power and formal authority.[17]	PAS agreed to target duty bearers but recognized that some influencers such as Governor's wives also have nonformal authority and must be targeted.

13 Eóin Young and Lisa Quinn. *Making Research Evidence Matter: A Guide to Policy Advocacy in Transition Countries. Open Society Foundations* (2012), https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/icpabook.local/files/Policy_Advocacy_Guidebook_2012.pdf.

14 Jennifer L. David, Samantha L. Thomas, Melanie Randle, Mike Daube. 'A Public Health Advocacy Approach for Preventing and Reducing Gambling Related Harm', *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (2019), https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1753-6405.12949.

15 Eóin Young and Lisa Quinn. *Making Research Evidence Matter: A Guide to Policy Advocacy in Transition Countries. Open Society Foundations* (2012), https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/sites/icpabook.local/files/Policy_Advocacy_Guidebook_2012.pdf.

16 World Health Organization. *WHO Strategic Communication Framework for Effective Communications* (2017), https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/documents/communicating-for-health/communication-framework.pdf.

17 Patchanee Malikhao. *Health Communication: Approaches, Strategies, and Ways to Sustainability on Health or Health for All. Handbook of Communication for Development and Social Change*, (2020), https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7278262/.

Stages in the advocacy and communication cycle	The Classical Western Model	The PAS adapted advocacy communication Model
Communication channel selection	Exploit the range of communication channels available, making sure that channels align with audiences.[18]	While PAS recognized a range of channels, an in-person face-to-face channel was adopted as the preferable channel to show respect for duty bearers and avoid misrepresentation by echo-chambers who may capture advocacy statements as political opposition.
Opposition identification and engagement strategy	Develop a strategy to address the opposition and roll it out as a risk mitigation strategy after advocacy engagements start.[19]	Because of the sensitive nature of FP in Northern Nigeria, engaging the opposition must be done at the beginning of the advocacy cycle and at all stages of the cycle.
Monitoring and evaluation	M&E to determine successful advocacy outcomes.[20]	PAS CSOs agreed to conduct M&E of advocacy outcomes but also felt that M&E for learning about their effectives as advocates, as CSOs and as a coalition was equally important.

18 Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao. 'Advocacy strategies for health communication', *Public Relations Review,* 36, 42-49. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.08.017 (2010), https://dfweawn6ylvgz.cloudfront.net/uploads/2021/06/Media-Advocacy-Action-Guide-2021.pdf.

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Table 3: Advocacy Messages by Number of Advocacy Events, by Advocacy Target and Communication Channel – Kano State 2017-2022

Year	Budget Allocation FP/CBS	% of FP Budget to Health Capital Budget	Actual Releases	% FP allocation to FP Budget Releases	% FP Releases to Heath Capital Releases
2015	10,000,000	0.17%	Nil	0%	-
2016	10,000,000	0.07%	Nil	0%	-
2017	15,000,000	0.16%	Nil	0%	-
2018	15,000,000	0.09%	31,141,332	107%%	1.48%
2019	182,817,350	1.20%	131,123,150	72%	10.56
2020	20,000,000	0.16%	Nil	0%	0%
2021	10,000,000	0.06%	10,000,000	100%	0.19%
2022	180,000,000	0.95%	100,000,000	55.55%	6.03%
Total	442,817,350	0.46%	272,264,482	61.48%	1.71%
Average allocation in 8 Years: 55,352,168.75					

Source: Compiled and computed from Kano State Appropriation Laws and Budget Implementation Report, 2015-2022

Table 5: FP Budget Performance Trends – Kano State 2015-2022

Year	Budget Allocation FP/CBS	% of FP/CBS Budget to Health Capital Budget	Actual Releases	% FP/CBS Allocation to FP/CBS Budget Releases	Funds Allocated for Integrated MNCH Budget Line Which Also Includes FP	Funds Released Under the Integrated Line
2015	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
2016	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
2017	100,238,000	0.96%	Nil	0%	-	-
2018	75,228,654	0.43%	75,228,654	100%	-	-
2019	147,644,200	1.12%	12,000,000	8.13	-	-
2020	12,250,000	0.05%	9,574,400	78.16%	-	-
2021	21,247,184	0.08%	Nil	0%	Procurement of Health Commodities & Consumables for Integrated PHC Services N503,539,200.00	N250,000,000.00
2022	7,609,536	0.03%	Nil	0%	Procurement of Health Commodities & Consumables for Integrated PHC Services N503,539,200.00	N250,000,000.00
Total	364,217,574	0.27%	96,803,054	26.58%	-	50% release
Average: 45,527,196.75						

Source: Compiled and computed from Kano State Appropriation Laws and Budget Implementation Report, 2015-2022

Table 6: FP Budget Performance Trends – Kaduna State 2015-2022

Year	Budget Allocation FP/CBS	% of FP/CBS Budget to Health Capital Budget	Actual Releases	% FP/CBS Allocation to FP/CBS Budget Releases	Funds Allocated for Integrated MNCH Budget Line Which Also Includes FP	Funds Released Under the Integrated Line
2015	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
2016	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
2017	100,238,000	0.96%	Nil	0%	-	-
2018	75,228,654	0.43%	75,228,654	100%	-	-
2019	147,644,200	1.12%	12,000,000	8.13	-	-
2020	12,250,000	0.05%	9,574,400	78.16%	-	-
2021	21,247,184	0.08%	Nil	0%	Procurement of Health Commodities & Consumables for Integrated PHC Services N503,539,200.00	N250,000,000.00
2022	7,609,536	0.03%	Nil	0%	Procurement of Health Commodities & Consumables for Integrated PHC Services N503,539,200.00	N250,000,000.00
Total	364,217,574	0.27%	96,803,054	26.58%	-	50% release
Average: 45,527,196.75						

Source: Compiled and computed from Kaduna State Appropriation Laws 2017-2022

Table 7: Number of Times the Words 'Family Planning,' 'family Planning Commodities,' and 'Maternal Health' are Mentioned in the Kaduna and Kano States Appropriation Laws

Year	Kaduna	Kaduna	Kaduna	Kaduna	Kano	Kano	Kano	Kano
	Family Planning	Family Planning Commodities	Maternal Health	Total	FP/CBS	Family Planning Commodities	Maternal Health	Total
2013	0	0	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014	0	0	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015	0	0	3	3	0	0	2	2
2016	0	0	3	3	0	0	6	6
2017	0	1	6	7	0	1	2	3
2018	0	1	7	8	0	0	8	8
2019	1	1	6	7	0	0	7	7
2020	2	0	2	4	2	0	8	9
2021	1	0	2	3	1	0	8	9
2022	1	0	2	3	2	1	8	12
	5	3	35	43	5	2	49	57

Source: Compiled from various Kano and Kaduna States' Appropriation Laws 2013-2022

Table 8: Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate in Kano and Kaduna States Between 2011-2021

State	MICS 2011	MICS 2016/17	MICS 2021
Kaduna State	8.4%	21.9%	19.1%
Kano State	0.7%	5.7%	13.7%

Source: MICS 2011-2021

Table 9: Maternal Mortality Rates Per 100,000 Live Births for Kaduna and Kano States From 2015-2022

States	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Kaduna	222.9	171.9	165.2	183.7	95.0	94.1	402.0	286.0
Kano	621.1	375.1	262.2	256.2	500.0	508.7	436.7	381.6

Source: https://dhis2nigeria.org.ng, the National Health Management Information System (DHIS2), Federal Ministry of Health

3. COMMUNICATION MATTERS: INVESTIGATING THE TENSION BETWEEN HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS DURING DISEASE OUTBREAKS IN MALAWI

FLEMMINGS FISHANI NGWIRA, KINGS FERRELS KONDOWE, MARY KAMWAZA AND ANDREW CHIMPOLOLO

Introduction

Violence and attacks against healthcare workers have emerged as a major area of concern during pandemics.[1] During pandemics, mistrust, misinformation, misconception, and the extensive and prolonged disruptions of social, religious, and cultural norms throughout the period have often fueled the attacks.[2] Healthcare workers are the backbone of healthcare systems and as such, they are the front-line officers during pandemics. As these front-line staff members are tasked with saving lives, managing patients and dead bodies during infectious disease outbreaks remains a challenge. They more often confront constant ethical challenges and threats that endanger their lives.[3] These challenges arise when they try to manage the contagion to ensure the safety of the living. Pandemics exacerbate the practical difficulties connected with proper and respectful handling of patients and dead bodies, and how these are handled can have important health implications and raise sociocultural and ethical dilemmas.[4]

Malawi has been rated one of the most dangerous countries for healthcare workers in terms of pandemic-related violence and attacks.[5] With evidence from local news, these violent attacks range from mere marching around the healthcare center,[6] attacking and hurting

1 Daniel Jacobi and Tobias Ide, "Collective Violence Against Health Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Nursing Reports* 13, no. 2 (14 June 2023): 902–12, https://doi.org/10.3390/nursrep13020079.

2 van Stekelenburg et al., "Attacks on Health Care Workers in Historical Pandemics and COVID-19."; Nuriddin et al., "Trust, Fear, Stigma and Disruptions: Community Perceptions and Experiences During Periods of Low but Ongoing Transmission of Ebola Virus Disease in Sierra Leone, 2015."; Jacobi and Ide, "Collective Violence Against Health Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic."

3 Rosibel Rodríguez-Bolaños et al., "The Urgent Need to Address Violence Against Health Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Medical Care* 58, no. 79 (11 June 2020): 663, https://doi.org/10.1097/mlr.0000000000001365.

4 Halina Suwalowska et al., "Ethical and Sociocultural Challenges in Managing Dead Bodies During Epidemics and Natural Disasters," *BMJ Global Health* 6, no. 11 (1 November 2021): e006345, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-006345.

5 Jacobi and Ide, "Collective Violence Against Health Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic."

6 Alinafe Gamaliel, 'Angry communities march on the health centre in Balaka because of cholera disagreements', *Face of Malawi,* January 23 2023, https://www.faceofmalawi.com/2023/01/23/angry-communities-marches-seal-health-centre-in-balaka/

healthcare workers,[7] attacking the ambulance,[8] and vandalizing healthcare facilities.[9] The attacks occurred due to disagreements on the decisions made by the government's public health containment sector in trying to manage the contagion, to ensure the safety of the living. Learning from other countries during outbreaks, governments' public health containment efforts have often been considered threatening, insensitive, or unhelpful to the local communities,[10] and communities have at times opposed government orders such as compulsory vaccination or quarantine which are meant to contain the disease.[11] According to Khan et al., the World Health Organization argues that about 8% to 38% of healthcare workers are exposed to physical violence at some point in their careers.[12]

Globally, infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, COVID-19 and Cholera claim thousands of lives causing a great deal of human suffering leading to severe and long-lasting consequences. How patients and bodies of the deceased are handled during these outbreaks sometimes raises some cultural and ethical dilemmas especially when healthcare workers try to balance the management of the contagion to ensure the safety of the living and the respect for the people and their cultural norms related to the caring of patients and the sacred obligations towards the dead. Several studies have revealed considerable levels of violent attacks against healthcare workers during pandemics.[13] For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 600 cases of violence were targeted at healthcare workers, patients, and medical infrastructure across 40 countries in Asia, the Americas, Africa, and the Near and Middle East regions as recorded by the International Committee of the Red Cross during the first six months of the pandemic.[14] In the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, a total of 483 attacks were recorded during Ebola outbreak (from the 1st of August, 2018 to the 25th of June, 2020) with 25 healthcare workers being killed in the process.[15]

7 Jonathan Pasungwi, 'Health workers attacked over suspected Covid-19 death', *Malawi News*, 16 June 2020, https://mwnation.com/health-workers-attacked-over-suspected-covid-19-death/

8 Robert Ngwira, 'Angry villagers attack Ambulance carrying remains of COVID-19 victim in Mchinji', *Face of Malawi,* 9 February 2021, https://www.faceofmalawi.com/2021/02/09/angry-villagers-attack-ambulance-carrying-remains-of-covid-19-victim-in-mchinji/

9 Cheka Ndege, 'Area 25 health centre Cholera site destroyed', *Radio Islam Malawi,* 7 February 2023, https://www.radioislam.org.mw/area-25-health-centre-cholera-site-destroyed/

10 Cohn Samuel, and Ruth Kutalek. "Historical Parallels, Ebola Virus Disease and Cholera: Understanding Community Distrust and Social Violence with Epidemics." *PLoS Currents Outbreaks 8* (26 January 2016), 10.1371/currents.outbreaks.aa1f2b60e8d43939b43fbd93e1a63a94

11 Eugenia Tognotti, "Lessons from the History of Quarantine, From Plague to Influenza A," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 19, no. 2 (1 February 2013): 254–59, https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1902.120312.

12 Muhammad Naseem Khan et al., "Prevalence and Determinants of Violence Against Health Care in the Metropolitan City of Peshawar: A Cross Sectional Study," *BMC Public Health* 21, no. 1 (10 February 2021), https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-10243-8.

13 van Stekelenburg et al., "Attacks on Health Care Workers in Historical Pandemics and COVID-19."; Devi, "COVID-19 Exacerbates Violence Against Health Workers."

14 Nanees Salah Eldeen Ghareeb, Dalia Abdallah El-Shafei, and Afaf M. Eladl, "Workplace Violence Among Healthcare Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic in a Jordanian Governmental Hospital: The Tip of the Iceberg," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 28, no. 43 (26 June 2021): 61441–49, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-021-15112-w.

15 Insecurity Insight, 'Attacks on Health Care During the 10th Ebola Response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', November 2020. Geneva, Switzerland: Insecurity Insight.

Literature reveals that, depending on different contexts, several factors influence the tension which results in attacks against healthcare workers during pandemics. Community distrust is one of the contributing factors to violence against healthcare workers. For instance, doctors at a hospital in Pakistan were verbally and physically attacked after a patient died of COVID-19; relatives shouted that COVID-19 was a hoax, suggesting that doctors were lying that the patient had died of COVID-19.[16] In a review paper by Jacobi and Ide,[17] opposition against public health measures, fears of infection, and supposed lack of care have also been found to be the most common reasons for the attacks. Mismanagement of the patients and dead bodies during the serial process of notification, storage, and burial, which is often done in a 'disrespectful' manner during pandemics, has also been found to be the critical reason for the attacks against healthcare workers.[18]

Factors influencing the community's attacks against healthcare workers reveal the fact that the attacks are just the 'tip of the iceberg' which suggests that many more contextual issues remain uncovered. It is from this background that we explored the controversial issues surrounding the attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities during pandemics. Violence against healthcare workers especially during pandemics is an important phenomenon to be studied. However, there is lack of comprehensive research to address the problem in Malawi. We aimed to assess the contributing factors influencing the community's attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities in areas around the health centers where the attacks against healthcare workers and vandalization of healthcare facilities happened during the COVID-19 and Cholera pandemics.

Methods

Our study used a cross-sectional design involving a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. In qualitative research design, a holistic picture of a phenomenon is developed after analyzing pictures, words or views of informants from a natural setting.[19] For this study, in-depth interviews were used to better understand the possible reasons behind the scuffle between the community and healthcare workers. A combination of data from the community members and healthcare workers increased the understanding of complex issues related to factors that influence the community's attacks against healthcare workers and on the facilities.

Study Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in all three regions of Malawi; the country has three political regions, namely, north, center and south. In each region, we purposively sampled villages and townships around the health centers where the attacks against healthcare workers and

16 Devi Sharmila, "COVID-19 Exacerbates Violence Against Health Workers." *The Lancet 396,* no. 10252 (1 September 2020): 658, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(20)31858-4.

17 Jacobi and Ide, "Collective Violence Against Health Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic."

18 Suwalowska et al., "Ethical and Sociocultural Challenges in Managing Dead Bodies During Epidemics and Natural Disasters."

19 John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications; 2007.

vandalization of healthcare facilities happened during the COVID-19 and Cholera pandemics. A total of seven villages and townships were sampled: Ndirande township in Blantyre District, Nadumo village in Balaka district, Area 25 township in Lilongwe district, Kayembe village in Mchinji district, Phangwa village in Nkhota-kota district, Wimbe village in Kasungu district and Luwinga township in Mzimba district. In these areas, we purposefully sampled and conducted in-depth interviews with 21 community members and 14 healthcare workers. Getting insights from both perspectives (community members and healthcare workers) is crucial in balancing the concerns of various stakeholders and coming up with a balanced solution to the problem. Cancedda and his colleagues highlight that literature on such tensions that includes perspectives from both the healthcare workers and the community is scanty.[20]

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

After a critical review of the research protocol, ethical approval was obtained from the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences research committee where the researchers work, and permissions to conduct a study were obtained from District Commissioners (DCs), Traditional Chiefs (TCs) and District Health Officers (DHOs) for the seven districts. Furthermore, oral informed consent was obtained from the participants themselves. Guided by literature and the research objectives, two separate semi-structured interview guides, one focusing on community members and the other on healthcare workers, were developed. The four researchers together with four trained research assistants went to the villages and townships to collect the data. Demographic characteristics of the participants were collected before proceeding to the content questions unearthing factors that influence violence against healthcare workers. All guides were developed in English and were translated into Chichewa (a local language) for the community members. To ensure consistency, the interview guides were back-translated into English by expert translators, and the final versions were used as data collection tools. The collected data was audio-recorded.

Data Analysis

The audio data from the community members' in-depth interviews were transcribed and translated into English. Data from the two sets, community members and healthcare workers, were entered into NVivo 12 Plus software for qualitative data coding and analysis. The study adopted a thematic analysis using a hybrid method, an approach that allowed researchers to incorporate both the deductive top-down process and the inductive, bottom-up process of theme identification. To generate rich interpretative analysis, one trained research assistant and one researcher analyzed the data beginning with an independent reading, coding, and categorizing themes from the transcripts.[21] After the individual work, a consensus-forming process was done to identify overarching themes within the data. A final set of themes was

20 Corrado Cancedda et al., "Strengthening Health Systems While Responding to a Health Crisis: Lessons Learned by a Nongovernmental Organization During the Ebola Virus Disease Epidemic in Sierra Leone," *The Journal of Infectious Diseases 214*, no. suppl 3 (28 September 2016): S153–63, https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiw345.

21 Andrew K. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects," *Education for Information 22*, no. 2 (19 July 2004): 63–75, https://doi.org/10.3233/efi-2004-22201.

identified after revising all the divergent themes. Data from the two perspectives (community members and healthcare workers) were analyzed in light of critical public health literature on the handling of patients and dead bodies during pandemics, community resistance to health issues and cultural influences on health.

Findings

A total sample of 35 (14 healthcare workers and 21 community members) participated in in-depth interviews that were conducted in Mzuzu (MZ), Kasungu (KU), Nkhotakota (KK), Mchinji (MC), Lilongwe (LL), Balaka (BK), and Blantyre (BT), where two healthcare workers {Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) or Health Promotion Officers (HPOs)} and three community members (CM) were interviewed from each district. Participants' responses to the in-depth interviews were categorized based on both, the priori and posteriori themes, the theory-driven and data-driven approaches respectively. The findings of the data were organized into four overarching themes, namely, i) ineffective communication, ii) lack of knowledge, iii) the breaking of the community's social order, and iv) negative effects of the attacks. These themes do co-exist and overlap to form the entirety of the phenomenon under study; they do not exist individually.

Ineffective Communication

Ineffective communication was found to greatly stoke the tension between the healthcare workers and the community members. Both healthcare workers and community members expressed that there was no effective communication when it comes to sharing information on the pandemic. On the community members' side, communication was one-way, where there was lack of inclusiveness and openness. This caused the tension between the community and healthcare workers. Consider the following sentiments from some community members:

> They don't involve us. That's why we always fight (laughs). (CM-02-KU)

> Most of the time they just tell us what to do. For example, like what happened here [Ndirande], the healthcare workers just told the family of the deceased that they would bury the deceased themselves, different from what the relatives had planned. This caused tension and led the community to destroy the healthcare facilities. (CM-03-BT)

Besides one-way communication, a lack of transparency from healthcare workers was also found to be prominent among community members and healthcare workers. Most of them voiced concerns that, during instances when one succumbed to or fell ill due to the pandemic, healthcare workers often failed to communicate the necessary procedures, and if they did, most of the information coming from healthcare workers was incomplete, which made them feel sidelined from the details surrounding the well-being of their loved ones. This caused them to resist whatever procedures that the healthcare workers had put in place one healthcare worker shared:

> I believe one of the problems lies in the lack of communication between healthcare workers and guardians. For instance, when a sick person is brought to the hospital for treatment, instead of the doctors taking the time to go out and meet with the guardians, explaining vividly the procedures they are going to take based on the patient's situation, they often neglect to do so. I think this lack of communication causes tension between the two parties. (HSA-01-LL).

Poor timing of communication from healthcare workers was also found to be prominent among community members. Most community members expressed concerns that they were communicated to when either their loved one had died or fallen sick due to the pandemic. This meant that they had to abruptly change some religious and social norms due to the new information that they got from healthcare workers. This abrupt change of some religious and social norms made the community angry and resist the procedure put in place by healthcare workers, which led to the tension. A healthcare worker and community member shared views on this:

> One of the challenges that I observed was when we tried to communicate with people who had already lost their loved ones. These individuals often fail to listen and understand the procedures that we try to convey to them because they are in a mourning period and their hearts are broken. (HSA-01-MC)

> I believe one of the issues lies in poor timing of communication between healthcare workers and guardians. For instance, when a sick person is brought to the hospital for treatment, instead of the doctors going out to meet with the guardians and explain the procedures based on the patient's situation, they simply go ahead with their procedures, this communication is often neglected. I think this causes tension between the two parties. (CM-03-LL)

Lack of Knowledge

Various narratives from community members revealed that lack of knowledge of the pandemic and the recommended pandemic procedures was one of the factors that triggered tension between the community and healthcare workers. This lack of knowledge was first observed during the pandemic itself, and this created perceptions of the supposed lack of care among community members. Most community members did not fully understand what COVID-19 or Cholera was, what caused it, how it was spread, and its effects, as some community members alluded to:

> The main issue was that the deceased went to the hospital on his own. When he was going, he mentioned having a toothache…However, upon reaching the hospital, we learned that he had been diagnosed with cholera and had passed away. This is why many people went to the hospital and ended up damaging the health facility. (CM-03-KK)

> During the COVID-19 pandemic, what shocked us the most was discovering that a fellow community member, who initially had a minor ailment like a cough. . .we later learned that this individual had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and had succumbed to the disease. This revelation was truly shocking. (CM-03-MC)

Additionally, most narratives also showed that most community members lacked knowledge of the recommended pandemic procedures implemented by the healthcare workers.

> Many patients and guardians, especially those who are not well-educated, lack knowledge of the recommended health procedures. When these guardians bring patients to the hospital, such as those who have experienced a prolonged illness, they often expect us to provide instant treatment and healing. This expectation mostly leads to various problems. (HSA-02-LL).

It was also found that community members' ignorance of things was also influenced by misinformation. Most healthcare workers and community members noted that there were a lot of information sources on COVID-19, with politicians and social media being the prominent ones. However, most of the information the public got from these sources misinformed them. Some community members expressed the following views:

> There was a lot of information on social media claiming that COVID-19 was satanic. This made people not listen to whatever preventive measure we told them. (HPO-01-MZ)

> Most politicians said there was no COVID-19. They aimed to gain votes. (CM-01-KU)

Misconceptions/myths about the outbreak especially COVID-19, which were an indicator of lack of proper knowledge of the outbreak and the recommended procedures, also affected the adherence to the outbreak's prevention and control measures. This caused further tension between the community and healthcare workers. Community members shared the following opinions:

> Many vaccines are surrounded by numerous misconceptions, leading to resistance within the community when we advocate for vaccination. For instance, when administering vaccines to children, some individuals claim that the vaccines are intended to render their children barren. . . (HPO-02-BT)

> There were rumors that healthcare workers were Satanists. Some claimed that influential members of society were using the blood of individuals who had died from COVID-19 for sacrificial rituals. (CM-02-LL)

The Breaking of the Community's Social Order

The sentiments from both community members and healthcare workers showed that the breaking of the community's social order was one of the major factors that orchestrated the tension between healthcare workers and the community. Most community members expressed concern that healthcare workers broke both cultural and religious norms when they were handling the sick and the dead:

> According to health procedures, when a person dies from Cholera and COVID-19, healthcare workers are responsible for handling everything to prevent the spread of the diseases. Culturally, during funerals, certain rituals such as body cleaning and viewing are performed, along with cooking and eating, among other customs. However, these rituals were initially restricted by healthcare workers. (CM-02-BK)

Some narratives also indicated that most healthcare workers disrespected the community members as they were trying to receive medical help, which was one way of breaking the community's social norm of respect.

> I remember a nurse telling an elderly woman, who was suffering from COVID-19, to go and die at home because she was already deceased due to her age. This is against our culture, which commands us to respect elders. Such behavior goes against our cultural values, which emphasize the utmost respect for elders. Ideally, the nurse should have warmly welcomed the elderly woman, sat down with her, and compassionately explained her health condition along with the procedures healthcare workers would implement to assist her. (CM-02-KK)

Negative Effects of the Attacks

Various narratives indicated that the threats and attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities had dire effects on both parties - the community and the healthcare workers. Most healthcare workers expressed concerns that these threats and attacks made them afraid of the communities, and this affected health service delivery. The following view was shared by a healthcare worker:

> This affects both the community and healthcare workers in the sense that intervention implementation becomes very hard. . .when healthcare workers are attacked by the community, it means they will not visit that community again to prevent the spread of the disease, and this will negatively affect the service delivery. (HPO-02-MZ)

The healthcare workers also expressed concerns that the destruction of healthcare facilities also meant that the healthcare clinics and hospitals did not have enough equipment and medical suppliers to help them during health service delivery, preventing the community members from receiving quality health services. A healthcare worker had this to say:

> In Luwinga, people destroyed medical equipment, making it difficult for us to assist those who were sick. Mind you, such equipment is very expensive and it takes time for us to get new ones. (HPO-01-MZ)

Responses from some healthcare workers indicated that the attacks had a huge impact on their profession to the extent that they wanted to change the profession. Most of them viewed their profession as dangerous since they were always afraid of how the community would react. Some participants further alluded to the same concerns as evidenced by the following extracts:

> Some of my colleagues told me that they were considering changing careers to something less dangerous, like teaching. (HSA-02-BK)

Discussion

Our study was conducted in all three political regions of Malawi to unearth the contributing factors of the attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities in Malawi during the COVID-19 pandemic and Cholera epidemic. Our results demonstrate that several violent cases and attacks against healthcare workers and healthcare facilities become heightened during pandemics, and as the literature suggests, this is a global trend.[22] These attacks give the country an additional burden on the already stricken healthcare service. The findings support the study that rated Malawi as one of the most dangerous countries for healthcare workers in terms of the attacks during pandemics.[23] We argue that during pandemics, the management of patients and dead bodies raises a wide range of ethical and sociocultural challenges. Specifically, our findings suggest that ensuring that the community receives adequate knowledge about the pandemic and the procedures to follow when one is sick or dies, ensuring dignity for the deceased while protecting the living, honoring the social, cultural and religious rituals when handling the dead, and respecting the sick and grieving families, would help in reducing the violence and attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities.

The study results postulate that the lack of effective communication from the government's public health containment sector is one of the reasons behind the violence and attacks. Communication with the general public and the concerned community members is usually one-way, characterized by poor timing and lack of openness and transparency. According to the guidance for managing ethical issues in infectious disease outbreaks by the World Health Organization (WHO), all aspects of infectious disease outbreak response efforts should require early and ongoing engagement with the affected communities which is essential to establishing and maintaining trust and preserving social order.[24] Our study findings show completely the opposite of what the WHO recommends. Communication was reactive rather

22 van Stekelenburg et al., "Attacks on Health Care Workers in Historical Pandemics and COVID-19."
23 Jacobi and Ide, "Collective Violence Against Health Workers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic."
24 World Health Organisation: WHO, "Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks," July 11, 2016, https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241549837.

than proactive. Health officials tend to explain to the affected communities after they have already broken the social order thereby intriguing the communities to act with violence. As noted in the results, there is no inclusiveness, openness, transparency and clarity in their communication; they simply did not involve the affected communities early to engage them in a two-way dialogue, allowing interests from both parties to prevail.

Lack of proper knowledge of the signs and symptoms of the pandemic, and the procedures for patient care and disposal of the dead also emerged as a critical factor that influenced community members to doubt the credibility of health workers and rose against them. This lack of knowledge gave room for misinformation, misconceptions and myths leading to the community's resistance to follow the laid procedures to protect the living during pandemics. In line with what Lee-Kwan and co-authors discovered in Sierra Leone during Ebola, lack of proper information influenced the community members to believe that vaccines would make their children barren, that healthcare workers are satanic, they take blood from the deceased for their rituals and that COVID-19 is just a hoax.[25] These results underscore the importance of proper communication which requires early and ongoing engagement with the affected communities to establish and maintain trust.[26] Effective communication is necessary to reduce misinformation, misconception and myths and improve compliance with prevention and control measures set by the authorities and literature has found it to have been proven effective.[27]

Community's perception that healthcare workers disrespect their social, cultural and religious norms was also discovered to be one of the main reasons why the community collectively attacks healthcare workers and vandalizes healthcare facilities. In a review study conducted by Suwalowska et al., ethical and sociocultural challenges of ensuring dignity for the deceased, honoring the cultural and religious rituals surrounding caring for the dead, and respecting grieving families were also found to be prominent during Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics as healthcare workers were trying to manage patients and dead bodies.[28] To ensure dignity, honor social norms and respect the affected families, healthcare workers need to note that there are various stakeholders (relatives, communities and religious leaders) involved in caring for patients and managing dead bodies. These stakeholders need to be engaged in all the planning and response efforts to establish and maintain trust and preserve social order.[29] Reaching out to the people and engaging the stakeholders in the communities have proven effective in reducing avoidance intent and improving compliance with the pandemics'

25 Seung Hee Lee-Kwan et al., "Facilitators and Barriers to Community Acceptance of Safe, Dignified Medical Burials in the Context of an Ebola Epidemic, Sierra Leone, 2014," *Journal of Health Communication* 22, no. sup1 (1 March 2017): 24–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2016.1209601.

26 World Health Organisation: WHO, "Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks,"

27 Rashid Ansumana et al., "Ebola in Sierra Leone: A Call for Action," *The Lancet 384*, no. 9940 (4 July, 2014): 303, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(14)61119-3.

28 Suwalowska et al., "Ethical and Sociocultural Challenges in Managing Dead Bodies During Epidemics and Natural Disasters."

29 World Health Organisation: WHO, "Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks,"

prevention and control measures put in place by the public health efforts.[30]

The study has also found that the outcomes of such tensions between healthcare workers and the community are not pleasing; healthcare workers become afraid of the community members, the community vandalizes medical facilities and finally, healthcare workers become demotivated to work and perceptions of job turnover become high. These effects negatively affect the delivery of healthcare services. The current results are in line with what Ghareeb et al. found in their study; healthcare workers were feeling afraid of their profession and worried about people.[31] Literature indicates that healthcare workers who are subjected to violence suffer from physical and mental well-being impairment and several other negative consequences that end with more extended periods of absenteeism, work inefficiency, deterioration of work performance, job dissatisfaction, burnout, and high turnover.[32] Much as there is need for healthcare workers to improve communication in order to improve compliance with prevention and control measures, healthcare workplace policies and procedures must focus on the security of the environment, reporting and surveillance, and education on how to prevent and manage workplace violence.[33]

Overall, this study reveals that in Malawi, violence against healthcare workers and the breaking of healthcare facilities during pandemics are a major problem that needs to be addressed. The results of this study underscore the importance of effective risk communication and community engagement during pandemics to improve compliance with prevention and control measures and minimize healthcare violence. The way we communicate about pandemics is important in encouraging people to take positive steps to fight the pandemic and safeguard healthcare, and this has been proven effective.[34] According to van Stekelenburg et al., timely, accurate and reliable communication from the government, healthcare systems, and experts is necessary to reduce misinformation, misconception and myths about the disease.[35] The government's public health containment efforts can therefore use and apply the World Health Organization risk communication information[36] and guidance for managing ethical issues in infectious disease outbreaks[37] as guides to prevent and address violence against healthcare workers and the breaking of healthcare facilities. Further, the government may also use some countermeasures against fake news such as media fact-check columns, the suspension of

30 van Stekelenburg et al., "Attacks on Health Care Workers in Historical Pandemics and COVID-19."
31 Ghareeb, El-Shafei, and Eladl, "Workplace Violence Among Healthcare Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic in a Jordanian Governmental Hospital."
32 Cheung, Teris, and Paul. S., F. Yip, "Workplace Violence Towards Nurses in Hong Kong: Prevalence and Correlates," *BMC Public Health 17*, no. 1 (14 February 2017), https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4112-3.
33 Ghareeb, El-Shafei, and Eladl, "Workplace Violence Among Healthcare Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic in a Jordanian Governmental Hospital."
34 Ansumana et al., "Ebola in Sierra Leone: A Call for Action."
35 van Stekelenburg et al., "Attacks on Health Care Workers in Historical Pandemics and COVID-19."
36 World Health Organization: WHO. "Attacks on Health Care in the Context of COVID-19," July 30, 2020. https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/attacks-on-health-care-in-the-context-of-covid-19.
37 World Health Organisation: WHO. "Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks," July 11, 2016. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241549837.

social media accounts that continually spread misinformation, and the removal of misleading content from the media.[38]

To safeguard healthcare workers and healthcare facilities from violence, it is of supreme importance to trustworthily engage the community through their local, religious and opinion leaders prior to the crisis. Respondents emphasized that they would have loved it if the government and health experts engage them through active consultations before breaking their social order in an effort to protect them. This preference by the community is being supported by what the WHO stipulated as guidance for managing ethical issues in infectious disease outbreaks.[39] Learning from the Ebola pandemic, consultations with the community and local authorities strengthen the effectiveness of emergency response.[40] Furthermore, studies reveal that engaging the community and actively involving religious leaders increase engagement and adherence to the pandemics' prevention and control measures, and may help increase awareness, spread information, and reduce anger against healthcare workers.[41] Particularly, a review study conducted by Feyissa et al. revealed that reaching out to the communities and training opinion leaders are effective in reducing violence and attacks on healthcare workers and healthcare facilities and improving compliance with safety measures.[42]

Limitations

Findings of this study are subject to some limitations. The areas from which we collected the data were based on the media reports only. Attempts were not made to find out more areas affected by these attacks. This means that this data might not be regarded as inclusive in terms of the community's and healthcare workers' thoughts regarding the communities' violence on healthcare workers and facilities during pandemics. Furthermore, given the lack of information on other potentially affected areas, and the small size number of our sample, statistical analyses could not be applied to generalize the study findings. Even though our results are not generalizable, they likely represent the views of most affected healthcare workers and communities, for the affected areas were selected from all the regions in the country. Finally, as a qualitative study, facilitator influence and social desirability may have inhibited some respondents from accurately sharing their experiences that may have countered official prevention messages. Prolonged engagement with the participants was engaged to achieve credibility of the data.

38 Zhaohui Su et al., "Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 Media Coverage: The Need for Effective Crisis Communication Practices," *Globalization and Health 17*, no. 1 (5 January 2021), https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-020-00654-4.

39 World Health Organisation: WHO. "Guidance for Managing Ethical Issues in Infectious Disease Outbreaks,"

40 Molly Ryan, Tamara Giles-Vernick, and Janice Graham, "Technologies of Trust in Epidemic Response: Openness, Reflexivity and Accountability During the 2014–2016 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa," *BMJ Global Health* 4, no. 1 (1 February 2019): e001272, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-001272.

41 Baldassarre et al., "Stigma and Discrimination (SAD) at the Time of the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic."; Vanhamel et al., "Understanding How Communities Respond to COVID-19: Experiences from the Orthodox Jewish Communities of Antwerp City."

42 Garumma Tolu Feyissa, Craig Lockwood, and Zachary Munn, "Reducing HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination in Healthcare Settings: A Systematic Review of Quantitative Evidence," *PLOS ONE* 14, no. 1 (25 January 2019): e0211298, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211298.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the limitations, our findings revealed in-depth, community-level and healthcare workers' perspectives on the factors influencing the community's violence against healthcare workers and the vandalization of the health facilities. The findings highlight the importance of effective risk communication and community engagement at all levels to minimize violence and attacks on healthcare workers and facilities. During pandemics, it is critical to have prevention than control strategies. First, government, healthcare systems, and health experts need to use communication effectively to improve the community's compliance with prevention and control measures. Educational training opportunities for healthcare workers must focus on effective public health communication techniques to manage the violence and attacks against them during pandemics. Second, healthcare workplace policies and procedures must focus on the security of the environment, reporting and surveillance, and education on how to prevent and manage workplace violence and attacks.[43] Finally, public education campaigns emphasizing the importance of healthcare workers in saving lives could also address vicious attacks that occur in the health sector.

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43 Ghareeb, El-Shafei, and Eladl, "Workplace Violence Among Healthcare Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic in a Jordanian Governmental Hospital."

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4. COMMUNICATION AND MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

TOYOSI OLUGBENGA SAMSON OWOLABI AND NOEEM TAIWO THANNY

Introduction

The escalating cases of mental health affecting millions of individuals, young and old have become a defining global health challenge of our time. Mental health disorders are believed to cause 1 in 5 years lived with disability. According to WHO,[1] about 20 per cent of the world's children and adolescents have a mental health condition, with suicide becoming the second leading cause of death among the 15-29-years age bracket. WHO[2] and Children Hope Chest[3] estimate that 970 million people around the world struggle with mental illness or drug abuse. 25 per cent of this population will suffer mental illness at some point in their lives. About 14.3 percent of deaths globally or approximately 8 million deaths each year are traceable to mental disorders. Mental disorders are a group of illnesses that may include symptoms that can affect a person's thinking, perceptions, mood or behaviour and can impact working and personal relationships.[4] While contributing to the discourse on mental illnesses, Obindo[5] says 60 million people suffer from varying degrees of mental disorders in Nigeria. This includes anxiety disorders, behavioural and emotional disorders in children, and young adults bipolar affective disorders, depression, dissociation and dissociative disorders, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, dementia, paranoia, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis and schizophrenia among others. Understanding the magnitude and devastating effect of mental illness on people around the world can help us to appreciate the problem better, recognize the causative factors, and cost of managing it and find plausible ways of resolving the crisis.

Health according to WHO cited by Schramme[6] has been accepted as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and is expected to be the fundamental right of every human being regardless of race, religion, political ideology and economic or social condition. The above definition presupposes that all

1 World Health Organisation, *Mental Health*, (2022). https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health

2 World Health Organisation*, Depression and other common mental disorders: Global health estimates*. Geneva: World Health Organisation, (2017). https://app.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/254601/WHO-MSD-MER 2017.2eng.pdf?sequence

3 Children Hope Chest, *Global mental health statistics*, (2022). https://www.hopechest.org/global-menta-health-statistics/

4 Better Health Channel, *Mental Health: Types, Issues and Illnesses*, (2023). https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

5 Obindo, Tunde. *'60m Nigerians suffering from mental illnesses'* The Cable, (2022). https:/www.thecable.ng/60m-Nigerians-suffering-from-mental-illnesses-says-psychiatrists-association/amp

6 Schramme, Thomas, 'Health as complete Well-being: the WHO Definition and beyond.' *Public Health Ethics* 16, no. 3 (2023): 210-218.

the components of health are as important as the others. In other words, human beings are to adopt a holistic approach to the health issue.

However, it is noteworthy that despite the above assertion about health, most peripheral nations including Nigeria, believe that physical and social components of health take precedence over the mental aspect. This is evident in the shrinking budget often appropriated for mental health care, lack of definite and coherent policy and legislation, dearth of mental health care facilities and personnel, inadequate research and training, a gross misconception of mental health issues and the stigma that is often associated with the mentally ill persons.[7] It is an undeniable fact that the few mental health facilities in Nigeria are overstretched beyond measure due to the swelling population of mentally ill patients. Nigeria with over 190 million people according to Khalid et al,[8] 300 psychiatrists account for a ratio of about 700,000 patients per psychiatrist (1:700,000). Several factors are responsible for this development. These include the stress of daily living, multiple disappointments, alcoholism, poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, hereditary disposition, degenerative process and spiritual causes among others.

It is pertinent to note that without optimum mental soundness, nothing in the realm of development is achievable. There is a need for working brains, bodies and souls to contribute to the development process. The search for a way out of the present predicament has, therefore, highlighted the role of communication media to adequately provide factual and accurate information, and advocate and educate people against lifestyles that can predispose them to mental disorders. In addition, the media are meant to create interest and awareness on the part of government, medical practitioners, media researchers, health journalists and members of the public to reduce misconceptions and stigma that are often associated with mental illness. Therefore, the study, which is anchored on Agenda Setting Theory and the Socio-ecological Model for health promotion among others, attempts to discuss the probable causes of mental illness, misconceptions about mental issues, available funding and facilities for managing mental ailment, the cost implications of mental health on SDGs, and by extension, advocate the need for mental health campaign to reduce the misconceptions and stigma accompanying mental illness.

7 Wada, Yusuf Hassan, Linu Rajwani, Emmanuel Anyam, Evelyn Karikari, Mitchelle Njikizana, Lilian Srour, and Garba M. Khalid. 'Mental health in Nigeria: a neglected issue in public health.' *Public Health in Practice* 2 (2021): 100166.

8 Khalid, Garba M., Umar I. Idris, Abubakar I. Jatau, Yusuf H. Wada, and Ya'U. Adamu, 'Assessment of occupational violence towards pharmacists at practice settings in Nigeria.' *Pharmacy Practice (Granada)* 18, no. 4 (2020).

Agenda Setting Theory, Health Communication and Promotion

This theory was propounded by McComb and Shaw[9] in 1972. The core concept espoused in the agenda-setting postulation is the assumption that media act as a stimulator of awareness for people about events, issues, and occurrences. It follows from Cohen's[10] position that the media may not necessarily be successful in telling its consumers what to think but it is almost certainly successful in influencing what the consumers think about. Agenda Setting according to McComb and Shaw is most definitely a step above the long-held proposition of Lippmann that the news tells us *what to think about.* The news also tells us *how to think about it.* In the deliberate selection of objects for attention and the purposeful selection of frames in which these objects are portrayed, the media act as a powerful and deliberate agenda-setting role.

By repeating messages about public issues over and again in the news day after day, and with their ubiquity and pervasiveness in our daily lives, mass media constitute a major source of journalism's influence on the audience. This, according to McCombs and Shaw[11] helps to quickly move the influence established through continuous exposure of the media agenda to the public agenda.

According to Albalawi and Sixsmith,[12] assumptions in agenda setting are grounded on two main principles: (1) media shape and filter reality before presenting it to people and (2) these channels determine the priority which individuals give to salient issues. The reasoning is in line with Rogers and Dearing's[13] position that agenda setting comes into full cycle when personal experiences and interpersonal communication filter through media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda before being presented as real-world indicators. Media agenda setting therefore refers to the deliberate coverage of certain events in a particular way; public agenda setting translates to what the public considers important while policy agenda setting concerns institutional framework and how it determines issues that are important to the public.

However, further interrogations by scholars have revealed that there are different levels to the agenda-setting function of mass media. The first level of agenda setting focuses on the amount of coverage or exposure that media affords a particular issue or event, the second level, according to Coleman, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver,[14] focuses on how the media discuss the objects of attention. These objects can be public figures such as politically exposed individuals and people of means. Attention would then be on the attributes or characteristics

9 McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw, 'The agenda-setting function of mass media.' *Public opinion quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176-187.

10 Cohen, Bernard Cecil, *Press and foreign policy*. Vol. 2321. Princeton university press, (2015).

11 McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw, 'The evolution of agenda-setting research: Twenty-five years in the marketplace of ideas.' *Journal of communication* 43, no. 2 (1993): 58-67.

12 Albalawi, Yousef, and Jane Sixsmith, 'Agenda setting for health promotion: exploring an adapted model for the social media era.' *JMIR public health and surveillance* 1, no. 2 (2015): e5014.

13 Rogers, Everett M., and James W. Dearing, 'Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going?.' In *Communication yearbook 11*, pp. 555-594. Routledge, (2012).

14 Coleman, Renita, Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw, and David Weaver, 'Agenda setting.' In *The handbook of journalism studies*, pp. 167-180. Routledge, 2009. https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203877685.ch11

that typify those issues, and the individuals or other topics in the news as well as the style and spirit of those attributes. The desired effect is generally the same: the attributes and tone employed by the media in their illustration and categorisation become the impulse and tone mostly in the public mind.

Within the prism of health promotion and communication, agenda setting is the creation of a nexus of relationships in the triple domains of media agenda setting, public agenda setting and policy agenda setting. As Kozel et al[15] rightly acknowledges, health promotion and agenda setting all too often take the focus away from the primary reason for individual health care and health information seekers. Rather than focusing on individual health risks and healthful behaviours, they focus more on the formulation and adoption of health policies with institutional characters rather than individual characters at the centre of discussion.

This is also the case in the communication of mental health issues and the promotion of practices that support mental well-being. Gammage and Nolte[16] affirm that medical workers in the area of mental health such as doctors, nurses, therapists and other support workers as well as mental health advocates are in the best position to promote mental health literacy by communicating mental health-related issues. They always focus on the individuals; unlike mass media whose major focus is always policy-related issues.

In situations where media focus on individuals as objects in mental health, the frames created to tell the stories make mental health pitiable in the West,[17] [18] but more of an affliction in most African societies, which shows a more reflective proposition in mental health coverage in the media. Aroyewun-Adekomaiya and Aroyewun[19] strengthened this position by affirming that magical beliefs are explanations of causes of mental illness that occurred in over 60 per cent of movies presenting mentally ill characters or characters with depictions of mental illness. This they believe is indicative of a dominant mindset of mental illness being associated with some magical or diabolical beliefs. There is therefore a commonly held view suggesting that movies serve as a conduit for the misrepresentation of mental illness.

15 Kozel, Charles T., William M. Kane, Michael T. Hatcher, Anne P. Hubbell, James W. Dearing, Sue Forster-Cox, Sharon Thompson, Frank G. Pérez, and Melanie Goodman, 'Introducing health promotion agenda-setting for health education practitioners.' *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 4, no. 1 (2006): 32-40.

16 Gammage, Rebecca J., and Lizette Nolte, 'Family understanding and communication about an adult relative's mental health problem: A systematic narrative review.' *Journal of psychiatric and mental health nursing* 27, no. 6 (2020): 763-788.

17 Knifton, Lee, and Neil Quinn, 'Media, mental health and discrimination: a frame of reference for understanding reporting trends.' *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion* 10, no. 1 (2008): 23-31.

18 Whitley, Rob, and Sarah Berry, 'Analyzing media representations of mental illness: lessons learnt from a national project.' *Journal of Mental Health* 22, no. 3 (2013): 246-253.

19 Aroyewun-Adekomaiya, Khadijah, and Folashade Temitope Aroyewun, 'Representation of mental illness in movies: A Nigerian perspective.' *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* 22, no. 2 (2019): 103-117.

Ecological Model and Mental Health Promotion

There have been extensive and long-standing inquisitions into how humans behave especially regarding healthful practices. There are interventions at individual, interpersonal, community and institutional levels. One model that takes an all-embracing approach to health communication intervention is the ecological model for health promotion. According to Kincaid and Figeroua,[20] the socio-ecological model of communication employs a systems approach to health promotion rather than an individualistic approach that avoids holistic thinking. This means that the socio-ecological model takes into consideration the complexity, inter-relatedness and wholeness of the components of a system that is complex and interdependent rather than just one particular component in the system in which it is rooted.

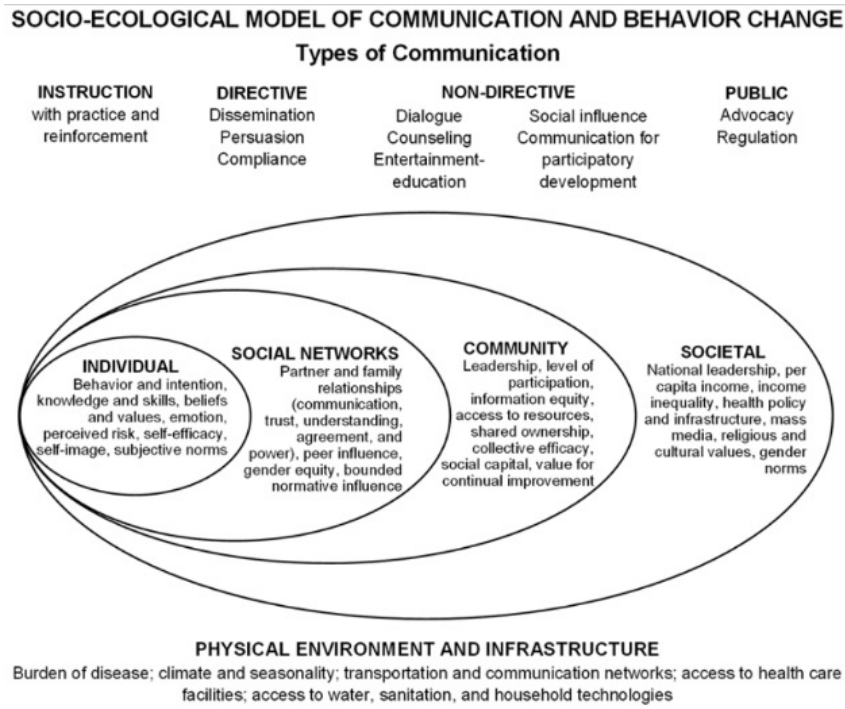
Most theories of health and behavioural change take the approach of intervention at a particular level. The ecological model is however slightly different. It is a meta-theory or rather a meta-model incorporating different levels of health interventions. Going by Kincaid et al's[21] analysis, the ideational model of communication and behaviour change fits within the individual level; interpersonal relationship theory and bounded normative influence theory fit within the social network level; the communication for participatory development model applies to the community level; and theories of mass media effects fit within the societal level.

The understanding in other theoretical interventions for health communication and promotion, especially those focusing on individual and interpersonal levels, is that those theories all too often engage in some form of victim-blaming, neglecting how social and institutional influences can impact behaviour (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckle and Glanz).[22] The ecological Model, therefore, proposes a position that assumes that when appropriate and defining changes are made at the environmental level, there would be a change in the support system for individuals, which would ultimately cause lasting and impactful changes. As a result, interventions in this model are directed at influencing not only interpersonal behaviour but also organisational, community and institutional frameworks that can help prevent unhealthy behaviour.

20 Cissna, Kenneth N., and Lawrence R. Frey, eds. *Routledge handbook of applied communication research*. Routledge, 2009.

21 Kincaid, D. Lawrence, and María Elena Figueroa, 'Communication for participatory development: Dialogue, action, and change.' In *Routledge handbook of applied communication research*, pp. 506-531. Routledge, 2009.

22 McLeroy, Kenneth R., Daniel Bibeau, Allan Steckler, and Karen Glanz. 'An ecological perspective on health promotion programs.' *Health education quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1988): 351-377.



Mental Health Disorders and Sustainable Development

'Health is wealth, a healthy nation is a wealthy nation' is a common axiom substantiating the fact that it is a healthy nation that can actively participate in the global development process. The issue of development has, in recent years become fundamental among governments, academics and development experts across the globe especially, among peripheral nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Modern scholars and researchers no longer perceive development as mainly matters of gross domestic product GDP, technological breakthrough, infrastructural advancement and widespread industrialization. At the mention of the concept of national development, the human element forms the nucleus, which aims at creating sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all and sundry.

This is the reason why development is built around the notion expressed by the Brundtland Commission Report[23] which sees sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present era without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.' According to Ejumudo,[24] the above definition has thrown up two key

23 Brundtland, Gro Harlem, 'Brundtland report. Our common future.' *Comissão Mundial* 4, no. 1 (1987): 17-25.

24 Ejumudo, Kelly Bryan Ovie, 'Sustainable development in Nigeria: The policy gap and action dilemma.' (2008).

elements- needs and limitations. By 'needs', it refers to the essential needs of the world's poor and the vulnerable that require priority attention. The element of 'limitation' denotes the restraints imposed by technology and society on the environment's ability to secure the present and future needs. Further from above, Batta and Ashong identify the essential needs of the people as follows: self-reliance in food production, education and elimination of illiteracy, improved health and well-being, shelter, eradication of poverty, mass participation in economic, political and social activities, human rights, social justice and peace. The above ideas are what the United Nations Children Emergency Fund cited by Owolabi summed up in its definition of Sustainable Human development as:

> …. Development that not only generates economic growth but distributes its benefits equitably, that regenerates the environment rather than destroying it; that empowers the people rather than marginalizing them. It gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and opportunities, and providing for their participation in decisions affecting them. It is a development that is pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-jobs, pro-democracy, pro-women and pro-children.[25]

Desirable as sustainable development is, Patel and Kleinman[26] have observed that the global burden of mental disorders is staggering when one considers its impact on human health, and social and economic costs to individuals, (patients), society and government. With about one billion people globally living with mental health disorders according to Rehm and Shield,[27] mental health challenges have shown a great propensity to engender profound socioeconomic consequences on the society.

Findings reveal that globally, mental disorder accounts for about 418 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs). In economic terms, this translates to about five trillion dollars per year. At the regional level, losses are estimated to be about 4 per cent of GDP in Eastern sub-Saharan Africa and about 8 per cent in high-income North America. Going by the above findings, mental illness is not only a leading cause of disability, but it is also a significant risk factor for premature death in the world. In 2022, the cost of mental disorders in the European Union is estimated to be U$ 430 billion in terms of productivity while in Australia about U$27 billion was reported to have been lost to presenteeism and absenteeism.[28]

The drive to incorporate the Mental Health (MH) issue into the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in 2015 signifies a paradigm shift in the way mental illness ought to be treated in society as well as the determination of the international community not to leave anybody behind in the global agenda 2030.[29] Despite the declaration of commitment to prioritizing

25 Owolabi, Toyosi Olugbenga Samson, 'Media coverage of SMEs in Nigeria: the imperative for national development.' (2014).
26 Patel, Vikram, and Arthur Kleinman, 'Poverty and common mental disorders in developing countries.' *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 81 (2003): 609-615.
27 Rehm, Jürgen, and Kevin D. Shield. 'Global burden of disease and the impact of mental and addictive disorders.' *Current psychiatry reports* 21 (2019): 1-7.
28 Arias, Daniel, Shekhar Saxena, and Stéphane Verguet, 'Quantifying the global burden of mental disorders and their economic value.' *EClinicalMedicine* 54 (2022).
29 Mackenzie, Jessica. *Mental Health Funding and the SDGs: What Now and who Pays?*. ODI, 2016.

mental health in the development agenda, the realization of adequate treatment and attention to mental health has been riddled with several challenges that make the realization of Agenda 2030 a mirage.

In Nigeria, at the societal level, the annual cost of mental illness was about 21 billion Nigerian Naira, translating to about U$166.2 million. Besides, studies have shown that mental health challenge accounts for 7.1 per cent of absenteeism and about U$189.5 million in work-related losses in productivity.[30]

According to Canavan et al,[31] it has also been observed that mental disorders are generally very costly in terms of direct medical cost of care, outpatient visits, hospitalizations and indirect costs such as loss of job income, and diminished productivity due to disability, which result from absenteeism and presenteeism. Mental health generally depletes supplies of labour and capital thus, resulting in low economic output and serious impairment to the sustainable human development of the state.[32]

It is noteworthy here that there is a link between economic inequality and poor mental health.[33] [34] Experiencing socio-economic disability, including unemployment, low income, poverty, indebtedness and poor housing can result in poor mental health. This precarious situation can also be worsened by emotional and psychological disability and distress. Other socially induced habits such as drug addiction, alcohol abuse, the stress of daily living, multiple frustrations, inherited predisposition, degenerative process, brain lesions, and breakdown of family and traditional systems are also found to breathe life into mental illness.[35]

As important as mental health is to sustainable development, it is very unfortunate that Nigerian governments at all levels often accord little or no recognition to it in health policy development and budgetary appropriation. Evaluating the social and economic cost of mental illness at this point is therefore, very germane as it will enable us to make the investment case for global mental health delivery and most importantly, influence the government on public

30 Esan, Oluyomi B., Lola Kola, and Oye Gureje, 'Mental disorders and earnings: results from the Nigerian National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being (NSMHW).' *The journal of mental health policy and economics* 15, no. 2 (2012): 77-82.

31 Canavan, Maureen E., Heather L. Sipsma, Achyuta Adhvaryu, Angela Ofori-Atta, Helen Jack, Christopher Udry, Isaac Osei-Akoto, and Elizabeth H. Bradley, 'Psychological distress in Ghana: associations with employment and lost productivity.' *International Journal of Mental Health Systems* 7 (2013): 1-9.

32 Trautmann, Sebastian, Jürgen Rehm, and Hans-Ulrich Wittchen, 'The economic costs of mental disorders: Do our societies react appropriately to the burden of mental disorders?.' *EMBO reports* 17, no. 9 (2016): 1245-1249.

33 Platt, S., S. Stace, and J. Morrissey, 'Dying from inequality: Socioeconomic disadvantage and suicidal behaviour.' *Samaritans, London* (2017).

34 Elliot, Iris, 'Poverty and mental health: a review to inform the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Anti-Poverty Strategy.' (2016).

35 World Health Organisation, *Depression, and other mental disorder: Global health estimates*, Geneva: World Health Organisation. 2017. https://.app.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/254601/WHO-MSD-MER-2017.2

health decision-making process to scale up the much-needed intervention.[36]

Mental Health Misconception and Stigmatization: Evaluating the Role of The Media

People with serious mental disorders need empathy. This is because of the dual challenges they often suffer. While they struggle with the symptoms and disability resulting from the infirmity on one hand, they are challenged by the stereotypes and prejudice that commonly result from the misconception of mental illness. Misconception, according to the Cambridge Dictionary,[37] is a view or opinion that is incorrect because they are based on faulty thinking or understanding. One of the concepts that has been wrongly misunderstood in the health scholarship is mental health. Misconceptions of mental health issues usually engendered stigma against mental illness, the mentally ill and those who care for them, including family members and health care providers. Stigma, according to Link and Phelan,[38] refers to a social process characterized by labelling, stereotyping and separation leading to status loss and discrimination. An individual may be a victim of stigmatization as a result of perceived status, or attributes, a medical condition, for example, mental health, and non-health conditions such as poverty, gender identity or sexual orientation. In most health facilities, the manifestations of stigma are too obvious ranging from outright denial of needed care, provision of substandard care, and physical and verbal abuse to a more subtle form such as unnecessarily delaying the patients or pushing their care to junior officers.[39] Mental health literature is replete with a series of misconceptions that often result in the stigmatization of mentally sick persons. These, according to Batta and Ashong include:

- Mental illnesses are believed to be caused by evil spirits.
- Some believe that mental illness is incurable.
- Effective mental health treatment must involve chaining victims, flogging, starving and exorcising the violent evil spirit from the mentally ill.
- A sexual relationship with the mentally sick immunises a person against spiritual attack.
- Those who treat mental patients also have mild to moderate forms of mental disorders.
- Every person with a specific mental health condition is believed to display certain unusual characteristics.
- People suffering from depression are prone to suicide while people with schizophrenia hallucinate.

36 Chisholm, Dan, Kim Sweeny, Peter Sheehan, Bruce Rasmussen, Filip Smit, Pim Cuijpers, and Shekhar Saxena, 'Scaling-up treatment of depression and anxiety: a global return on investment analysis.' *The Lancet Psychiatry* 3, no. 5 (2016): 415-424.

37 Cambridge Dictionary *Meaning of Misconception, 2018* https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/misconception

38 Link, Bruce G., and Jo C. Phelan, 'Conceptualizing stigma.' *Annual review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 363-385.

39 Ross, Charlotte A., and Elliot M. Goldner, 'Stigma, negative attitudes and discrimination towards mental illness within the nursing profession: a review of the literature.' *Journal of psychiatric and mental health nursing* 16, no. 6 (2009): 558-567.

When discussing the concept of stigma or stigmatization, the media, according are believed to play key roles in shaping, perpetuating, and reducing the stigma of mental illness.[40] It has also been observed that the portrayal of the mentally ill is distorted due to inaccuracy and exaggeration of facts. The media, including films, television, books, magazines, and news programs often stereotype the mentally ill as being violent, unpredictable and dangerous. Some movies also spread the false stereotype that people with schizophrenia are 'possessed.' The media are also observed to trivialize mental illness. For instance, people with an eating disorder otherwise known as anorexia nervosa are being presented as less severe than they are. This is even though research confirms that people with anorexia nervosa stand 10 times higher risk of dying than people without.[41] It has also been observed that people without mental illness usually mock people with mental disability by appropriating mental illness terminologies such as hashtag OCD (#OCD), meaning obsessive-compulsive disorder. Another most disparaging stigmatization can be found in film portrayal of antagonists as characters with schizophrenia who are usually depicted as 'homicidal maniacs' or 'psycho killers.' These stereotypes contribute to the public's harsh negative attitudes towards mentally ill persons and are responsible for the government's lukewarm attitude towards mental health issues. In addition, it contributes to self-stigma leading to feelings of internal shame; incorrect information about symptoms and treatment are communicated to the public and it creates barriers to treatment. In a nutshell, it could lead to worse mental health outcomes as it increases the probability that mentally challenged person may not want to seek medical help and keep to their treatment regime.[42]

To place mental health in its proper perspective where misconception and stigmatization will give way also falls within the ambit of the communication media especially, radio, television, and social media. Social media platforms have become a great space for positivity, especially in responding to misconceptions, misrepresentations, or negative comments by sharing facts and experiences to counteract errors. If properly utilized, the media can be used to remove the prejudice and combat the stigma often experienced by people who are mentally challenged. The above functions the media can perform if the journalists reporting mental health keep to the following tips.

a. Mental health journalists must ensure that accurate and verifiable report about a specific disorder is presented to the reading public. This will go a long to helping those who have challenges to know where to seek help. Let the mentally ill and their families know that with proper treatment, medication and social support, their mental health can be improved.
b. Mental health reporters must avoid the use of derogatory words when reporting mental issues.

40 Klin, Anat, and Dafna Lemish. 'Mental disorders stigma in the media: Review of studies on production, content, and influences.' *Journal of health communication* 13, no. 5 (2008): 434-449.

41 Salek, Nicolas, *How the stigma of mental health is spread by the media*. 2023. https://www.verywellmind.com/mental-health-stigmas-in-mass-media

42 Nyblade, Laura, Melissa A. Stockton, Kayla Giger, Virginia Bond, Maria L. Ekstrand, Roger Mc Lean, Ellen MH Mitchell, 'Stigma in health facilities: why it matters and how we can change it.' *BMC medicine* 17 (2019): 1-15.

c. When reporting serious mental cases leading to suicide for example, such stories though may be newsworthy, but care should be taken not to dramatize it by placing 'suicide' in the headline. 'Dies' is more appropriate.
d. The video or photograph of a mentally deranged person and or their grieving family should not be displayed in the media.
e. Ensure the appropriate, non-discriminating and non-humiliating languages (register) are used. Rather than using words like 'crazy', 'lunatics' and 'psychiatric patients' among others, use phrases like 'people with mental health challenges' or 'people having mental illness.'

Communicating Mental Health for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Among developing nations including Nigeria, physical and social aspects of health appear to attract more attention than the mental aspect. This is generally apparent in the lukewarm attitudes and responses of governments, development experts, medical scholars and practitioners, media academics and researchers, health reporters as well as civil society, often times, general health issues are usually given adequate space and time in print and electronic media but the media rarely bring up issues of mental health and disorders. To checkmate this trend and correct the lopsidedness in healthcare delivery coverage, this section attempts to examine the potential roles of communication media in advocating and promoting mental health issues to achieve sustainable development.

Mental health literacy, which has been described as the ability to understand mental health information and issues is connected to the recognition of attendant difficulties, help-seeking, stigma reduction and the maintenance of good personal mental health. It is this understanding and empathy that define communication in the context of mental health. When there is a deeper appreciation and knowledge-driven perception it can lead to health literacy that can influence how various communication contexts view mental health. It can also define how the media frames discussions concerning mental health.

The media,[43] refers to any form of technological devices that are used to disseminate information from a source to a large heterogeneous audience that is separated by distance. These include print- newspapers, magazines; electronic- radio, television, film, video recording and the internet- the world wide web, all kinds of social media tools, libraries and movie studios.[44] The media both traditional and new possess considerable potential to reach a broad audience and have a proven impact on mental health literacy, stigmatization and mental health prevention. By their nature, besides the four traditional functions of mass media (information, education, entertainment, and surveillance), the mass media have the new responsibilities of increasing understanding of development issues; building up solidarity in a common effort,

43 https://.wwwstudy.com/academy/lesson/what-is-mass-media-definition
44 Duignan, Brian, 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.' *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2023). https://www.britannica.com/topic/mass-media

and enlarging the capacity of the people to take charge of their own development needs.[45] The media are also known to possess the power and the tools to bring mental health issues to the public domain through its agenda-setting power.

A critical role of the media in this context is to provide citizens with vital information on mental health. The visual media (television, film, and the new media) are the greatest form of expression and a powerful medium that can be adapted to various situations.[46] Film as a form of mass media can also be used for sensitization, education, enlightenment, and positive health campaigns towards behavioral and attitudinal changes. This is possible[47] because of their persuasive, manipulative and educative nature, which helps the people in comprehension, retention, and shaping of opinions as well as influencing people's behavior and perception of mental health issues.

Having recognized the significance of mental health to sustainable human development, pertinent questions we may ask are: what role does communication media play in promoting mental health, how can the media deconstruct the minds of the people and remove all kinds of misconceptions and stigmatization often associated with mental health, and how the media can impress it on the government and employers of labor to integrate the issues in their health care project.

As Olamide[48] succinctly puts it, effective mental health communication should follow a five-fold route namely:

- Communication - This involves disseminating research-based information that is meant to increase knowledge and awareness of mental health issues.
- Education - The message is prepared to enlighten the people and to guide them against all such habits and lifestyles that can make them predisposed to mental health risks.
- Advocacy - This involves the planning and packaging of mental health information into persuasive messages for governments, ministries, departments agencies and NGOs to up-scale their investments and support towards the mental healthcare delivery system.
- Social Mobilization - A potentially effective mental health message must possess a driving force that will bring mental health stakeholders together to identify the needs of the sector, raise demands for and mobilize all to work together to engender the progress and continuity of the communication efforts.
- Community Participation - Mental health promotion activities must be participatory and inclusive in content and context. In order words, mental health communication experts must work along with youths, women, teachers, elders and vulnerable groups to identify

45 Laninhun, Adeyinka, 'Communicating for development purposes: A gender perspective.' Kraft Books Limited, Ibadan, 2003.

46 UK Essays, *The role the media play in society media essay*. 2018. https://www.ukessays.com/essays/media/the-role-the-media-plays-in-society-media-essay.phps

47 Arinze-Umobi, Somtoo Obiefuna and Chiweta-Oduah, Onyinye, Mental health perception in Nigeria: The role of mass media. *Global Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (2002). Vol. 2, Issue 12, p.935-941.

48 Akpobo, Olamide. 'Mass media health communication: Imperative for sustainable health development in Nigeria.' *Mgbakoigba: Journal of African Studies* 4 (2015): 1-6.

mental health issues and to accept the responsibilities for planning, managing, controlling and implementing collective action to resolve mental health challenges.

To implement the five-fold agenda, the mass media have diverse formats for disseminating messages on mental health disorders. These could be in the form of special interviews, phone-in programs, talk shows, phone-ins, discussion forums, radio and television debates, public service announcements, news, jingles, advertorial, opinion and feature articles, syndicated analyses and editorials, comics and pictorials, which must be published and broadcast in different indigenous languages.

It is pertinent to also note that in this digital era, the internet and satellite technologies have widened the frontiers of information dissemination networks and heightened the speed at which information travels across borders. Internet technology is responsible for the advent of social media such as TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, My Space, YouTube, LinkedIn, Skype, X, Blogs and Microblogs among others, through which mental health information can be shared and feedback received in seconds.

Challenges of Communicating Mental Health Promotion in Multicultural Setting

Indeed, Nigeria is a typical multicultural setting. Her plural-ethnic configuration of about 400 ethnic groups and languages, 5000 dialects, three major religions, dozens of political parties and 36 federating states as additional complex platforms of diversities.[49] The Nigerian multicultural setting is characterized by diversity, heterogeneity, and pluralism in the areas of culture, ideological belief, political leaning, orientations, behavior and attitudes of the people that constitute the population.

Multiculturalism and ethnic consciousness ordinarily are not a threat to cohabitation and peaceful co-existence. However, it has been observed that multiculturalism affects how people communicate, understand, and respond to development-based messages disseminated through the mass media. It has been observed that most development messages always fail to accomplish their goal not because the messages are not well crafted but because they are communicated through the wrong channel and as such, are lost in transit without getting to the intended audiences. Propagating mental health information using the mass media may sometimes suffer various levels of breakdown depending on the mass media channel used. There are various media for transferring messages from the sender to the receiver, each with its characteristics and different levels of effectiveness.

Print media: These include newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and all other printed materials. They have the advantage of reaching large, diverse, and dispersed people. Copies of printed materials can be read and reread to engender understanding and finally, can be preserved in the archive for future reference. The disadvantages of print media can be observed

49 Oso, Lai, 'multiculturalism, diversity and reporting conflict in Nigeria.' Ibadan: *Mara Mon Bros & Ventures Ltd*, 2017.

in that due to their elitist orientation, they cannot make much impact among the illiterate public which constitute about 57 per cent of the Nigerian population.[50] Besides, those who are sufficiently literate often lack the financial wherewithal to buy copies. The news copies, due to the logistic problem may also not circulate in the rural communities where over 70 per cent of the population is domiciled.

Broadcast media: These refer to radio and television. Radio as a broadcast medium has the highest capacity of reaching the largest audiences both literate and illiterate in different languages. Radio appears to be the most efficient organ of mass dissemination of development information to wide, diverse, and heterogeneous audiences without demanding much intellectual exertion from the listeners. Accordingly,[51] its advantage over other media lies in its relative simplicity, cheapness, and ubiquity without dependence on electricity supply. In this internet and digital era, there are mobile wireless devices such as handsets, Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA), digital amps and Universal Mobile Telecommunication Systems (UMTS), which possess the in-built capability to receive broadcast signal anywhere at no extra cost. It allows a host to be heard regularly and repeatedly thus, allowing the public to know what the psychiatrists do and who they are. It also has the advantages of being connected in cars, offices, and stores even as one treks on the road, incidental listeners who otherwise might not have originally planned to learn about mental issues may take advantage of the free radio broadcast.

Television is a higher grade of broadcast media with the added advantage of combining visual, sound and motion simultaneously. It registers the development messages in the audience's heart and makes it real and credible. However, it has inherent limitations of its being expensive to own, install and maintain. Perhaps this explains why it is hardly talked about in the rural communities.

Further from the above, mass media though, possess an incredibly tremendous power to promote development messages such as mental health disorders, it cannot guarantee a hundred per cent success rate in a multicultural setting such as we have in Nigeria because of their elitist and urban-centrist orientation. This is the basis of the argument that when disseminating a development message that borders on mental health disorders, for example, national or regional media communicating in English may not accomplish much success. Instead, he suggests indigenous language media, which will consider the peculiarities (language and cultural variability) of each community.

Indigenous language media including prints and broadcasts as well as social media platforms are potential channels of communicating mental health messages to the grassroots where over 70 per cent of Nigerians are residents. This is because, according to earlier reasearch,[52]

50 Soola, Ebenezer O, 'Development journalism for print and electronic media journalists in Nigeria.' *Communicating for Development Purposes. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited* (2003): 115-125.

51 Oyero, Oyedmi Samson, Indigenous language for development purposes. In E.O. Soola (ed.) *Communication for development purposes*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.p.185-195. 2003.

52 Salawu, Abiodun, Paradox of a milieu: Comunicating in African indigenous languages in the age of globalization. In A. Salawu (ed.) Indigenous language media in Africa, Lagos: CBAAC p. 1-20.

'every language reflects the culture of the people,' as a result, it is reasonable that individuals will communicate and express their culture better in their mother tongue.

Despite the global rating of English Language media in many countries, it has been observed that mass-mediated mental health messages in the English language will not get to the grass-roots in a multicultural setting like Nigeria where a multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages and cultures are competing with English.

Communicating messages on mental health disorders with people in indigenous languages engenders comprehension of the complexities in the form of diagnosis, treatment, misconception, and the stigma associated with mental ailments and mental illness.

Looking at the mental disorders index in Nigeria reveals that mental health issues are prevalent in rural communities more than the urban centers. This is because, rural dwellers are mostly illiterates, and are ignorant of the typology of mental disorders, genesis, and prognosis, when to seek early help, what kinds of psychiatric treatments are available and where. Therefore, when helpful messages are to be communicated by way of intervention, it is best done in both English and the indigenous language of the people otherwise, the message may be lost through the channel and the intended audiences may be unable to get the message or if they got it at all, might not be able to make meanings from it.

Conclusion

The study found that though mental health is as important as social and physical health, the aspect of mental health has over the years been neglected by each succeeding government in Nigeria. The neglect is well illustrated by the unenviable level of funding, the infrastructural provision, and the number of mental health professionals (doctors, nurses, psychologists and pharmacists, psychotherapists, social workers etc) employed to attend to the mental health needs of over 190 million Nigerians. The study has also observed that mental health disorders have constituted serious inhibition to sustainable development in Nigeria in that about 60 million people suffering from varying degrees of mental disorders are most times either disabled or are unable to participate maximally in the overall development process. In a proposed mental health communication to checkmate the ugly trend, the communication media are believed to be relevant in disseminating useful and factual mental health information to the government, health professional, patients, and their relatives. It is important to note that the traditional media of print and electronic media alone might not be able to carry mental health messages effectively to the grassroots because of their elitist contents and the lopsided reporting style, which is often in favor of the urban centers to the disadvantage of the rural communities where about 70 per cent of Nigerian population reside. The study therefore proposes the following recommendations.

- The government should come up with definite policies and legislation to shore up funding and upgrade infrastructural facilities that can enhance mental health care practice.

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- The government should pay serious attention to health professionals including mental health experts by giving them regular training and retraining programs that will enable them to have up-to-date skills to manage present-day mental illnesses.

- To mitigate and reduce the stigma often associated with mental health, health facilities can deploy technology in the communication and management of mental patients. For example, there are phone apps that can connect clients having mental illness with doctors, nurses and other care providers and report and receive feedback on health behaviors and illness symptoms. In a way, this will prevent the unnecessary delay they usually experience in the hospital and reduce exposure to stigma in the physical space of the ever-busy health facility.

- Mental health reporters should also seek to increase their knowledge by frequently visiting, psychiatric health facilities, research centers, mental health institutions, mental health officers, remand homes and mental rehabilitation centers to interact with diverse categories of professionals to gain insight into the current scientific discoveries about mental health.

- Media professionals should regularly attend conferences, seminars, and workshops and subscribe to current mental health journals, books and other relevant literature to be familiar with innovations and developments in mental health practice.

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5. MARKETING TOOLS FOR FRAMING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS: VIEWS FROM POLITICAL PARTY-EXECUTIVES FROM AN EMERGING DEMOCRACY, GHANA

GEORGE KWABENA ASAMOAH

INTRODUCTION

Examining political marketing from a broader standpoint involves the application of marketing principles to the complex field of politics.[1] [2] It entails the utilization of marketing methodologies, such as voter research and advertising, to promote political entities – candidates and parties – much like any other service or manufactured product.[3] [4] The groundwork for this intersection between marketing and politics was laid when[5] parallels were identified between marketing consumer goods and political figures. Political marketing has since evolved significantly, with heightened interest in theoretical development and its broader implications over the past decade. The intense competition that has characterized political elections over the past decades has prompted political strategists to adopt commercial marketing principles, strategically influencing voter behavior to gain an edge. [6] [7] A growing body of literature underscores the effectiveness of integrating marketing strategies into political activities.[8] [9]

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9 Lloyd, Jenny. "Square peg, round hole? Can marketing-based concepts such as the 'product'and the 'marketing mix'have a useful role in the political arena?." *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* 14, no. 1-2 (2005): 27-46.

Within the landscape of political marketing research, a peek into the literature reveals a notable gap: limited empirical studies exploring whether political parties in emerging economies, like the dynamic setting of Ghana, actually give a hoot about marketing principles and tools when crafting their campaign messages. In simpler terms, while a ton of studies has dissected the factors political parties weigh in on when molding their campaign messages, [10] [11] [12] the spotlight hasn't shone as brightly on the marketing tools and principles these emerging democracies embrace in their message-making mojo.

So, the burning question: Do political parties in Ghana even bother with marketing principles and tools when conjuring up their campaign messages? The lack of a clear answer is quite the head-scratcher, especially considering the crucial insight it could provide. Knowing whether political party bigwigs in places like Ghana factor in marketing strategies could be a game-changer in understanding if election victories there are a result of strategic brilliance or just sheer luck. This insight becomes even more crucial when considering the ongoing debate about whether political marketing is the true wizard behind electoral success or if it is more about external factors like the environment and the economy. Why does this matter, you ask? Well, having the knowledge on whether Ghanaian politicians are playing the marketing game can guide scholars, practitioners, academics, and even Ghanaian political enthusiasts in crafting and executing effective political marketing moves.

Diving into the intricacies of political marketing, the study doesn't just stop at scratching the surface; it delves deep to offer a contextual lens, particularly from the vibrant perspective of an emerging market. If you take a gander at the existing literature, you'll notice a little bias. Most studies on political marketing seem to have a soft spot for data from the big players – the developed economies. But, and It is a big but, my study breaks free from that trend. I am turning the spotlight on emerging markets, with a keen eye on the dynamic landscape of political marketing activities by pursuing the following research questions.

What factors or marketing principles and tools do political parties in Ghana consider when planning or designing their political campaign strategies and messages?

Which of these marketing principles or tools are mainly applied?

Contextual Discussion

Ghana made history as the first nation south of the Sahara in Africa to gain independence from British colonial rule on March 6, 1957. The post-independence journey has been quite a rollercoaster. By 1960, Ghana became a republic, with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as its President, operating under a one-party system led by the Convention People's Party. The political

10 Lees-Marshment, Jennifer. "The product, sales and market-oriented party-How Labour learnt to market the product, not just the presentation." *European Journal of Marketing* 35, no. 9/10 (2001): 1074-1084.

11 Worcester, Robert M., and Paul R. Baines. "Voter research and market positioning: Triangulation and its implications for policy development." *Winning elections with political marketing* (2006): 11-31.

12 Wring, Dominic. "Reconciling marketing with political science: theories of political marketing." *Journal of marketing management* 13, no. 7 (1997): 651-663.

landscape took a sharp turn in 1966 when Nkrumah's government faced a coup by the military-junta National Liberation Council (NLC). Power then shifted hands to the Progress Party (PP), which won the elections in 1969, ushering in the second republic and a return to civilian rule. However, Ghana's political stability faced turbulence with subsequent coups until constitutional rule was restored in 1992, marking the beginning of the current fourth republic after a democratic general election. From 1992 to 2020, Ghana experienced a political landscape dominated by two major parties, the NDC and NPP, even with more than eight parties in the electoral mix. It wasn't until 2020 that the country reverted to a multi-party system. The journey from independence to a multi-party system has been a fascinating ride for Ghana, marked by both triumphs and challenges.

Ghana's political scene in the fourth republic is like a heavyweight boxing match. Picture this: the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) are in the ring, duking it out, and guess what? They've both snagged the title four times each! It is not just about winning hearts; it is a full-blown political showdown. According to the wisdom dropped[13], this cutthroat competition has turned the political battlefield into a marketing playground. Yes, you heard that right – marketing principles are the secret weapons wielded by political parties in Ghana, especially the big dogs, NDC and NPP. Scholars before us, have been on this beat, confirming that political parties in Ghana are rocking the marketing world.

Taking a cue from previous research findings – It is like a backstage pass to the strategies of these political maestros. Marketing research is their playbook, guiding policies and manifestos. Spill the tea on how social media has become the political pulse, especially for reaching out to the cool cats in the youth. It is not just about shouting into the void; it is about getting personal – segmentation; targeting, and positioning are the power moves. When it comes to swaying voters, it is like a multifaceted dance – political rallies, media debates, short-term goodies, and sound bites all take center stage.[14] With these two heavyweight champs, the NDC and NPP, tag-teaming in the governance spotlight for the last two decades, my study is like an investigative journey into this political circus.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF PREVIOUS WORKS

Marketing in Politics

Peek into the fascinating world of marketing, as defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA). Brace yourself for the jargon: marketing is not just about selling stuff; it is an entire shebang of activities, institutions, and processes. It is all about creating, communicating, delivering, and swapping offerings that carry value – not just for customers

13 Hinson, Robert, and Ernest Yaw Tweneboah-Koduah. "Political marketing strategies in Africa: Expert opinions of recent political elections in Ghana." *Journal of African Business* 11, no. 2 (2010): 201-218.

14 Brierley, Sarah, and Eric Kramon. "Party campaign strategies in Ghana: Rallies, canvassing and handouts." *African Affairs* 119, no. 477 (2020): 587-603.

but for the whole shebang: clients, partners, and society at large. [15] Now, let's rewind a bit. The marketing concept isn't a new kid on the block; It has been a trusted philosophy for both money-making and do-gooding ventures, as declared by the legendary duo. But here's where it gets interesting – political parties, those power-hungry entities, fit snugly into the not-for-profit category. Their game plan? Bagging power from the masses to run the show. It is like the ultimate non-profit hustle.

A decade back, applying marketing theory to politics was like discovering hidden treasure. Now, it is booming, especially in the realms of social and non-profit marketing. In the commercial marketing universe, organizations do the song and dance to meet consumer needs and rake in profits. Political parties, on the flip side, dive into the minds of voters, understanding their needs to secure those precious votes. Here's the twist: unlike your typical profit-driven venture, political candidates aren't selling products; they're dealing in information. It is a grand exchange aimed at shaking up voter behavior and keeping that support flowing. So, satisfaction in this political arena? It hinges on delivering the goods – or in this case, fulfilling promises made during the campaign hustle for votes. It is a wild ride where promises and votes do a tango, leaving everyone wondering who's leading the dance. Enter the realm of political marketing – a crucial cog in the grand machinery of political communication. It is not just a stroll in the park; it is a complex process, a global effort that ropes in every conceivable factor in a politician's communication toolkit.[16] Dubs it as a savvy maneuver involving environmental analysis and opinion research. Why? To whip up competitive offerings that not only please the electorate but also tick off those crucial checkboxes on the party's to-do list. Now, according to the wisdom dropped by, this isn't a casual affair. It is a full-blown process, complete with planning, implementation, evaluation, analysis, and control. Picture this as a meticulous dance orchestrated by various players – individual candidates, political parties, lobbyists, governments, and other interest groups, all vying to push their ideologies, sway public opinion, and, drumroll, clinch those elections. Gives a nod to this high-stakes game. Cutting to the chase, political marketing boils down to one thing – building and maintaining those precious exchange relations between a candidate or party and us, the voters. It is not just about winning hearts; it is about nurturing valuable connections. And guess what? The research is on the same wavelength, adopting this very notion of political marketing.

The Fusion of Marketing Mix and Political Marketing Mix

Parties leverage marketing intelligence to tailor products for voters. This fusion births the political marketing mix, embracing classic elements like the 4Ps and the expanded 7Ps.[17] Unlike commercial marketing, political marketing demands a bespoke approach, crafting

15 Nicolas, Carolina, Leslier Valenzuela-Fernández, and José M. Merigó. "Research trends of marketing: a bibliometric study 1990–2017." *Journal of Promotion Management* 26, no. 5 (2020): 674-703.

16 Newman, Bruce I. *The marketing of the president: Political marketing as campaign strategy*. Sage Publications, 1993.

17 Akinola, Olanrewaju Olugbenga, and Ibrahim Ayoade Adekunle. "Developing market-oriented politics in Nigeria: a review of the 2019 presidential election." *Journal of Marketing Communications 28,* no. 1 (2022): 73-94.

products of core themes, ideas, and promises of value. Promotion, the star of the show, communicates these benefits to voters through various channels, from personal selling to targeted ads.[18]

Moreover, the political price tag encompasses economic, psychological, and national image prices, while 'Place' strategically positions the product for maximum impact. Scholars emphasize a holistic view of political marketing beyond the mix, integrating customer-centricity, research, relationship-building, branding, and market orientation.[19] Success in political marketing hinges on diverse goals, from raising awareness to fulfilling manifesto promises and shaping public opinion. It's a multifaceted narrative where victory takes many forms, from immediate electoral triumphs to long-term strategic influence.

Theoretical Perspective

Let us step into the vibrant world of political messaging, where the game is all about framing. Imagine it as a storytelling magic trick – the way you present a message (the frame) shapes how people interpret it. It is not just about the content; it is about how you paint the picture.[20] [21] [22] Now, framing theory, in the realm of mass communication, refers to how the media wraps up information for the audience.[23] [24] Think of it as a narrative sculptor, selectively emphasizing certain aspects of reality in a way that promotes a specific perspective, problem definition, or moral stance. In the arena of political marketing, framing becomes a strategic tool. It is about political players crafting messages that influence how people see, think, and act through a carefully woven narrative. It is like a backstage manipulation of public perceptions, where the chosen frame reveals what the speaker deems crucial to the topic at hand.

Take the 2020 campaign, for example. The ruling government (NPP) frames free senior high education as a success story, enhancing access and saving costs for Ghanaian parents. On the flip side, the main opposition party (NDC) frames it as a failure, pointing to infrastructure challenges and the impact on the education system. It is a dance of perspectives, each party crafting its narrative to sway voter opinions. This is not a new playbook. Past studies from developed economies showcase how political parties masterfully wield this theory. In the

18 Grimmer, Martin, and Dennis C. Grube. "Political branding: A consumer perspective on Australian political parties." *Party Politics 25*, no. 2 (2019): 268-281.

19 Pich, C., & Newman, B. I. (2020). Evolution of political branding: Typologies, diverse settings and future research. *Journal of Political Marketing, 19*(1-2), 3-14.

20 Arowolo, Sunday Olasunkanmi. "Understanding framing theory." *Mass Communication Theory* 3, no. 6 (2017): 4.

21 Borah, Porismita. "Conceptual issues in framing theory: A systematic examination of a decade's literature." *Journal of communication* 61, no. 2 (2011): 246-263..

22 Hänggli, Regula, and Hanspeter Kriesi. "Political framing strategies and their impact on media framing in a Swiss direct-democratic campaign." *Political communication* 27, no. 2 (2010): 141-157.

23 Shulman, Hillary C., and Matthew D. Sweitzer. "Advancing framing theory: Designing an equivalency frame to improve political information processing." *Human Communication Research* 44, no. 2 (2018): 155-175.

24 Ardèvol-Abreu, Alberto. "Framing theory in communication research. Origins, development and current situation in Spain." *Revista latina de comunicación social* 70 (2015).

U.S. 2016 election, for instance, Donald Trump's campaign strategically framed messages about immigrants, capturing voters' attention. [25] [26] So, as we delve into the current study, picture it as an exploration into the minds of political parties in emerging democracies like Ghana. What factors do they juggle when sculpting their campaign messages? It is not just about what they say; it is about how they frame it, creating narratives that resonate in the complex dance of politics.

METHODOLOGY

The study sought to explore and identify marketing principles political parties in Ghana use for their campaign activities. I opted for qualitative interviews to get the lowdown straight from the party executives themselves.[27] Picture it like a backstage pass to the political landscape's strategic minds. Now, the stage was set with a whopping 27 registered political parties according to the Electoral Commission of Ghana. Out of this eclectic mix, 11 threw their hats into the 2020 general elections ring. I cherry-picked these 11 for my study, sending them letters like political messages explaining my mission and seeking their nod to join the conversation. Seven parties were game, ready to spill the beans on their marketing tactics. However, the dance partners boiled down to five, as only their executives were available for the interview party.

In the spirit of confidentiality, party names and executive positions were masked, represented only by the mysterious letters of the alphabet (A-E). It was like giving them a political alias for this undercover exploration. We snagged interviews with 10 party executives, each chat lasting a cool 45 to 60 minutes. Now, given the sensitive nature of the Intel we were after, we reassured them that their identities and party names would stay incognito – no spoilers here.

With the juicy data in hand, we followed a three-step dance routine suggested by scholarly choreographers.[28] [29] First up, the data got a makeover – transcribed, organized, and printed for a dazzling performance. A skilled transcriptionist double-checked for accuracy, ensuring the data was as reliable as a seasoned campaign promise. But that's not all; we brought in the 'member verification' cameo, reaching out to some respondents to cross-check their contributions. Any contradictions or inconsistencies got a quick fix, keeping the data dance floor squeaky clean.[30] Finally, it was time for the grand finale – pattern recognition. We spotted

25 Groshek, Jacob, and Ahmed Al-Rawi. "Public sentiment and critical framing in social media content during the 2012 US presidential campaign." *Social Science Computer Review* 31, no. 5 (2013): 563-576.

26 Ogan, Christine, Rosemary Pennington, Olesya Venger, and Daniel Metz. "Who drove the discourse? News coverage and policy framing of immigrants and refugees in the 2016 US presidential election." *Communications* 43, no. 3 (2018): 357-378.

27 Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. "Using thematic analysis in psychology." *Qualitative research in psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77-101.

28 Huberman, A. "Qualitative data analysis a methods sourcebook." (2014).

29 Creswell, John W., and Vicki L. Plano Clark. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications, 2017.

30 Jugder, Narantuya. "The thematic analysis of interview data: An approach used to examine the influence of the market on curricular provision in Mongolian higher education institutions." *Hillary place papers* 3 (2016).

the themes, gave them a code, and lined them up for the review party. It is like putting together the pieces of a political puzzle, revealing the marketing magic happening behind the scenes.

Findings

In their fierce battle for supremacy, companies make strategic marketing decisions based on a mix of tactics – the marketing mix, branding, and customer-centric strategies like segmentation, targeting, and positioning. This study explores Ghanaian political marketing with an emphasis on party message tactics. Party A places a strong emphasis on marketing research and shapes their manifestos and slogans using vast voter data. Not simply party ideology, but voter expectations also influence policy decisions, allowing for customized messaging for specific constituencies and national issues. They often hold town hall meetings, focus groups, and interviews with influential people including assembly members and chiefs to stay in step with popular needs.

> We don't just say things because they sound nice … we usually go to ground through our research team, which is directly supervised by the director of research to conduct town hall meetings, group discussion or interviews with chiefs and community leaders in the various constituencies or professional groups to understand their issues. Through this research, we can identify the specific needs of each constituency… even within the same constituency there are needs for the youth, children and adults. By this, we can segment the population … design effective solutions and coined beautiful messages to communicate our solutions. Because there are differences in needs and wants of different constituencies, we can design targeted solutions and different communication modes in transmitting our campaign messages… thus, everything we do or say emanates from the people [Executive 1, party A].

As Ghanaian voters up their game, becoming more savvy and ready to give political parties the boot if their needs aren't met, diving into marketing research is like the secret sauce. It is the unsung hero behind whipping up those attention-grabbing campaign messages that hit the right chords with specific voters. So, being all ears and tailoring policies and messages straight from the voters' playbook is the golden ticket to clinching elections in today's Ghana – or so spilled the beans from a party bigwig.

> All our attention as a party is on the various segments of the voter population since that is the only strategic means of winning elections in this country (Ghana) … you must identify their needs from community to district to constituency to region to national and frame appealing policies and messages to win their heart.

Straight from the horse's mouth – an insider from the party spilled the tea. They spill over backwards to get into the minds of their customers (aka voters). Why? Because, in their playbook, the party manifesto is like a sacred social contract. It is not some pie-in-the-sky wish list; it is grounded in the nitty-gritty realities that voters face.

> *"Though we have ideology as a party, our decisions and policies emanate mainly from*

voters… we regard the voter as a 'king' and to be able to serve them better, we have to know what they need and expect us to do for them when we win power… you cannot sit in your office and assume what they want, you have to go to them…[and] based on this information, we are able to craft a campaign message that resonates with the voters' aspiration".

The party backed their words with action, creating a manifesto and campaign messages tailored to each region's unique challenges. They used sales promotion as a key part of their strategy, offering short-term perks to attract voters. Their goal was to generate excitement, raise awareness, and engage voters with their policies, messages, and candidates. They handed out branded T-shirts and other swag during energetic campaign tours to further entice and connect with potential supporters.

"For our rallies, we provide incentives such as T-shirts, party paraphernalia, and sometimes branded things like cutlass and wellington boots, depending on the area to attract people... No serious political party can deny that most voters, particularly those in rural areas, expect gifts during campaign season." [Executive 1, party A).

During campaign tours, Ghanaian political parties hand out branded items like T-shirts, cutlasses, and wellington boots. Despite this generosity, the respondents insist it is not vote buying – just innocent promotional giveaways

Providing these products cannot be considered as vote-buying because Ghanaians have voted against political parties since 1992, regardless of perceived sharing of items... Even if they share cars or houses, if people feel your ideas or solutions do not meet their requirements, they will vote no. So, the objective cannot be to buy their votes, as Ghanaians have proved [Executive 1, party A).

Past scholars argue that freebies don't sway elections, as voters prioritize a candidate's track record. Research shows voters view gifts as tokens. The party segments voters using market research, focusing on economic factors, investor interests, and regional specifics to tailor effective campaign messages.

"Aside the general campaign message which captures broad economic and national issues, we also have targeted messages for various stakeholders, regions, cities, districts, and villages based on information gathered from them with regard to their needs… everybody wants to know what you will do for them when they vote for you. The youth, for instance, need jobs… and we provide practical solutions and creatively communicated on how those jobs will be created in each district, constituency and regions across the country. As our research have shown, a large segment of the voter population considers corruption. So, we design a solution to deal with the canker and it was also explicitly captured in our campaign message" [Executive 2, party A].

According to the party leaders, they customize messages with specific promises for different regions and tailored solutions for key sectors. Party 'A' aims to connect with everyone—youth,

adults, stakeholders, and the general public. They use a wide range of communication channels, from TV, radio, and billboards to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. During the 2020 election, amid COVID-19, they even went door-to-door to ensure every voter was informed.

> *"We use the mix of all the communication channels to get our message to everybody… radio, television, information van or centers, billboards, flyers… for the youth and middle-class people who are IT savvy and are mostly online, we use the online platforms to get our message across to them".*

Now, when it comes to party 'B,' they're all about the voters' needs and their party's grand ideology – the North Star guiding them in crafting policies and spinning up campaign messages that scream, "We've got the better deal, folks!" Their stance? The government should take the reins in cooking up and divvying out the wealth pie for the folks, none of that private sector business driven by personal interests in their playbook.

> *"Our policies and campaign messages are mainly guided by this principle (party ideology) the private man who is seeking his personal interest cannot be trusted to be one to genuinely bring people out of poverty… the government must lead in wealth creation" [Executive 2, party B].*

Diving deep into the trenches of voters' minds, party 'B' takes serious strides in identifying those needs. They're not just throwing darts in the dark; they've got a marketing research consultant on board, and they're chatting it up with community leaders, constituency bigwigs, and polling station executives across the nation. It is a full-on voter needs investigation! The Intel they scoop up becomes the secret sauce for whipping up campaign policies and messages that resonate and, more importantly, clinch those votes. No one-size-fits-all here – It is all about tailored policies and messages, hitting the right chords with different segments of the population.

> All our policies, campaign promises and messages are hinged on needs, wants, expectations and aspirations of our customers, which are the voters. So, true identification of these needs and wants is very critical to us a party. That is why we always contract professional marketing companies to do professional marketing research to identify these needs for us. However, to compliment the work of the consultant, we conduct our independent research through our party executives in the various constituencies and polling stations across the country through interviews with chiefs, community leaders and town hall meetings to identify the needs of the various towns, constituencies and regions across the country [Executive 1, party B].

Sure, party 'B' executives play it coy, insisting they're not slipping cash into voters' pockets – that's "vote-buying," they say. But, in a sly move, they confess to some friendly gestures. Picture this: snazzy T-shirts making the rounds, and a little transport TLC for folks showing up to party shindigs. They claim it is not a backdoor deal; it is just a sprinkle of appreciation. Just party vibes, no strings attached.

"We don't believe in inducing voters to vote for us as our competitors do… politics has become so expensive, and the rich are taking advantage of the situation to get into politics for personal interest… as for T-shirts and T&T, we provide for people who turn out for our party event".

The party mainly employs the door-to-door approach in conveying its policies and campaign messages to the electorate through constituency and polling station executives.

"Given resource constraints, we rely solely on our party executives at the various levels for our campaign activities and communicate our policies to the electorates."

According to the party executives, although the party is aware of the growing social media influence, particularly among the youth, it has a limited social media presence due to a lack of expertise but is working to improve the situation.

We are aware of the importance of social and how it can influence people, especially the youth… but we currently don't have resource expertise but working to improve our social media presence before the 2024 election.

In the lead-up to the 2016 and 2020 showdowns, the party brass from Party C took the grassroots route, knocking on doors, charming voters, and pitching their political spiel.

Now, when it comes to shaping their campaign playbook, Party C turns into a policy maestro. They're like the conductors of public opinion, tuning in to Ghanaians via media and their Intel squad at the local level. Every policy and message is a carefully crafted product, a vote-worthy offering tailored to meet the diverse needs of the electorate, or so says a high-ranking executive. It is not just an election; it is a strategic exchange of policies for votes. That's Party C's winning symphony.

"To ensure that our policies and campaign message address the critical issues bothering Ghanaians, we first listen to them through the media and our party structure at the grass-root… through detailed consultation and engagements, the concern of the various categories of stakeholders is taken into consideration when drafting our policy document… our policies and candidate is the product we seek to offer Ghanaians in exchange for their votes; therefore, a due diligent is always done."

The party pulls out all the stops, employing an array of promotional tools to give their candidate and campaign messages the spotlight. Picture this: lively political debates, strategic discussions on handpicked media platforms, press releases that make waves, and press conferences that command attention—all orchestrated by the party's communication maestros. Come the 2020 campaign blitz, they took a personalized approach, hitting the streets door-to-door with their members. For them, it is about direct engagement, not swaying opinions with cash or gifts. They steer clear of what they deem as vote-buying, holding firm to the belief that genuine influence shouldn't come with a price tag.

"We don't encourage vote-buying using all manner of gifts… we sell our message directly to the voter and expect them to take decision devoid of influence through gifts."

The scoop from party 'D's executives spills the beans: their game plan is to emerge as a formidable third force, eyeing the throne of power in the not-so-distant future. To turn this vision into reality, they treat their policies and flag bearer as the star products in need of some savvy marketing to win the hearts of Ghanaians.

This political maverick aims to stand out as the go-to choice, positioning itself as the alternative to the dominant duo ruling the fourth republic as of 2020. How do they go about it? They've rolled out a strategy that brings them face-to-face with voters, orchestrating direct communication through agents and party bigwigs in every nook and cranny across the nation. When it comes to shaping their campaign messages and policies, they draw inspiration from their party ideology and the opinions echoed by everyday Ghanaians. As one seasoned executive puts it,

"Though we have an ideology which is to revive all state-owned companies and factories, we still go to the electorate and find out their needs and factor those aspirations into our bigger idea… we sell our message directly to them on one-on-one basis… we don't rely on the media, we go to them directly."

Insiders from party 'E' reveal their belief that a compelling campaign message can sway decisions without the need for incentives. Party paraphernalia and T-shirts are solely for promotional purposes, boosting candidate visibility. Branded as the people's advocate, they position themselves as a "national party" focused on addressing the needs of Ghanaians. They carefully select candidates known for their dedication to the people and conduct extensive research to tailor policies and messages to evolving needs.

"We are a national party that seeks to serve all Ghanaians equally and create equal opportunity for all, not some select few. To achieve this effectively, we always go to them to have first-hand information regarding their needs and expectations… you don't sit in your office assume for them."

Like party A, B and D, party E also uses focus group discussions, town hall meetings, and interviews with other key stakeholders in society such as chiefs and community leaders as a primary means of identifying needs of voters in the various constituencies and communities across the country.

We use our party structures and the research department of the party which is headed by the director of research and operations to undertake research activities such as interviews with key and strategic community leaders like chiefs and opinion leader's focus group discussions particularly with youth to identify the needs and aspirations of voters in each constituency, district, or community. Based on our research, I can tell you on authority that the needs of voters differ across constituencies across the country, though with some commonalities like job for the youth. For example, while

> some communities place more value on access to portable drinking water, others places value on either tertiary or secondary education school closer them [Executive 2, party E].

This party does not just dip its toes; it dives headfirst into the world of segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Armed with insights from robust marketing research, they carve the voting populace into distinct groups. Tailoring unique policies and messages becomes their forte, catering to specific clusters of stakeholders. The voter-population undergoes a magical transformation, turning into segments like the investor population, economic enthusiasts, anti-corruption advocates, and anti-feminist voices, among others.

> *"Though we have a national policy that seeks to deal with the bigger national economy, we divide the entire voter population into groups based on their needs and aspirations and provide targeted campaign messages based on the needs and aspirations of the various identifiable stakeholders, communities, districts, constituencies, and regions… because we do rigorous research, we have a message for everybody peculiar to their needs."*

This party doesn't just wing it; they meticulously cherry-pick their promotional tools and communication channels to beam their campaign message directly to the electorates. Engaging in political debates and discussions across various radio and TV stations, they deploy articulate and well-versed communicators. Press releases, press conferences, and public relations serve as their trusty communication tools, ensuring their message resonates far and wide.

> *"We are a serious political party with representation in almost every media house in the country with intelligent communicators that debate and discuss the party's position on national issues… we sometimes use press release or organize press conference to state our position or correct a wrong impression in public domain."*

Concerning communication channels, the executives stated that although the party uses both traditional and online social media platforms, the focus is more on the traditional media such as radio, television, and billboards.

> *"We use both online and offline media, but the concentration is more on the offline traditional media due to the low penetration of internet in most parts of the country."*

Additionally, the party embarks on sales promotion by providing short term incentives in the form of party souvenirs, T-shirts, and transportation to party programs and rallies.

> *As a party, we frowned on vote buying and don't encourage it at all, but we do provide little incentives like souvenirs and T&T to encourage patronization of party programs and rallies."*

Although the party does door-to-door campaigns, it was intensified during the 2020 campaign season because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

My exploration of Ghana's political landscape aimed to unveil the marketing principles and tools employed by political parties during campaigns. Six key factors emerged: marketing research, customer-centrism, sales promotion, personal selling, advertisement, and press conferences. These fundamental principles are integrated into campaign activities by the five scrutinized political parties, shaping and disseminating their messages to the electorate.

Breaking away from the scripts of prior studies, my study spotlighted personal selling as a major player in the communication toolkit during the 2020 general election, particularly in light of the disruptive force that was the Covid-19 pandemic. The shift towards personal selling can be chalked up to the curbs on mass social gatherings, including political rallies, which, before 2020, didn't command a spotlight in the political communication playbook. Put differently, the unique challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic nudged Ghanaian political parties to recognize personal selling as an indispensable facet of effective campaigning in the 2020 general election. Further peeling back the layers, the results indicate that only the two political heavyweights in Ghana — the parties that have clinched victories in elections during the fourth republic — engage in the theater of political debates and media discussions to peddle their policies and candidates to the voting masses. This aligns with the insights of past scholars, echoing the crucial role that political debates and discussions play in the art of persuasion and conveying campaign messages to the electorate — a quintessential element in framing messages and clinching political victories.[31]

Table 1: Emerging themes from the study

Themes	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E
Customer centrism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing research	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Segmentation	✓	-	-	-	✓
Targeting/Positioning	✓	-	-	-	✓
Sales promotion	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Personal selling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Debates & discussions	✓	-	-	-	✓

31 Mensah, Kobby. "Political brand architecture: Towards a new conceptualisation of political branding in an emerging democracy." *African Journalism Studies* 37, no. 3 (2016): 61-84.

Themes	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Party E
Advertisement in Social media	✓	-	-	-	✓
Advertisement in Traditional media	✓	-	✓	-	✓
Press release	✓	-	-	-	✓
Press conference	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
Party ideology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Once more, the study brings to light a tale of two, with only the heavyweight political players, the proven victors in elections of the fourth republic, embracing the dance of segmentation, targeting, and positioning as the heartbeat of their campaign choreography. In contrast, the smaller political underdogs, perennially clocking in with less than 3% in elections since '92, seem to have their focus set on a different stage. The neglect of these crucial marketing moves, particularly segmentation, might very well be the Achilles' heel of the minor parties in Ghana. This aligns with the tune sung by [32] who tout segmentation as a cornerstone strategy for political parties eyeing success in their campaign endeavors.

Venturing deeper into the political theater, the results unfurl marketing research, press conferences, incentives, and the age-old medium of traditional media advertisement as the mainstays in the arsenal of political parties sculpting their policies and messages to sway voter sentiments.[33] This echoes past harmonies that have hailed these elements as the secret sauce for crafting policies and messages that pull the puppet strings of voter behavior. Ballad, for instance, harmonizes with the notion that the siren call of short-term incentives (a.k.a. sales promotion) was a major influencer in voters' intentions during the 2016 general election in Ghana. Four out of the five political party interviews in my study dance to the rhythm that sales promotion is the key to unlocking the electorate's attention and participation in party programs and rallies. Here, it is noteworthy that, in this context, the offering of short-term incentives doesn't wear the cloak of vote-buying, a sentiment echoed by who revealed that incentives carry little weight in the grand ballet of winning elections in Ghana. The prevailing tune, as elucidated by the study, suggests that these political tokens are simply a ploy to court attention from the electorate, a prelude to the main act of delivering campaign messages and policies.

32 Branton, Regina, Jared Perkins, and Samantha Pettey. "To Run or Not to Run? US House Campaign Advertising." *Journal of Political Marketing* 18.3 (2019): 196-215.

33 Armannsdottir, Guja, Stuart Carnell, and Christopher Pich. "Exploring personal political brands of Iceland's parliamentarians." *Journal of political Marketing* 19, no. 1-2 (2020): 74-106.

Moreover, the study nods to the revelations of, affirming that the airwaves of traditional media, radio, and television, still hold the throne as the paramount channels through which voters catch the political messaging wave. In tandem with this, we echo the sentiments of, underscoring the bedrock importance of tuning into voters' needs to compose a symphony of compelling marketing campaign messages.

Yet, standing in contrast to the findings of, the study takes a different turn, uncovering a landscape where 'smaller' political players in Ghana seem to gloss over crucial marketing doctrines like marketing intelligence, customer-centrism, and extend a cold shoulder to communication tools such as social media, political debates, and discussions in traditional media when crafting their campaign messages. These less prominent parties seem to be sparing little thought for other vital factors like segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Even in the era of the digital age's uprising, with online and social media claiming their seats at the communication table, the findings reveal a timid embrace by these smaller political entities in Ghana. A gentle nudge toward adopting these marketing principles and techniques might just be the catalyst needed to transform these smaller parties into competitive contenders, potentially ushering in a third force to shake the foundations of Ghana's political duopoly.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This chapter throws a fresh twist into the mix, tossing the framing theory, typically a staple in mass communication theory, into the political marketing pot. While scholars like have flirted with the framing theory to decode political message differences, my take injects a dose of novelty by exploring its relevance in an emerging democracy like Ghana.

The study unveils marketing intelligence and customer-centricity as pivotal in Ghana's political marketing landscape. Political parties craft their policies and messages guided by these principles, alongside flashy tools like sales promotion and advertising across traditional and social media. Party ideology, press releases, and conferences add depth to the political narrative. Larger parties dominate with segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies, ruling social media platforms. Smaller parties, consistently securing less than 5% of votes, rely heavily on personal selling, particularly accentuated during the Covid-19 era to compensate for banned rallies.

This isn't just another academic paper; it's a qualitative exploration into Ghana's political marketing secrets. From marketing research to incentives, it deciphers the playbook of Ghana's political masters. For smaller parties, segmentation, targeting, and positioning are paramount, as evidenced by Nigeria's APC party. Embracing social media is crucial, given Ghana's tech-savvy youth population.

Managers of political parties, take heed: leverage marketing research, customer-centricity, and personal selling. Blend traditional and social media ads, sales promotions, press releases, and debates. Embrace segmentation, targeting, and positioning to stand out in the political arena and aim for success.

Limitation and Direction for Future Studies

The study took a qualitative approach to unravel the marketing strategies of Ghanaian political parties. But here's the deal – qualitative methods have limitations. They're like a close-up lens, offering insights, but not the big picture. To broaden our horizons, we need quantitative studies. It is like going from an intimate chat to a massive gathering. Quantitative methods allow us to reach a wider audience, unlike the exclusive vibe of qualitative approaches. In a nutshell, qualitative methods gave us an insider's look, but for a more inclusive understanding, we'll turn to quantitative studies. It is about expanding the conversation beyond the insiders.

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SECTION 2: CONCEPTS OF COMMUNICATION IN AFRICA

6. HARNESSING THE POWER OF LISTENING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN A DISRUPTED MEDIA ECOLOGY

THEODORA DAME ADJIN-TETTEY AND ANTHEA GARMAN

Introduction

One of the key attributes of democracy is freedom of speech and expression.[1] Hence, in many democratic dispensations, it is expected that there are no restrictions on what the media report on and how media practitioners do their work, albeit professionally (i.e., in compliance with the regulatory and professional framework that guides their practice). The public also has the right to speak out on matters of public interest and to demand accountability from those in positions of authority, both political, public, and corporate, to effect social change. This, we believe, is how freedom of speech and expression is extended to the public. The media, in keeping with their democratic duty, set the agenda and provide public interest issues the time and space they need to be expressed, which plays a critical role in promoting freedom of expression and social change.[2]

However, over time, the relationship between the 'traditional' notion of audience and the media has evolved. This is because there is an apparent blurring of the lines between the media content creator, disseminator, and consumer of media content. Thanks to the development of Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC), nearly any media user can now produce media content, provided they have access to the necessary tools. Further accentuating this 'new' norm are the social media platforms and other participatory media that allow for the easy dissemination of content. The content that we view online, including those that are posted on social media platforms, comes from a variety of sources, including bloggers, professional journalists, amateur 'journalists,' people with a range of interests and goals, corporations and business organizations, politicians, and governmental organizations. One disadvantage of this trend is the spread of false information and fake news, which undermines the ability of media professionals and/or organizations to act as gatekeepers to ensure that only verified and trustworthy content is made available to the public.

However, the uniqueness of the present times is that even though legacy media may be carrying out their functions dutifully, individuals do not necessarily have to rely on them for space and airtime to put words to their thoughts and communicate to whomever they want to address issues to in any form, be it text, audio, visuals or a mix of formats. As alluded to

1 Van Vollenhoven, Willem Johannes. 'The right to freedom of expression: The mother of our democracy.' *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 18.6 (2015): 2299-2327.

2 Thomas, Ryan J. 'Book Review: Jeffrey C Alexander, Elizabeth Butler Breese and María Luengo (eds) The crisis of journalism reconsidered: Democratic culture, professional codes, digital future.' *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*. *18*. 7 (2017): 927-929.

earlier, the digitized public sphere has become an enabler of speaking truth to power, thereby amplifying citizens' agency.[3] With the rapid generation and sharing of content on various platforms available on the internet, almost everyone who has access to the internet and has signed up to any social media network is exposed to tons of information. This potentially leads to internet users being inundated with a host of information which can result in information overload, a term associated with the excessive quantity of daily information consumed.[4] In a world where nearly everyone with internet access has some form of control over media content production and dissemination and is also a member of the media audience, the question that begs for an answer is: who is listening to whom?

Listening here is used to represent giving attention to any kind of information or speaker, including online content of various formats, messages or content for meaning, soundness, or substance. Husband[5] defines listening as 'an act of attention, a willingness to focus on the other, to heed both their presence and their communication.' The listening theory provides very insightful perspectives and offers some important reflections about how people [can] engage meaningfully in various contexts to arrive at useful decisions to harness positive social change, which we, borrowing from Simaddan,[6] define as the modification of social structural mechanisms, as evidenced by shifts in social structures, cultural symbols, norms of behavior, or value systems. In this particular context, the focus of our attention is social change that reflects positively on society.

With earlier conceptualizations by Susan Bickford, other scholars have also contributed meaningfully to conceptualizations of the listening theory in various communicative contexts. In this chapter, we go into some detail regarding the many submissions made about the listening theory in the following contexts: journalism, online media interactions, and public discourse. We use those arguments to make the case for how listening can be effectively used to bring about social change. We also attempt to put forward other dynamics of listening among individuals and corporations and suggest another mode of listening that occurs in participatory media, which we believe when utilized consciously can bring about positive social change.

3 Geise, Stephanie, Axel Heck, and Diana Panke. 'The effects of digital media images on political participation online: Results of an eye-tracking experiment integrating individual perceptions of "photo news factors".' *Policy & Internet* 13.1 (2021): 54-85.

4 Roetzel, Peter Gordon. 'Information overload in the information age: a review of the literature from business administration, business psychology, and related disciplines with a bibliometric approach and framework development.' *Business research* 12.2 (2019): 479-522.

5 Husband, Charles. 'Between listening and understanding.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 441-443.

6 Simandan, Dragos. 'Being surprised and surprising ourselves: A geography of personal and social change.' *Progress in Human Geography 44*.1 (2020): 99-118. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518810431

What the Listening Theory says about Public Discourse

It is no doubt that there will be no communication if there are only voices and no listeners who will have to pay attention to and possibly act on the information. Most scholars agree that it is essential to understand the relationship between listening and speaking, and how interdependent and dynamic they are.[7] Consequently, 'Who should speak?' is less crucial than 'Who will listen?'.[8] Intrinsically woven in the quoted statement is the fact that communication achieves its purpose when there is someone to receive it (the listener) and possibly act on it. Consequently, value should not be placed on listening at the expense of speaking.[9] Likewise, Bickford[10] fundamentally argues that to achieve results with communication, there should be a party that is ready to listen. Conceptualizing listening as an act of concentration, Merleau-Ponty[11] suggests that the the listener fades into the background throughout the communication interaction and makes the speaker or the bearer of the message the center of attention.

Susan Bickford, drawing on Merleau-Ponty's submission, suggests that listening is an attempt to provide for a range of expressions that could be unexpected and thought-provoking.[12] This means that no matter one's stance on an issue, a good listener should be open to any view held in any interaction or discourse. We believe that this is one of the surest ways that duty-bearers can be responsive to societal needs.

Bickford offers that listening and speaking are interdependent, in that both are active responses to each other. She, further, likens listening to speaking and suggests that both are creative acts. As a creative act, demanding a certain level of attention to others, listening requires a conscious resolve which is equally essential for speaking. Bickford, exploring what listening demands in a democratic and diverse unequal social order, proposes that to listen effectively, value must be placed on the distinctiveness of the speaker as a whole and refers to Simone Weil's[13] proposition of placing value on a speaker - '… the whole of him. The arms, the eyes, the thoughts, everything'. This kind of listening sets aside personal biases, judgment, and passiveness and demands 'self-annihilation' and genuine openness to the speaker [or the message].[14]

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7 Bickford, Susan. *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

8 Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (1990). *The postcolonial critic*. Routledge, 1990.

9 Couldry, Nick. 'Rethinking the politics of voice: Commentary.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 579-582.

10 Bickford, Susan. *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

11 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 'Phenomenology of perception.' *Translated by Colin Smith* (1965).

12 Bickford, Susan. *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

13 Weil, Simone. *Selected Essays, 1934-1943: Historical, Political, and Moral Writings*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015.

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On the question of openness and self-annihilation in listening, Gemma Corradi Fiumara suggests fundamental openness which lets the listener be 'overwhelmed by the message.'[15] She argues that genuine listening leaves the listener experiencing differences, 'anomalies' and contradictions that challenge what they believe in, which could make them make better judgments. It can be assumed that once the judgment is suspended and a conscious effort is made to listen attentively for the substance of a message, the listener will be able to decipher the rationality of the argument or message being put across and make a better judgment. Fiumara, therefore, challenges the human tendency to always stick to their individual views and resist any views that oppose theirs:

> It almost seems that 'culture' requires aspirants to participate according to their specific qualifications, to become adherents to an immense task of justifying a 'logic' that knows very well how to say practically everything and hardly knows how to listen.[16]

She advocates objectivity in listening, postulating that it is an 'intrinsic quality of philosophical rigor'. When there is judgment during or before listening, personal biases will likely interfere in the assessment of the content of the message or information. Sharing a similar view, Levin[17] proposes that the listener must yield to the speaker and neutralize attractions and aversions.

Susan Bickford refers to Levin's position as courageous listening, where people courageously and consciously put away their fears and predispositions and listen actively. She submits that silence is one of the often-cited conditions for achieving this kind of listening and offers that silence is not the mere lack of sound but the absence of sound. Just like speaking and listening, silence and speech are mutually reliant on each other, and silence as a condition of listening is also an intentional act.[18] This means that silence must be consciously created to give space to the speaker. However, Bickford was quick to add that silence has several interpretations and, thus, can be misleading, if it is the only marker for listening. She, thus, recommended additional conditions for listening such as the listener asking questions, which signifies the readiness to listen and helps direct the terms of discussion in a specific manner.

Listening, however, does not mean the listener cannot be critical of what is being spoken about. Levin[19] reasons that the kind of listening suggested in the listening theory does not prevent one from making critical judgments, but those judgments must come from the 'neutral space' of genuine listening in which judgment has been suspended. Susan Bickford equally recommends avoiding two extremes when listening: simply exchanging one's ideas with the speaker or simply defensively deciding not to listen. These conditions are suggested because one should be able to listen to understand or make meaning of what the other party is saying

15 Fiumara, Gemma Corradi. *The other side of language: A philosophy of listening*. Routledge, 2013.

16 _____

17 Levin, David Michael. *The listening self: Personal growth, social change and the closure of metaphysics*. Routledge, 2019.

18 Bickford, Susan. *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

19 Levin, David Michael. *The listening self: Personal growth, social change and the closure of metaphysics*. Routledge, 2019.

to offer an alternative position, even in the context where one does not share the views of the other party.

Another inference that may be made is that individuals who lend a listening ear in public are more likely to receive it back when they present their arguments or opinions. The central point here is that for good public discourse to yield fruitful results, such as leading to social change, listening becomes a path-building activity that requires those in the communicative interaction to engage one another's perspectives. Understanding the various viewpoints on a subject is crucial for both fitting in and, more significantly, for coming to sound judgments or decisions.

Listening is thought to provide a lot of benefits, the dominant one being bringing actors and institutions into clearer relationships with each other,[20] where each party is ready to consciously give attention to the substance of an argument, thought, or viewpoint. This mode of listening, where judgment and aversions are suspended and openness is embraced, ensures that rationality prevails and the communication actors can then become aware of the perspectives of an issue to offer solutions that will be mutually beneficial.[21]

We submit that conversations yield better results if all parties are ready to listen to the different perspectives of an issue and find common ground. This is even more important in public discourse when conversations usually center on issues of public interest which can potentially lead to social change. If people are not ready to listen to one another, it is unlikely that we will arrive at well-considered solutions that include opposing and alternative viewpoints that reveal potential gaps that need to be fixed beforehand. It will be voices and, possibly, no solutions or solutions that never meet the majority's needs or expectations. The listening theory, therefore, provides a framework for public discourse engagements.

Based on this, we argue that to arrive at useful conclusions and decisions that yield positive social change, leaders at all levels must listen without aversions and put aside preconceived notions or biases when dealing with subordinates. Since the marker of listening can be ambiguous, it is also suggested that an assessment of whether listening has occurred in public discourses should center on how the different sides of an argument are given space and how they reflect in objective and rational decision-making.

Online Media and Listening

A lot of attention has been given to how online media is giving a 'voice' to the masses while overlooking other forms of online engagement including the emergent disciplines of online attention (listening). [22] She maintains that listening is a 'significant practice of intimacy, con-

20 O'donnell, Penny, Justine Lloyd, and Tanja Dreher. 'Listening, pathbuilding and continuations: A research agenda for the analysis of listening.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 423-439.

21 Bickford, Susan. *The dissonance of democracy: Listening, conflict, and citizenship*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

22 Crawford, Kate, 'These foolish things: On intimacy and insignificance in mobile media.' In Goggin, Gerard and Larissa Hjorth, (Eds.) *Mobile Technologies*. Routledge, 2009a, pp. 252-265.

nection, obligation, and participation online'[23] and therefore needs to be given the needed attention. Crawford contends that 'lurking', which is often used to describe the activity of being present in public online spaces but not prominently speaking up[24] has failed to present the nuances that exist with the degrees of online attention (listening) and submits that at the individual, corporate, and political levels, various degrees of attention (listening) occur online resulting in different qualities of listening.

It is based on this argument that in our previous work,[25] we probed the relationship between listening and lurking and proposed seven types of lurking that occur on social media which are motivation-based and are a demonstration of the practice of online attention, intimacy, connection, obligation and participation. Similarly, Crawford proposed three modes of online listening: background listening, reciprocal listening, and delegated listening which are adopted by individuals depending on whether they are representing themselves or acting on behalf of an organization.

Crawford[26] looks at background listening in the light of how radio audiences interact with radio content - tuning in and tuning out. With online media, the individual scans through posts without focusing on any particular one. This she likens to the radio, 'where commentary and conversations continue as a backdrop throughout the day, with only a few moments requiring concentrated attention'.[27] With social media, regular internet access could mean that messages from social media platforms could pop up anytime there is a post or update; however, the user may not be necessarily interested in reading the messages. So just like radio, the social media user 'tunes out', although the messages keep popping up.

Additionally, there is the case where the user deliberately accesses their account to read messages, a behavior Crawford compares to "tuning in"—just as when someone purposely tunes in to a radio station to listen to specific programs. Background listening, therefore, occurs in three modes: 1) where the user simply does not pay attention to messages because they are not interested in reading them; 2) where the user scans through the messages and does not particularly pay attention to any; and 3) where a user reads the messages but does not respond to them. These modes of paying attention in online spaces (listening) do not offer any feedback which could lead to decision-making.

Crawford's reciprocal listening is likened to how some individuals who have social media profiles constantly respond to posts of followers or give an indication that posts are being

23 Crawford, Kate. 'Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009b): 525-535.

24 Crawford, Kate, 'These foolish things: On intimacy and insignificance in mobile media.' In Goggin, Gerard and Larissa Hjorth, (Eds.) *Mobile Technologies*. Routledge, 2009a, pp. 252-265.

25 Adjin-Tettey, Theodora Dame and Anthea Garman. 'Lurking as a mode of listening in social media: motivations-based typologies.' *Digital Transformation and Society* 2.1 (2023): 11-26.

26 Crawford, Kate, 'These foolish things: On intimacy and insignificance in mobile media.' In Goggin, Gerard and Larissa Hjorth, (Eds.) *Mobile Technologies*. Routledge, 2009a, pp. 252-265.

27 Crawford, Kate. 'Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009b): 525-535.

seen. Although this brings about a sense that followers are being taken seriously or posts are being recognized, this form of listening, Crawford suggests, is not used in corporations or by people who have given others the responsibility to listen on their behalf. She contends that if politicians do not personally write the messages but delegate the activities of posting and responding to posts from followers to staffers, it can neither be recognized as a conversation nor engagement with a community of users (i.e., reciprocal listening) and can also be considered deceptive. To Crawford, reciprocal listening only occurs when the profile user personally responds to posts.

Delegated listening is another mode of listening that occurs online, where users outsource their online activities to others. Crawford holds the view that politicians and corporate entities employ this mode of listening quite often. In this manner or mode of listening, there is someone responsible for reading posts and perhaps responding to posts, but it is done impersonally as another person is given the responsibility to do that on behalf of the account/profile owner. Feedback on posts provided to followers is also done by representatives of individuals or organizations. Crawford[28] has characterized this as suggesting 'something akin to ventriloquism – a pretense of presence, or a consultation puppet-show'.

Although Crawford[29] does not consider delegated listening a perfect example of listening and views it as a mere public relations tactic, we hold the view that delegated listening offers a fertile avenue to get to know what people are saying about an individual or organization. This is because the act of placing the responsibility on someone to look out for what people are posting or saying, providing followers with feedback, and taking feedback from followers to the organization to act on is evidence of a good attempt to listen. Delegated listening offers some form of engagement with followers which makes them feel that they are being listened to or acknowledged. We are therefore confident that delegated listening could work well as much as reciprocal listening does if intentionally utilized.

Journalism and Listening

In the context of journalism, listening can be regarded as representativeness of the needs of diverse societal groupings in media coverage to bring about social change beyond giving a voice. Husband[30] postulates that there are two kinds of listening related to media content production - receptivity and recognition. However, Tanja Dreher[31] contends that although 'media recognition' is essential, it is not enough to contribute to ensuring various constituents of the media are represented. She suggests that recognition directs attention to 'communicative justice on attention and response as well as on access to material resources' where

28 Crawford, Kate, 'These foolish things: On intimacy and insignificance in mobile media.' In Goggin, Gerard and Larissa Hjorth, (Eds.) *Mobile Technologies*. Routledge, 2009a, pp. 252-265.

29 Crawford, Kate. 'Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009b): 525-535.

30 Husband, Charles. 'The right to be understood: Conceiving the multi-ethnic public sphere.' *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 9.2 (1996): 205-215.

31 Dreher, Tanja. 'Listening across difference: Media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 445-458.

justice goes beyond the amount of airtime, or 'access to the means of production'.[32]

Listening in the media demands that media practitioners (especially those who make editorial decisions) strategically ensure that different voices (perspectives) of an issue are heard. Beyond that, they have to create room for the representativeness of different facets of society, be it the marginalized, vulnerable, and minority groups. In all of these, Dreher stresses that recognition should be woven around 'the esteem, value, and attention given to social and cultural difference as questions of justice'.[33] Husband[34] believes that there has been a one-sided way of looking at representativeness in the light of having the right to produce, disseminate, and consume media content without looking at how media content meets the actual needs of constituents of media organizations. This stance makes it imperative for media organizations to clearly define the target group(s) they serve and factor them or somehow involve them in editorial decisions to serve them appropriately.

This may look like a daunting or impossible task but Dreher[35] suggests an instructive approach where media productions are 'power sensitive and responsive to the inequalities and conflicts that shape speaking and listening relationships.' Listening in the media ('Listening across difference') is essentially about ensuring that media productions reflect the needs of the communities that media organizations serve. This is opposed to media organizations initiating stories and asking community members for their reactions. The American Press Institute's (API) report on the 'culture of listening' in the media designates listening as media producers regarding audiences as 'constituents, not consumers'.[36]

Media organizations that listen are expected to ask for the ideas, insights, and feedback of their constituents and factor them into content production. By so doing, media organizations set agendas that emanate from what their publics want and effectively bring about social change. Media organizations, therefore, become more accountable to the constituents they serve, and the organizations, in turn, get support from their constituents. Listening in the media is done by looking out for the information needs of target audiences and getting feedback and views from those who feel alienated or are usually overlooked in news or media coverage.

As a way of assessing themselves and making sure they are listening, the report recommends that media organizations conduct staff audits to ensure there are a variety of backgrounds and perspectives in terms of sources and ascertain whether they reflect the representativeness of the community they serve; nurture a relationship with audiences and critical constituents

32 Dreher, Tanja. 'Listening across difference: Media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 445-458.
33 Dreher, Tanja. 'Listening across difference: Media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 445-458.
34 Husband, Charles. 'Between listening and understanding.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 441-443.
35 Dreher, Tanja. 'Listening across difference: Media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009): 445-458.
36 Goins, Cole. 'How a Culture of Listening Strengthens Reporting and Relationships.', 4 September 2018, https://americanpressinstitute.org/how-a-culture-of-listening-strengthens-reporting-and-relationships/

of the organization; and liaise with community influencers to help newsrooms find areas where news coverage may be lacking. By building cordial relationships with constituents, it becomes easy to get information that will direct content production and get valuable feedback on content produced.

From this, listening in the media entails recognizing any form of inequalities that exist in society as well as marginalized groups, be it social, political, or cultural, and giving them a voice or providing an avenue for them to tell their stories. It is about who is speaking and who is listening. The question to ask when assessing whether media organizations are listening, therefore, is: Who has been given the voice to be listened to?

Morgan[37] says that the critical questions to ask when putting content in the media are Who cares about this issue, and why? What do they want to know? If they wanted to make a change, what information would they need? She believes that these questions when answered objectively result in better reporting, build stronger ties with audiences, and make organizations accountable to their constituents because audiences identify with and are interested in content projected in the media. Since journalists' efforts to listen may not be in the best interest of a group or community that the organization seeks to serve,[38] journalists must let communities talk about what they want rather than forcing them to talk about issues they may not be interested in. This could take the form of inviting opinion leaders to be part of editorial meetings.

The American Press Institute also suggests that journalists can identify already-existing spaces or create new spaces where they can listen. Spaces, where conversations are already ongoing including online communities such as social media platforms, events and places (including markets, church, and gaming centers) Informal gatherings in coffee shops and restaurants are also fertile grounds for getting people in their comfort zone to share what is important to them, which can be factored in news content production. Journalists can, as well, create spaces including digital platforms, and invite conversations.

The Listening Post Collective Playbook also encourages journalists to get community leaders to share what they are hearing from residents concerning their needs and priorities with them. This form of listening is undoubtedly a viable way of ensuring that media organizations attend to the needs of the communities in which they find themselves. This must be encouraged because a media organization whose motive is to inform, educate, entertain, provide a voice for the constituents it serves, and ultimately effect social change cannot fully realize these objectives until it knows what its targets want by way of information, education, and entertainment. The organization cannot also adequately be the mouthpiece of its constituents if it is not acquainted with their needs.

37 Morgan, Fiona. '*Listen to people who care*.' 2 March 2016, https://medium.com/free-press/listen-to-people-who-care-6d6008dfaf40

38 Goins, Cole. 'How a Culture of Listening Strengthens Reporting and Relationships.', 4 September 2018, https://americanpressinstitute.org/how-a-culture-of-listening-strengthens-reporting-and-relationships/

Bringing it all Together

Applying the listening theory to a real-life (journalism) scenario, we mention the television show, *The Big Debate,* a South African television debate series aired on the South African Broadcasting Corporations' television station, which highlighted contemporary socio-political issues to be debated. The concept took the form of a typical 'town hall debate'. There was a moderator, key guests, and studio guests who were not restricted in expressing their opinions on matters that were debated. Because the nature of topics discussed centered on issues that affect people's day-to-day lives, such as racism, poverty, discrimination, social services, and security, a lot of the time, the debates got heated to the extent that some guests abandoned the debates and walked out. This unwillingness to listen to others who have a different stance on an issue and holding on to views that may not necessarily be absolute could lead to a cycle of actions that does not benefit society generally. This is because, as argued earlier, people who do not listen are not able to suspend their aversions and open themselves up to be challenged to arrive at the most valuable decisions.

When the listening theory is applied to political discourse, politicians will be willing to 'listen out' to those they do not share political ideologies with, in recognition of the fact that value must be placed on other people's opinions as they may offer valuable input to the cause that is being pursued. They will thus avoid being overly defensive and sticking to only their convictions, even though those ideas may not be the best options. Through listening, there will be a conscious effort to find a middle ground on issues of public interest. Besides, during policy decision-making processes, there will be a conscious attempt to listen to those for whom decisions are made to arrive at policies that will receive the buy-in of most (if not all) constituents of society.

Furthermore, the watchdog role of the media makes it imperative for practitioners to be listeners. When journalism is practised to fulfill its civic duty and watchdog role, and listening is viewed as having a socio-political purpose, journalists will intentionally play their role to ensure that every aspect of their constituents' well-being is brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities so they can take appropriate action for social change to be realized.

Although there is the view that delegated listening cannot be well-thought-out as 'ideal' listening because individuals and corporations who 'own' social media profiles do not engage followers directly, we contend that that stance is not wholly valid. This is because whoever is given the responsibility of managing a social media profile on behalf of an individual or an organization, often, cannot arbitrarily make decisions about what to post and how to respond to posts. That individual will have to constantly get the involvement of the profile user or account holder. For this reason, the inputs of the profile user become core to what is put up and what is not, and even how to respond to posts. We argue that when decisions concerning the management of the account are made in consultation with an account holder, it signifies that the account holder values the relationship with followers.

In every organization, it is individuals who act on behalf of the organizations in specific capacities, according to the organization's standards and norms. The one acting on behalf of the

organization responds to issues based on how the organization wants to handle them. If an organization appoints someone whose duty is to manage the company's social media profile, be it as a primary duty or an added responsibility, it means the value is placed on recognition and by extension listening.

This paper takes the stance that delegated listening will occur when the organization or user outsources every decision about the account as Crawford describes in the case of organizations or individuals that hire the services of agents or professional micro bloggers to craft online presence for them. These individuals and entities, although they want to have an online presence, do not want to assume the responsibility of creating and managing accounts. They do not bother themselves with responding to posts or making posts. All those decisions are 'delegated' to others. One cannot delegate and at the same time be central to decision-making and activities on the social media profile or page.

Therefore, the nuanced stance we hold slightly contrary to Crawford's explanation for delegated listening is that if an organization or individual falls on an agency or someone to take up the responsibility of managing their social media presence, that can be considered delegated listening. However, if the individual is central to every action on the account, gets updated on what followers are saying regularly, and uses feedback from posts to make decisions, it means there is a form of recognition occurring that needs to be delineated properly from the total outsourcing of the management of profiles.

Personal accounts can be traced to individuals. Because of that users are likely to be mindful of how they react to posts, in order not to destroy their reputation. Public figures (whose image in the public domain is very important to them) will therefore have to act with a lot of restraint and consideration if they decide to manage their account. To avert mistakes that a public figure may be thrown into, which can affect their reputation, it is advisable to let someone be at the interface with agreed terms of engagement with followers. For this reason, it cannot be expressly concluded that a politician or celebrity account holder who makes another person (staffer) be at the interface of attending to post is not listening.

The social media manager is likely not to be emotionally attached to the account and will be more dispassionate about issues and find a civil way of engaging in acceptable public discourse as espoused by Susan Bickford. By making another person the interface between the account or the profile owner and online followers, the social media manager serves as a 'shock absorber' and makes sure the tone of content posted and feedback on posts are acceptable. In this case, the account holder is always aware of what is happening on their page because their is in constant touch with the account manager. The account holder is regularly updated on what followers are posting and is involved in decisions about content to be posted. The account manager, mindful of the reputation management role that has been handed them, will most likely ensure there is civility in their public discourse on behalf of the account holder.

On delegated listening in organizations, as stated elsewhere in this piece, organizations always have people acting on their behalf. So, it is only standard that an organization gives social media management responsibility to an individual or agency. If the agency or individual is

required to regularly update management with information from followers for decision-making and provide feedback to followers based on management decisions, it is maintained that that organization is listening. This cannot be categorized as reciprocal listening, and neither can it fit adequately as delegated listening because the account holder plays a significant role in how the account is managed Given the apparent nuances, it is argued that it is crucial to distinguish between two types of listening: one that is given to a third party but frequently needs updates, feedback, and inputs, and another that doesn't require any kind of input from the account owner or manager.

Interface Listening Proposed

It is argued that listening occurs when decisions about what gets posted and how to respond to posts are made in consultation with the organization or individual account holder, and when it has been purposefully decided that someone should listen on behalf of an organization or individual (e.g., Celebrity or politician) If Crawford[39] says some form of listening occurs in the above scenario but it cannot be categorized as reciprocal listening in definite terms, then there should be a more definite term for that form of listening other than delegated listening. The argument here is that, per Crawford's description of delegated listening, two qualities of listening can occur: (1) where decisions about account management are solely in the hands of an account manager and (2) where there is the involvement of the account holder in the management of the account. So, broadly categorizing both modes as delegated listening could be problematic. Although it may not be regarded as reciprocal listening, the second mode (2) as stated above can neither be regarded as delegated listening.

A more adequate term to describe the mode where there is the involvement of the account holder in the management of the account is thus proposed: interface listening. Delegated listening should hence be used to refer to the listening mode that is outsourced and does not require the regular input of the account holder. Corporations or perhaps individuals outsource the creation and management of accounts totally and do not have an interest in being in the mix of management of the account. Interface listening occurs when the account holder/owner is interested in what happens on the account, obtains and uses feedback from followers for decision-making, and is involved in decisions about the content of posts and when to post (although they do not personally post).

Concluding Thoughts

Listening can serve as an essential catalyst for positive social change by promoting understanding, empowerment, collaboration, and accountability among society's many voices and perspectives on various platforms and levels when intentionally and consciously employed as a developmental tool. It creates space for deliberate debate, educated choice-making, and collective action to build more just, equitable, and inclusive communities.

39 Crawford, Kate. 'Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media.' *Continuum* 23.4 (2009b): 525-535.

This chapter's discussion offers a framework for participating in public debates in which people exchange ideas and listen to one another's viewpoints to reach a practical and meaningful social change. It also sets the foundation for exploring various research agendas. Among the relevant issues, researchers can explore public engagements both in the media and in the physical space; how listening occurs in such spaces and their consequences; and how governments create listening spaces to listen to citizenry and whether that goes into decision-making and policy-making. In the context of journalism, studies can be conducted on how journalists are creating listening spaces and whether their constituents feel listened to. In terms of social media, studies on non-active participatory practices that occur can be studied and theorized as well.

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7. NEGOTIATING MEDIA'S ROLE IN A FRAGILE STATE: JOURNALISTS IN GUINEA-BISSAU'S CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS

JOHANNA MACK

Introduction

Um pais suma catxhu no mon di mininu[1]

In Guinea-Bissau's recent political conflict, its media are among the first who feel the consequences. In early December 2024, the arrest of the finance minister due to corruption allegations ended with a violent clash between members of different parties and factions of the military. President Umaro Sissoco Embaló reacted by dissolving the parliament on 4th December 2023, followed by threats against anyone opposing him.[2] Whether it was a coup attempt or not has since been debated among politicians and observers, but as is so often the case, freedom of the press was one of the first victims of the escalation. On 23rd January 2024, Sissoco mentioned to the Portuguese foreign broadcaster, RTP África, that all Guinean journalists were 'of the opposition'.[3] This is only one of several recent examples illustrating how Guinea-Bissau's media are struggling to stand their ground within a context of political and economic fragility, poor infrastructure and lack of reliable institutions or education opportunities. While these phenomena are ongoing and although various international actors are trying to support media, donor fatigue is a consequence of ongoing instability.[4]

Explaining what positions and roles media can take in this context and how media and the broader (geo-)political and social context shape each other is a topic for media system research. However, Guinea-Bissau has not appeared in any of the big publications that compare media systems on a global scale. In media systems research, a small number of approaches and models have long been dominant, and some regions of the world have been repeatedly studied in depth, while others hardly appear on the radar of communication research or international comparisons.[5] In consequence, not only are some countries often

1 Bissau-Guinean Creole: A country like a bird in the hand of a child

2 Alberto Dabo, 'Guinea Bissau president dissolves parliament after clashes', Reuters, 4 December 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guinea-bissau-president-dissolves-parliament-after-foiled-coup-2023-12-04/.

3 'Guiné-Bissau: Sissoco acusa jornalistas de serem da "oposição" e ameaça acabar com "analistas políticos"', *rfi,* 24 January 2024, https://www.rfi.fr/pt/%C3%A1frica-lus%C3%B3fona/20240124-guin%C3%A9-bissau-sissoco-acusa-jornalistas-de-serem-da-oposi%C3%A7%C3%A3o-e-amea%C3%A7a-acabar-com-analistas-pol%C3%ADticos.

4 Global Initiative, 'Mission not accomplished? UNIOGBIS closes amid uncertainty in Guinea-Bissau', 15 March 2022. https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/uniogbis-guinea-bissau/.

5 Johanna Mack, 'Research Reviews for Media Development Practitioners #4: Comprehending Media Systems for Media Development' Fome, February 2022, https://fome.info/wp-content/

left out and we lack studies about these cases, but also media systems research as a whole is lacking the important perspective of these countries.

Figure 1: View on buildings from colonial time in Bissau Velho, seen from the Port of Pindjuguiti where a protest of dock workers in 1959 ended in the massacre that started Guinea-Bissau's liberation struggle

This twofold dilemma means that knowledge production on media systems is limited to data drawn from only some case studies and that the existing theoretical and methodological tools are not sufficient to describe the situation of those media systems that have been left out. Factors that separate the more from the less studied countries include their location, their degree of political and economic stability, their size, to what extent they produce their own communication research and to some extent also their language.

Guinea-Bissau is a relevant case study for this line of argumentation as it is marginalized in communication research for some reasons: it is a Lusophone African country (more or less isolated among francophone countries in its direct vicinity), it has been neglected among the Portuguese colonies and continues to be one of the lesser known Lusophone countries; it is a small country which is classified by international bodies as 'least developed'[6] and a 'fragile state'.[7] When looking at Guinea-Bissau's media system through the lens of the best-known

uploads/2022/01/Media-Dev-Research-Reviews-4-Media-Systems_1.pdf.

6 UNCTAD, 'UN list of least developed countries', 5 October 2022, https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list.

7 OECD, 'Guinea-Bissau. States of Fragility 2022', 2023, https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-fa5a6770-en.htm.

media systems models, such as Hallin and Mancini's, a contradictory view emerges: for example, many media-related institutions exist, but they do not always seem to exert the expected functions in the expected ways. Journalists balance various roles between professional standards and other socio-economic demands and limits. The example of Guinea-Bissau shows why it is important to have in-depth case studies of media systems, especially for countries outside of the gaze of those that have been used to form well-known models. The current political crisis can illustrate some examples of what it means for media to operate in a fragile context and why a different approach is needed to look at its media system.

Media Systems Research

Media systems research is concerned with media as a part of society, with the context and conditions in which media operate and the ways that media actors are related to each other and act within a media landscape. While research sometimes describes and analyses different aspects within one media system, it works oftentimes with the nation state as a unit of comparison.[8] Along the line of comparing different country's media systems, researchers have developed models and typologies. The most well-known of these are Hallin and Mancini's, which were based on case studies in Europe and the US. Issues with the prior research on media systems include the over-use of such models, which have been easy to apply to contexts they were not designed for, leading to inaccuracies. In addition, due to the dominance of Eurocentric research, theoretical and methodological clarity is lacking for cases on which data is missing. This also goes along with normative ideas about media and their relation to democracy – a nexus that is widely accepted and that is also at the root of international media development activities, but which has been proven to be less straightforward when it comes to countries that are experiencing instability – Afghanistan has been the most striking example in the past years.[9]

Together with Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Sao Tomé and Principe, Cabo Verde, Timor Leste and Guinea-Equatorial, Guinea-Bissau is part of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). Susana Salgado has done extensive research on the Lusophone communication sphere, especially on Lusophone Africa. However, looking at the different Lusophone countries' historical-political trajectories and the development of their media systems, she concludes:

> 'After independence and, later, the adoption of democratic constitutions, these countries followed different political pathways and developed different media systems. In fact, the maturity of their political and media systems and their overall development is very distinct from country to country and they illustrate distinct adaptations of democracy.'[10]

8 Terry Flew & Silvio Waisbord, 'The ongoing significance of national media systems in the context of media globalization', *Media, Culture & Society,* (2015) 37(4), https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443714566903.

9 Wollenberg, A. & Bahar, H., 'Critical review of media development in Afghanistan before Taliban takeover'. Presentation at the FoME Symposium 2023.

10 Salgado, S., 'Prospects for democracy, language and media in Lusophone African countries', Media,

Within the Lusophone African sphere – in case it does exist as a common experience– historical research, for example on the use of media by Portuguese colonizers, is more developed,[11] but there is still a lack of comparative media systems research. Guinea-Bissau especially is lacking even in most of the existing studies. It may be interesting to compare Guinea-Bissau's media landscape with that of other small states that have similar experiences in terms of fragility, continuous political crisis and being under-researched in communication studies, such as the Gambia, Timor Leste or even Haiti.

State Fragility

The term 'fragile state' refers to 'the combination of risk exposure and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate these risks'.[12] This fragility is evident in Guinea-Bissau at the political and economic level, but also in relation to humanitarian, social and environmental factors.[13] Institutions are often unable to fulfil the roles ascribed to them. In Guinea-Bissau, next to political institutions, this is particularly true of the health and education systems. In fragile states, there is therefore also a question mark behind the connection assumed in Western contexts between free, independent media and functioning democracy; this relationship is also characterized by the continuous experience of dysfunctionality - viewed from a European perspective. De Vigh explains the specific experience of Guinea-Bissau and other unstable states 'crisis as chronicity': rather than being a rupture of an otherwise stable 'normality', crisis is an ongoing state that has become indistinguishable from the social context and which people expect and have learned to navigate, 'yet, they are equally aware that life is lived differently and better elsewhere.'[14]

As Nicole Stremlau emphasizes, it is precisely in fragile contexts that alternative paths are often found and existing informal structures should be considered rather than insisting on 'an idealized system of governance'.[15] According to Bissau-Guinean sociologist Joacine Katar Moreira, in the absence of a stable system in Guinea-Bissau, the strongest often make the rules. She titles as matchundadi a conglomeration of strong-man politics, and patriarchal elitist power circles.[16] At the same time, there are other ways of navigating this context and asserting themselves in it as far as possible - described, for example, by the concept of *mandjuandadi*, which can only insufficiently be described as an important form of self-organization of locally connected population groups.

Culture & Society (2018) 40(3), 464–469. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443717752809.

11 Ribeiro, N., 'Broadcasting to the Portuguese Empire in Africa: Salazar's singular broadcasting policy', Critical Arts (2014) 28(6) https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2014.990630.

12 OECD, '*States of Fragility 2022*', 2023, https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-fa5a6770-en.htm

13 OECD, 'Guinea-Bissau. States of Fragility 2022', 2023, https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-fa5a6770-en.htm.

14 Vigh, H., 'Crisis and Chronicity: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline', *Ethnos* (2018) *73*(1), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141840801927509.

15 Stremlau, N., 'In Search of Evidence – Media and Governance in Fragile States', Global Media Journal - German Edition (2014) 4(2). https://globalmediajournal.de/index.php/gmj/article/view/78.

16 Katar Moreira. *Matchundadi: Género, performance e violência política na Guiné-Bissau*. Sequência. Documenta. 2020, https://doi.org/Katar.

What happened in December 2023?

On 30th November 2024, Two Guinean politicians were arrested due to corruption charges and forcibly released shortly afterward. A few days later, parliament was dissolved, and the state media were occupied by the military, their bosses were replaced. The current political crisis also reveals power struggles and dynamics that have preoccupied the country for years. The current situation in the West African country is an example of what it means for the media to operate in a fragile state. 'What we are seeing right now means that we are moving even further away from the idea of democracy in Guinea-Bissau', comments journalist Fernando Jorge Lopes Pereira. 'One effect of this is the restriction of virtually all freedoms, especially the freedom of the press.'[17]

Figure 2: Mon di Timba, memorial for the liberation struggle in Bissau

17 Interview conducted by the author in December 2023.

Background

Guinea-Bissau is a state of approximately two million inhabitants in the Gulf of Guinea, bordering Guinea Conakry and Senegal. A look into its history shows that difficult negotiations of media's positions in the country is a continuity throughout: this territory was never a priority for the Portuguese colonizers (who occupied the area from 1588 to 1974), which meant that they practiced only scarce and top-down communication and did not leave behind much crucial infrastructure, some of which then was also destroyed in the independence war.[18] During colonial times, the media were never able to consolidate themselves as a space for free public debate (Fonseca, 2016). In 1974, Guinea-Bissau gained its independence after a fierce struggle for freedom and was then ruled for 20 years by the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e do Cabo Verde (PAIGC) in a one-party system - during this time, information and "truth" were a state monopoly; censorship was the order of the day.[19] It was not until the 1990s that other parties and media were authorized. However, tensions between various interest groups in politics and the military led to the civil war of 1998/99, in which the media were used by various warring parties for propaganda on the one hand and for peace work on the other.[20] In the period of political instability that followed, two opposing trends emerged: The politicization and instrumentalization of the media, but also the attempt to establish it as a pillar of democratization and peace work. Various international players, including the UN, the EU, the World Peace Service and various NGOs, also work intensively with the media. With the beginning of the regime of Umaro Sissoko Embaló, a new surge of authoritarianism is being observed.[21] A connecting thread through these different historical phases is that rather than being platforms for free debate, media were often used as tools for various aims, by different actors including international.

Nowadays' the media landscape consists mostly of three tiers: state media, private media and community media. Blogs and social media are other important distribution lines at the edge of journalism and private communication. Radios in particular play an important role in Guinea-Bissau: in addition to one state television and radio station and one state newspaper, there are around a dozen private and around 30 community radios, as well as two private newspapers and several online offerings. The Portuguese RTP África also has a branch in Bissau. A survey about media use commissioned by the late United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office UNIOGBIS confirmed that radio is also the most used type of media in the country.[22] In terms of ownership, political parallelism is on the rise with more and more political parties entertaining their radio stations; other radios are owned or financed by NGOs, religious actors or a mix thereof.

18 Fonseca, I. A., 'Dilatando a fé e o império: a imprensa na Guiné no colonialismo (1880-1973)', Media & Jornalismo, (2016) 16(29), https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-5462_29_8.

19 Lopes, A. S., 'Os média na Guiné-Bissau', Edições Corubal, 2015.

20 Lopes, A. S., 'Os média na Guiné-Bissau'.

21 Antonio Rodrigues, 'Relatório denuncia o "autoritarismo" e a "apetência pela ditadura" na Guiné-Bissau', *Público*, 18 January 2024, https://www.publico.pt/2024/01/18/mundo/noticia/relatorio-denuncia-autoritarismo-apetencia-ditadura-guinebissau-2077167.

22 António, J., 'Grande Inquérito sobre uso e consumo de informação pela população da Guiné-Bissau' *UNIOGBIS* (2020).

Political Turmoil Since 2020

Once more, the media is being criticized in the ongoing political crisis that intensified in December 2024. The background to the situation relates to power struggles between various political groups. The legitimacy of Umaro Sissoco Embaló's presidency was already disputed in the country when he took office in 2020,[23] but was then officially recognized by the international community. Shortly afterward, the twenty-year mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office UNIOGBIS came to an end.[24] Following a 'very murky coup attempt'[25] in February 2022, President Umaro Sissoco Embaló dissolved the parliament. In addition, a radio station critical of the government was destroyed and a decree was passed stating that many of the country's radio stations would operate illegally from then on because they had not paid license fees,[26] After a year without a parliament, new elections were held in June 2023. The government of Guinea-Bissau is suspected of having interfered with RTP África's reception during this period, although this has not yet been officially confirmed.[27] In the parliamentary elections, the PAI-Terra Ranka party won the most seats - this is the name of a new alliance including the former PAIGC, which ruled the country alone for 20 years after independence. The president, in turn, belongs to the MADEM-G15 party, which split from the PAIGC in 2018 - since then, the two have been in opposition to each other.

Figure 3: Election posters for Umaro Sissoco Embaló

This conflict of interest between different party factions appears to be reflected in the affair surrounding the evasion of (depending on the source) six to ten million dollars in state funds:

23 'Guinée-Bissau; la Cedeao reconnaît la victoire d'Umaro Sissoco Embaló à la présidentielle', *Jeune Afrique,* , 23 April 2022, https://www.jeuneafrique.com/933214/politique/guinee-bissau-la-cedeao-reconnait-la-victoire-dumaro-sissoco-embalo-a-la-presidentielle/.

24 UNIOGBIS' website: https://uniogbis.unmissions.org/en.

25 Andres Schipani & Neil Munshi, 'Cocaine and a very murky coup in Guinea-Bissau' *Financial Times*, 2 April 2022, https://www.ft.com/content/c2a959a7-567a-426a-adc4-b7fb6413e53c.

26 Johanna Mack, 'Medien in Guinea-Bissau: Münder zum Vermieten?', *European Journalism Observatory,* 6 July 2022, https://de.ejo-online.eu/pressefreiheit/medien-in-guinea-bissau-muender-zum-mieten.

27 'Guinea Bissau's government suspected of disrupting transmission of Portuguese Channels', *MfWA*, 16 July 2023, https://www.mfwa.org/country-highlights/guinea-bissaus-government-suspected-of-disrupting-transmission-of-french-channels/.

On 30 November, Finance Minister Souleiman Seidi (member of PAI-Terra Ranka) and Secretary of State for Finance António Monteiro were arrested.[28] They were freed shortly afterwards by members of the National Guard, which reports to the Ministry of the Interior.[29] The army in turn reports to the president, although parts of it are said to sympathize with the opposition. Guinea-Bissau is considered a highly militarized state in which the army can be decisive for political decisions and, like some factions of the political system, is involved in international crime, particularly cocaine trafficking.[30] On the night of 1st December, there were fierce exchanges of fire between the army and the National Guard, with two fatalities, according to Reuters.[31] The following morning, the military patrolled the streets. Schools were temporarily suspended, but the markets continued to function.

Battle for Sovereignty of Interpretation

President Sissoco Embaló rushed back to his country from the World Climate Change Conference in Dubai. There he declared that the events constituted an attempted coup and consequently dissolved the government. He also declared himself Minister of the Interior and Defense until a new government took office. Head of government Geraldo João Martin was to take over the Ministry of Finance.[32]

However, the portrayal of the situation as a coup has met disagreement: the Guinean human rights organization Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos emphasizes in a press release that the dissolution of parliament in the first year after its election constitutes a breach of the constitution.[33] In an interview with the German international state broadcaster Deutsche Welle, the lawyer and journalist Armando Lona describes the president's behavior as a coup from above.[34] Some members of parliament announced that they would not vacate their posts as the dissolution of parliament was illegitimate. However, the PAIGC/PAI-Terra Ranka party headquarters was blocked by the military.[35] In an interview with the Portuguese-language service of Deutsche Welle, political analyst Sumaila Jaló calls the events a renewed attack

28 'Heavy gunfire in Guinea-Bissau as minister is freed from detention', *Al Jazeera*, 1 December 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/1/heavy-gunfire-heard-overnight-in-guinea-bissau-capital.

29 Sumaila Jaló, 'Guinea-Bissau: 30 years of militarized democratization (1991–2021)', *Frontiers in Political Science*, 5 (May 2023), https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2023.1078771/full

30 Global Initiative, 'Breaking the vicious cycle: Cocaine politics in Guinea-Bissau', August 2021, https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/cocaine-politics-west-africa-guinea-bissau/.

31 'Gunfire breaks out in Guinea-Bissau's capital overnight', *Reuters*, 1 December 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/gunfire-breaks-out-guinea-bissau-capital-overnight-reuters-reporter-2023-12-01/.

32 'Uma tentativa de golpe na Guiné-Bissu?' *DW,* 4 December 2023, https://www.dw.com/pt-002/uma-tentativa-de-golpe-na-guin%C3%A9-bissau/a-67632714.

33 Liga Guineenses dos Direitos Humanos, 'Comunicado à Imprensa', 4 December 2023, http://www.lgdh.org/2023/12/comunicado-imprensa.html.

34 Amós Fernando, 'O presidente está a fazer um golpe', *DW*, 4 December 2023, https://www.dw.com/pt-002/bissau-o-presidente-est%C3%A1-a-fazer-um-golpe/a-67632216.

35 'Guiné-Bissau – Parlamento e sede do PAIGC bloqueados e cercados por homens armados', *RTP África*, 6 December 2023, https://rtpafrica.rtp.pt/noticias/guine-bissau-parlamento-e-sede-do-paigc-bloqueados-e-cercados-por-homens-armados/.

on democracy.[36] Which political side various Guinean media outlets support can be surmised, among other things, by whether they describe the events as a coup and whether they blame the president or the opposition.

Effects on the Media

During the unrest, the state media were accused by the PAI-Terra Ranka of only reporting along the lines of the MADEM-G15 party. Shortly after the nightly exchange of fire, the military entered the Rádiodifusão Nacional (RDN), which is located directly next to a military base anyway, and the Televisão da Guiné-Bissau (TGB). Programs were briefly suspended and only music was played. According to Pereira, the RDN journalists protested by going home in unison. Demonstrations were temporarily banned, as well, allegedly because of an ongoing search operation for illegal weapons.[37] In the meantime, the military have replaced the director of the RDN with a candidate who is considered more loyal to the presidency. 'To protect my journalistic freedom, I am resigning as editor-in-chief of the RDN',[38] said journalist Djibril Iero Mandjam.

In a press release, the journalists' association SINJOTECS calls the 'intrusion of armed men into Guinea-Bissau's public radio and television stations and the subsequent expulsion of the employees of these organizations last Monday'[39] an 'affront to the freedom of the press and freedom of expression as well as to the safety of journalists who are only doing their job'. Indira Correia Balde, Chairwoman of SINJOTECS: 'It is a step backwards for media freedom. We are now seeing censorship and restrictions again, and it is being dictated who is allowed to speak in the media and who is not. This is a strong signal that even darker times are coming.'[40] While the state media are related to the government's agenda, what seems to be causing most opposition from the side of the journalists' representatives is the arbitrary replacement of functionaries as a response to political unrest and the use of force by the military.

One example is the private radio Capital FM: during Sissoco's presidency, it was destroyed twice by unidentified armed men. The radio is considered to be particularly critical of the current president. 'If there is any problem, the government has all legal means to act, instead of using firearms', Capital FM's director stressed in an interview in April 2022. After the elections in June 2023, Rádio Capital FM began broadcasting again, including the critical discussion program Frequência Ativa. According to Fernando Jorge Pereira, this show has been suspended again since December 1st: This can be interpreted as self-censorship due to security concerns.

36 'Guiné-Bissau: Dissolucao do Parlamento', *DW*, 5 December 2023, https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guin%C3%A9-bissau-dissolu%C3%A7%C3%A3o-do-parlamento-%C3%A9-golpe-contra-a-democracia/video-67642904.

37 'Demonstrations formally banned in Guinea-Bissau", *MfWA*, 17 January 2024, https://www.mfwa.org/country-highlights/demonstrations-formally-banned-in-guinea-bissau/.

38 Interview conducted by the author in December 2023.

39 SINJOTECS, 'Comunicado da Imprensa', Facebook Post, 7December 2023, 15:01, https://www.facebook.com/sinjotecsguinebissau20218/?locale=hi_IN.

40 Interview conducted by the author in December 2023.

Effect on Media Development Activities

The political crisis has also had an impact on media development programs. As the representative of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in Guinea-Bissau, Daisy Prempeh, explains, the organization's efforts have been put on hold for the short term due to the dissolution of the government. The Ghana-based MFWA, which implements media development projects throughout West Africa, has launched a major EU-funded project in Guinea-Bissau in 2021. Over a period of at least three years, the organization aims to carry out capacity building with media organizations, journalist training and workshops with the military, police and politicians. However, this also requires national partners: 'We have worked together with the Ministry of Communications, the Media Council, the police, the military, the judiciary and the National Commission for Human Rights, among others,' says Prempeh. In a time of governmental crisis, these connections need to be re-established and the situation analyzed. A setback for media development cooperation.

Figure 3: This journalism school in Bissau has been founded by UNIOGBIS in 2020 and is managed by the Consórcio Média, Inovação da Comunicação Social

Fernando Jorge Pereira also describes this prerogative effect on ongoing initiatives for improving the media's situation. Together with the government, there have been efforts to introduce a press card: "It causes confusion when various people claim to be journalists because they expect to benefit from it, even though it is not true, or they have only spoken on the radio once."[41] During both governments that Sissoco Embaló dissolved, work was carried out on this project. This also applies to the debate on radio licences: after radio stations were threatened

41 Interview conducted by the author in December 2023.

with closure due to non-payment of license fees since 2022, discussions began between the government, media representatives and international players on how the position of radio stations, many of which operate without significant financial resources, could be strengthened. 'With the dissolution of parliament, we once again have a government that is hostile to journalists,'[42] says Pereira. The debates around journalists' cards and radio licenses show two sides of one coin: While regulations are often demanded to and hoped to be a step towards professionalization and therefore also protection for journalists, they also have a downside: where there is a rule, it can also be misused or 'captured'. As Mabweazara points out in his overview text on the most common dimensions of media capture in Africa, 'regulatory (and legislative) frameworks are the main cog for the curtailment of journalistic autonomy by controlling the administrative elements around licencing, funding and other aspects of media development and management in sub-Saharan Africa'.[43] While the Bissau-Guinean authorities have not yet taken any action to actually close down the stations that failed to pay the fees, they now have an instrument at hand that can be used in case they want to silence a voice.

This example shows the ambiguous role of international media assistance in the Guinean media landscape. Media development assistance, in the sense of supporting and assisting media or journalists through advocacy, trainings, resources and other activities is a side note in Guinea-Bissau. Organizations such as MFWA which center the support of media and journalism are in the minority. Most actors who work with media in Guinea-Bissau have other foci such as peacebuilding or environmental protection and use media as platforms to communicate their aims, funding or even founding radios. Thus, there is an emphasis on 'media for development', the idea that media can help to further development goals by promoting messages to target audiences.[44] In consequence, media distribute messages that are determined by external actors who pay for them. This could be interpreted as a further confirmation of media as communicators/ service providers rather than independent actors in their rights. In addition, it may be discussed whether this type of interaction can be interpreted as a form of capture, too: By incentivizing media financially, development actors push certain narratives. Bissau Guinean sociologist Miguel de Barros has once named this as 'agenda-setting upside down', meaning that it is not the media who determine what is being publicly discussed, but development actors determining it through the media. However, in an interview, a Guinean expert said this was a good type of capture. As Stremlau notes, in media contexts with high political parallelism, those media development actors that aim to support civil society through media, assuming that they are a 4th estate, can sometimes unwillingly support political actors: 'It is uncomfortable, and potentially awkward, to recognize that media and journalists are often political actors representing particular politically embedded interests or structures of power that may have precedence over a more recognized role associated with freedom of expression.[45]

42 Interview conducted by the author in December 2023.

43 Mabweazara, H. M., Muneri, C. T., & Ndlovu, F., 'News "Media Capture", Relations of Patronage and Clientelist Practices in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Interpretive Qualitative Analysis', Journalism Studies, (2020) 21(15), https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1816489.

44 Scott, M., Media and Development: Development Matters. Development Matters Ser. Zed Books: 2014 https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kxp/detail.action?docID=1696466

45 Stremlau, 'In Search of Evidence – Media and Governance in Fragile States'.

In the meantime, only a few days after the dissolution of Parliament, President Sissoco Embaló announced the formation of a new government in the coming week.[46] This promise has since been repeated and postponed several times, and analysts doubt that there are chances for fair and free elections.[47] Diamantino Domingos Lopes, journalist, and representative of SINJOTECS, told Deutsche Welle: 'Anything is possible in Bissau'.[48]

Conclusions Regarding the Media System

The current political crisis in Guinea-Bissau reveals several important aspects concerning the media system. Media are among the first to be attacked, controlled or silenced in a situation of political stress – this shows the importance that is attributed to them. As the debates about the interpretation of the events (coup or not, who is to be blamed?) show, information and 'truth' are important tools of power and authorities aim at dictating them. This tendency seems to have been at play in Bissau-Guinean media throughout the colonial time as well as after independence and seems to be newly affirmed since the presidency of Umaro Sissoco Embaló, who mentioned in a speech that he would like to be Africa's Kim Jong-Un.[49] As these tendencies have been engrained since the foundation of the nation state, media, authorities as well as audience are used to these dynamics and a historic analysis of the developments of the media system can be enlightening, including critical examination of possible path dependencies. Thus, regarding the media system as a process rather than a static entity, as Roudakova suggests,[50] would allow to observe roots of trends such as the current autocratization, especially in a fragile state, where less is fixed and changes can be swift. Journalists use their agency and oppose restrictions of their freedom by protesting, as the reactions to the occupation and change of leading staff of the national radio show. In Guinea-Bissau, journalists are self-organized in various associations; next to the bigger journalists' syndicate and journalists' order, there are various specialized journalists' associations which center women, youth or investigation.

At the same time, they are bound by the limitations of their context, which leads to role conflicts. Next to the aim of adhering to professional standards which the majority of them report

46 'Guiné-Bissau: Presidente da Republica promote novo governo para a proxima semana', *RTP Africa*, 7 December 2023 https://rtpafrica.rtp.pt/noticias/guine-bissau-presidente-da-republica-promete-novo-governo-para-a-proxima-semana/.

47 Djariatú Baldé, 'Crise política em Bissau: O Presidente terá de ceder?', *DW,* 13 March 2024, https://www.dw.com/pt-002/crise-pol%C3%ADtica-em-bissau-o-presidente-ter%C3%A1-de-ceder/a-68515398.

48 'Guiné-Bissau: Dissolucao do Parlamento é golpe contra a democracia', *DW*, 5 December 2023, https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guin%C3%A9-bissau-dissolu%C3%A7%C3%A3o-do-parlamento-%C3%A9-golpe-contra-a-democracia/video-67642904.

49 'Guiné-Bissau: "Aqui o King Jong Un é o Presidente", diz Embaló e adverte que não vai permitir desordem', *Voice of America Português*, 4 June 2023, https://www.voaportugues.com/a/guin%C3%A9-bissau-aqui-o-king-jong-un-%C3%A9-o-presidente-diz-o-presidente-advertindo-que-n%C3%A3o-vai-permitir-desordem/7122480.html.

50 Natalia Roudakova, 'Comparing Processes: Media, "Transitions," and Historical Change', In: Hallin DC, Mancini P, eds., 'Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World.' Communication, Society and Politics. Cambridge University Press; 2011.

to have learned either in journalism education institutions, trainings or their newsrooms, there is the need to earn a living, which is often impossible even in the state media. This economic precarity makes journalists more prone to accept dependencies and financial incentives from politicians and other actors, even if they value independence. In addition, the function of reporting freely and independently about important issues that could potentially lead to positive social change is hampered by the lack of security for journalists, especially when it comes to sensitive topics concerning political issues or organized crime. There is impunity for attacks, which can be attributed to the authorities' interests, but also to the absence of stable institutions, including the justice system, which cannot prevent arbitrary actions by power holders. Media development programs cannot guarantee journalists' safety, either. Such contradictions should be considered when interviewing journalists, as their pronounced role understanding may differ from their actual role performance.[51]

Figure 4: Journalist filming in Bandim market Bissau

Due to the apparent politicization of state media and many private media, which are also centralized in the capital city, community media are actors of over-proportional relevance. Most often, their work is non-profit. In line with Stremlau's argument (see above), a look at informal structures is worthwhile: in a context in which institutions and the state are unstable, less-formalized community media structures are more adaptable and may have ways to pass on information to different parts of the population. Their embeddedness in local contexts and the consequential trust granted to them can make them important information channels which sometimes even escape pressures or censorship. This also makes them partners that international development actors like to work with. However, the role of the community media

51 See Mellado, C. (Ed.), *Beyond journalistic norms: Role performance and news in comparative perspective.* Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2021

should not be romanticized, as the lack of formalization of some community radios also makes them highly susceptible to influence by various actors including political or religious – for example, Guinea-Bissau has radio stations associated with Muslim, Catholic and Evangelist actors. In the case of closeness to NGOs, this sometimes means that community radios take on roles closer to activism, which moves them further away from a purely journalistic stance. This effect is increased especially in the community radios, journalists have often not been formally trained outside of the newsrooms where they are socialized in the profession, and due to high staff fluctuation. Thus, when regarding media landscapes in which informal structures are more reliable than state structures, dominant conceptualizations of journalistic norms, roles and organization structures may not fit the realities on the ground. Rather than limiting themselves to these lenses, researchers should be open to seeing structures that challenge their pre-conceived views from Eurocentric literature.

The imprint of international actors such as development is another aspect to be considered, as they are often shaping media not only in financial terms but also about values, the weighting of different media actors and their relations to authorities. In absence of strong state institutions, international actors dealing with media should not be forgotten as important context factors for the media system, even if the lens of media systems research is often bound to the frame of the nation-state. This may also apply to actors such as ECOWAS, African Union and some neighboring leaders are also in close connection, and trends in the surrounding region should be considered. It can be debated in how far joined trajectories are of relevance such as the common media sphere in the region or in the Lusophone network.

Instead of using a template developed using very different country cases and measuring countries like Guinea-Bissau against those, the starting point of in-depth media systems research in formerly neglected places could derive from the research context itself. Stremlau suggests a diagnostic approach, with 'power', 'flow' and 'participation' as guiding elements. As the quoted examples suggest, this type of study requires openness concerning the categories used to decide which elements or – to avoid missing important communication channels or a misinterpretation of actors' characteristics. Interdisciplinary approaches including borrowing e.g. from ethnography, political science, conflict studies or history may be useful, as well as innovative, context-sensitive approaches with a higher degree of participation. Enough time should be granted, as a dearth of data can necessitate more basic research into the conditions. In the best case, such an analysis could help to understand the effects and underlying dynamics of current events, such as the ongoing political crisis, on the media. Comparisons with similar cases could bring new light and may help to bring less-studied cases into the more well-known academic debates around media systems, thus advancing the field in its search for De-westernization and more rigorous knowledge production.

Disclaimer: Parts of this contribution referring to the state crisis in December 2023, including some of the interview quotes, have already been published in a shorter article in the European Journalism Observatory (in German language): https://de.ejo-online.eu/aktuelle-beitraege/staatskrise-in-guinea-bissau-die-wahrheit-des-staerkeren

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8. THE NIGERIAN FILM INDUSTRY AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION: A REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

KHADIJAT ADEDEJI-OLONA

Introduction

Throughout history, societies have used various methods to pass down their cultural heritage, norms, and values to subsequent generations. In many African communities, storytelling serves as an effective way to convey societal values and integrate younger members into prevailing cultural norms [1]. As societies expanded and globalization accelerated, the need for efficient communication methods grew. Mass media technologies therefore emerged as vital tools for disseminating information and preserving culture, while offering insights into the world. [2] Media and society are thus closely linked, with the media reflecting societal realities.[3]

The introduction of video film technology marked a major milestone, enabling compelling storytelling through visual and auditory elements.[4] While films have replaced traditional institutions in societal integration, they have also enhanced the transmission of generational beliefs.[5]

The story of contemporary Nigerian society intertwines closely with its vibrant film industry, popularly referred to as Nollywood. From colonial times to the present day, Nollywood has played a critical role in projecting the country's people and cultures, while providing insights and commentaries on prevalent socio-political, economic, and cultural issues.[6] This symmetrical relationship between Nollywood and Nigerian society is emphasized by Haynes,[7] who describes Nollywood films as 'a record and interpretation of contemporary Nigeria, a social and emotional history'.[8] Nollywood's trajectory has also been similarly influenced by Nigeria's

1 L.O. Amodu et al., 'Portrayal of Moral Lesson in Nigerian Movies: A Study of Tunde Kelani's Maami.,' in Beyond Fun: Media Entertainment, Politics and Development in Nigeria., ed. Lai Oso et al. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2019), 263–373.

2 Lai Oso, "Socio-Historical Context of the Development of Nigerian Media," in *Mass Media and Society in Nigeria*, ed. Lai Oso and Umaru Pate, 2nd ed. (Malthouse Press, 2011), 1–24.

3 Ganiyat Tijani-Adenle, "She's Homely, Beautiful and Then, Hardworking! Critiquing the Representation of Women Leaders and Managers in the Nigerian Press," *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 31, no. 5/6 (2016): 396–410.

4 A. Opubor, O. Nwuneli, and O. Oreh, "The Status, Role and Future of the Film Industry in Nigeria," in The Development and Growth of the Film Industry in Nigeria, ed. A Opubor and O. Nwuneli (Third Press International, 1979), 1–22; O. Sunday, "An Overview of Nigerian Film Industry," in Emergence, Growth and Challenges of Films and Home Videos in Nigeria, ed. O. Onabajo and R. M'Bayo (Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporated, 2009), 53–62.

5 Amodu et al., "Portrayal of Moral Lesson in Nigerian Movies: A Study of Tunde Kelani's Maami."

6 J. Haynes and O. Okome, "Evolving Popular Media: Nigeria Video Films," in *Nigerian Video Films* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 51–88.

7 J. Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), http://repositorio.unan.edu.ni/2986/1/5624.pdf.

8 Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*, xxiv.

political landscape and the economic policies of successive governments, thus becoming a significant indicator of Nigeria's developmental progress.[9]

Although Nigeria's earliest encounter with film dates back to 1903, scholars unanimously attribute the origins of indigenous filmmaking in Nigeria to the Yoruba Travelling Theater troops, thriving between 1946 and 1981.[10] Over time, the Nigerian film industry has evolved with its films serving as important channels for transmitting societal concepts like family life, language, marriage, spirituality, and societal cohesion across generations.[11] Scholars have identified various phases in the industry's development. These phases have been condensed and refined into six eras namely: (i) The colonial era; (ii) The independence era; (iii) The indigenous film era; (iv) The television era; (v) The Home Video Era; and (vi) The New Nollywood Era.[12] Nollywood now stands as Africa's most prolific, exerting significant regional influence.

It is pertinent that an exploration of the Nigerian film industry's (Nollywood) influence on the transformation of Nigerian society begins with a proper conceptualization of the notion of a communication-enabled social change, often interchangeably referred to as communication for development, communication for social change, communication for social change and development.[13]

Demers offered a simple, yet all-encompassing, definition of social change by describing it as the difference between current and previous conditions within the social structure.[14] He notes that the role of the media in this process extends beyond maintaining social order to actively producing content that can facilitate social change.

Abah,[15] emphasizes that social change is not accidental but rather the result of a deliberate, collective, coordinated, and well-considered communication-enabled process. Echoing this sentiment, Enghel[16] insists that communication, in any form, holds the potential to either empower or remain neutral in effecting social change. McQuail,[17] also asserts the undeniable influence of communication in causing social change, highlighting that 'wherever the media exert influence, they also cause change'.[18] He however highlights ongoing theoretical debates surrounding the impact of evolving communication media on societies and the application

9 Kehinde Opeyemi Farinde, "Nollywood Portrayal of the Nigerian Society: Issues in Question," *International Journal of Communication* 9 (2008): 282–90.
10 (Adesanya, 2010; Azeez, 2019; Farinde, 2008; George, 2018; Haynes & Okome, 2010).
11 Adedayo Ladigbolu Abah, "Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry," *Media, Culture and Society* 31, no. 5 (2009): 731–48.
12 K. Adedeji-Olona, G. Tijani-Adenle, and L. Oso, "Historical Overview of the Nigerian Film Industry," in Forthcoming Publication, 2024.
13 Florencia Enghel, 'Toward a Political Economy of Development,' Nordicom Review 36, no. Special Issue (2015): 11–24.
14 David Demers, History and Future of Mass Media: An Integrated Perspective (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2007).
15 Abah, "Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry."
16 Enghel, "Toward a Political Economy of Development."
17 Denis McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010).
18 McQuail, *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 91.

of communication in the development process, which is the focal point of the discussion in this chapter.

Whichever way one views it, it is important to note that communication, while critical, must operate alongside other factors to facilitate social change. These factors, according to Agina,[19] must interact to actualize change. In the context of Nigerian society, a communication-enabled social change would contribute to the elimination of traditional harmful practices and foster the formulation/implementation of policies that could help actualize this change.[20]. Nollywood is therefore ideally positioned to play a significant role in this endeavor as it 'provides a venue where cultural practices can be analyzed for changes in thought patterns and social processes'.[21] The extent to which Nollywood has been used for this purpose is the focal point of examination in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Nollywood Films and Social Change in Nigeria

Reputed for its ability to shape public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors on various issues, the Nigerian film industry, through its video productions, has been integral to the socialization and cultural orientation/re-orientation of Nigerians over the years, significantly transforming Nigerian popular culture.[22] This is facilitated by the visual medium's unique ability to captivate and engage audiences while reshaping their experiences.[23]

The Nigerian film industry is particularly suited for societal transformation for several reasons. Firstly, its widespread popularity ensures that Nollywood appeals to local, regional, and diaspora audiences, making it a potent vehicle for social change.[24] The fact that Nigerian films are consumed in countries like Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania presents filmmakers with a unique opportunity to embed transformational messages in their works.[25]

Also, Nollywood's high degree of independence distinguishes it from traditional news media, as it has largely evolved with minimal government support, relying instead on private initiatives facilitated by a globalized economy. This autonomy frees it from governmental influence, allowing for independent self-representation and transformative storytelling.[26] Moreover, Nol-

19 Anulika Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative," in *Beyond Fun: Media Entertainment, Politics and Development in Nigeria.*, ed. Lai Oso et al. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2019), 275–85.

20 Adedayo Ladigbolu Abah, 'Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry,' Media, Culture and Society 31, no. 5 (2009): 731–48.

21 Abah, 'Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry,' 746.

22 J. Haynes, Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), http://repositorio.unan.edu.ni/2986/1/5624.pdf.

23 Uchechukwu C Ajiwe, Sylvia Okwuosa, and Samuel O Chukwu-Okoronkwo, 'Nigerian Video Films as Effective Tool for Social Transformation: A Critical Appraisal of Fola-Toro,' American Journal of Social Research 1, no. 2 (2015): 57–62.

24 Abah, 'Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry.'

25 Farinde, "Nollywood Portrayal of the Nigerian Society: Issues in Question."

26 Akin Adesokan, "Practising 'democracy' in Nigerian Films," *African Affairs* 108, no. 433 (2009): 599–619.

lywood is expected to lead and inspire societal transformation due to its unofficial mandate to impart moral lessons - a responsibility inherited from the pioneering efforts of Yoruba traveling theater and Onitsha Market literature, where entertainment was intertwined with moralizing narratives and cautionary tales.[27] The Hausa version of Nollywood, Kannywood, even lists its casts as '*masu fadakarwa*', meaning preachers.[28]

Recognizing the gradual, but powerful socializing power of film, colonial masters effectively deployed film as an ideological tool, compelling the populace to adopt European ideologies over African ones, while simultaneously transmitting British values and norms through entertainment infused with colonial messages.[29] It was also an important tool for Christian missionaries to propagate Christianity and assimilate African converts into the Christian way of life.[30]

In the post-independence era, indigenous filmmakers used film as a platform to counter the cultural dominance of foreign films and reaffirm Africa's cultural heritage, which had been eroded [31]. As noted by Azeez,[32] many indigenous films addressed prevalent social issues and aimed to correct distortions in Nigerian history while combatting negative portrayals of Africans in colonial and Hollywood films. Scholars such as Musa,[33] have highlighted the industry's early inclination to address social issues, underscoring its integral role in societal discourse since its inception, not only in Nigeria but globally.

Despite Nollywood's suitability for societal transformation, scholars have lamented its reluctance or unwillingness to embrace this noble task, especially in light of declining cultural values among citizens.[34] This is often attributed to Nollywood's commercial orientation, driven by the imperative to generate profits, which sometimes reinforces negative traditional norms in films and perpetuates social injustices.[35] The risk of censorship by the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) also poses a challenge, with filmmakers sometimes altering titles or adjusting storylines based on the Board's recommendations to avoid outright bans.[36]

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27 Mathew Hays, "A Thousand Films and One Queen," *The Globe and Mail*, October 19, 2005.

28 Muhammad Muhsin Ibrahim and Amina Haruna, 'Films for Reform: Cinema and the Fight against Drug Abuse in Northern Nigeria,' Dutse Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences 3, no. 1 (2018): 225–39.

29 Ajiwe, Okwuosa, and Chukwu-Okoronkwo, "Nigerian Video Films as Effective Tool for Social Transformation: A Critical Appraisal of Fola-Toro"; Azeez, "History and Evolution of Nollywood: A Look at Early and Late Influences."

30 O. Obododinma, "The Rhetoric of Christian Videos: The War Paradigm of the Great Mistake," in *Nigerian Video Films*, ed. J. Haynes (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 192–99.

31 Adesanya, "From Video to Films"; Azeez, "History and Evolution of Nollywood: A Look at Early and Late Influences"; E.C. Ernest-Samuel and N.E. Uduma, "From Informality to 'New Nollywood': Implications for the Audience," in *Nollywood in Glocal Perspective*, ed. B. Musa (Cham: Palgrave: Macmillan, 2019), 45–65.

32 Azeez, "History and Evolution of Nollywood: A Look at Early and Late Influences."

33 B.A. Musa, "Nollywood and the Glocalization of Prosocial Entertainment," in *Nollywood in Glocal Perspective*, ed. B.A. Musa (Cham: Palgrave: Macmillan, 2019), 127–44.

34 Apollos Maton Yosi, 'The Nigerian Entertainment Industry (Nollywood) Culture and Society Being,' Sociology and Anthropology 6, no. 8 (2018): 657–64; Abah, 'Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry'; Adesokan, 'Practising 'democracy' in Nigerian Films.'

35 Abah, "Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry."

36 J. Haynes, 'Political Critique in Nigerian Films,' African Affairs 105, no. 421 (2006): 511–33.

Moreover, filmmakers must navigate Nigeria's delicate socio-political landscape, marked by ethnic and religious tensions, which may deter them from addressing sensitive socio-political issues for fear of public backlash.[37] For instance, in 2014, the film *Half of a Yellow Sun*, [38] a filmic adaptation of Chimamanda Adichie's acclaimed novel about the Biafran war, experienced delays in its release due to objections raised by the NFVCB. Despite having been successfully screened in places like Canada and the United Kingdom, the NFVCB found certain scenes objectionable, given the sensitivity of the historical narrative among Nigerians. While the board eventually granted approval for the film's screening, it came with conditions, leading the production company, FilmOne Production, to make necessary cut-outs and edits in compliance with the board's regulatory requirements.[39]

With the turn of the 21st century and the advent of globalization and digital technologies, the Nigerian film industry has undergone significant advancements. Nigerian filmmakers are increasingly striving to 'adjust certain social orientations through their portrayal in video films of the social, political, economic and cultural specifics that define the Nigerian people's existence'.[40] Some of these instances are examined in the next section.

Nollywood Films and Social-Political Commentary

Examples abound of filmmakers leveraging Nollywood films for socio-cultural and political commentary, with both prominently-studied figures like Tunde Kelani, Tade Ogidan, Emem Isong, Amaka Igwe, Lancelot Imasuen, and Kunle Afolayan, as well as lesser-studied individuals like Izu Ojukwu.[41] Some Nigerian filmmakers have distinguished themselves by consciously using their films for socio-political commentary, blending social messages with entertainment while adhering to Nollywood's commercial imperatives, leading to extensive scholarly examination of their work.[42]

For instance, to assess the level of improvement made in *Nollywood*, Ajiwe et al.,[43] determined how the industry responds to contemporary realities by examining its portrayal of modern Nigeria and audience perceptions. Their study, focusing on the film *Fola Toro,* found that the

37 Haynes, 'Political Critique in Nigerian Films.'
38 Biyi Bandele, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (Nigeria: FilmOne Distribution, 2014).
39 "Half of a Yellow Sun Film Approved by Nigeria Censors," *BBC News*, July 8, 2014.
40 Ajiwe, Okwuosa, and Chukwu-Okoronkwo, "Nigerian Video Films as Effective Tool for Social Transformation: A Critical Appraisal of Fola-Toro"; Ganiyat Tijani-Adenle, "She's Homely, Beautiful and Then, Hardworking! Critiquing the Representation of Women Leaders and Managers in the Nigerian Press," Gender in Management: An International Journal 31, no. 5/6 (2016): 396–410; Lai Oso, "Socio-Historical Context of the Development of Nigerian Media," in Mass Media and Society in Nigeria, ed. Lai Oso and Umaru Pate, 2nd ed. (Malthouse Press, 2011), 1–24.
41 Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative"; Uzoma Esonwanne, "Interviews with Amaka Igwe, Tunde Kelani, and Kenneth Nnebue," *Research in African Literatures* 39, no. 4 (2008): 24–39; Haynes, "Political Critique in Nigerian Films"; Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres*; J. Haynes, "New Nollywood: Kunle Afolayan," *Black Camera* 5, no. 2 (2014): 53–73.
42 Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative"; Haynes, "Political Critique in Nigerian Films."
43 (2015)

film effectively used filmic elements to convey its message about the dangers of greed and ritualistic practices. However, the research only highlighted the potential of film for social change, failing to contextualize its findings historically or gauge audience responses.[44] Nevertheless, it succeeded in raising awareness about societal issues, sparking discussions about social change, which is an achievement in itself.[45]

Similarly, an analysis of Tunde Kelani's film - *Dazzling Mirage*, an adaptation depicting the struggles of individuals living with sickle cell disease in Nigeria, showed that the film offered hope to sickle cell patients, promoting messages of courage, resilience, and acceptance.[46] By advocating for care and understanding instead of stigmatization, Kelani's work highlighted societal issues, particularly regarding disabilities, and inspired viewers to consider societal change.[47]

In an exploration of films by Izu Ojukwu, a socially conscious filmmaker whose works have received limited academic attention, Agina,[48] found that Ojukwu's films served as platforms for discussing various societal issues, suggesting solutions and setting agendas for change. From *Sitanda* to *White Waters*, *Cindy's Notes*, and then *'76*, Ojukwu's films highlight a range of issues that need urgent societal attention. The responsibility for effecting change, therefore lies not solely with filmmakers but also with other members of society.[49]

While some films in Nigeria have catalyzed societal transformation and influenced government policies, these are often produced by change agents and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to alter attitudes and behaviors toward specific issues. Ugochukwu,[50] highlighted the success of Stepping Stones Nigeria, a UK-based charity organization, in using documentaries - *The Dispatches*,[51] to raise awareness about 'witch-child' neglect in Akwa-Ibom state in Southern Nigeria. So influential were these documentaries, that the Akwa-Ibom State government had to quickly assent to the Akwa-Ibom Child Rights Bill Law (2008), to protect the children, who have been accused of witchcraft. The documentaries were also successful in countering stereotypical notions about 'witch-children', arguing instead, for the

44 Ajiwe, Okwuosa, and Chukwu-Okoronkwo, 'Nigerian Video Films as Effective Tool for Social Transformation: A Critical Appraisal of Fola-Toro.'

45 Anulika Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative," in *Beyond Fun: Media Entertainment, Politics and Development in Nigeria.*, ed. Lai Oso et al. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2019), 275–85.

46 Tunji Azeez and Babafemi Babatope, "Communicating Change: Social Justice, Human Dignity and the Intercourse of Medicine and Fiction in Tunde Kelani's Dazzling Mirage.," in *Beyond Fun: Media Entertainment, Politics and Development in Nigeria.*, ed. Lai Oso et al. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2019), 249–62.

47 (Azeez & Babatope, 2019)

48 Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative."

49 Adedayo Ladigbolu Abah, "Popular Culture and Social Change in Africa: The Case of the Nigerian Video Industry," *Media, Culture and Society* 31, no. 5 (2009): 731–48; Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative."

50 (2019)

51 Channel4, "Saving Africa's Witch Children: Dispatches" (BBC Channel4, November 12, 2008).

equal treatment of all children [52]. However, as Ugochucku notes, the success of documentaries like *The Dispatches,*[53] is the result of concerted efforts, including publicity campaigns, press conferences, and social media mobilization, indicating that films alone may not drive desired change. This underscores the need for coordinated efforts and interaction between media and other factors to effect meaningful societal change, as advocated by Agina.[54]

The accounts in this section show that some Nigerian filmmakers such as Tunde Kelani, Kunle Afolayan, Tade Ogidan, Emem Isong, Amaka Igwe (late), Lancelot Imasuen, and Izu Ojukwu have responded to calls for improvement by using their films as platforms for socio-political discourse and activism, aiming to draw attention to societal issues and adjust their narratives to reflect existing realities.[55]

Conclusion

It is unimaginable that a film industry like Nigeria's will be value free, but the values being promoted is of utmost concern to communication scholars and cultural enthusiasts. Since the colonial era, Nigerian films have served as vessels for ideological messages, effectively shaping the attitudes and behaviors of the populace. Recognizing the threat of foreign cultural dominance, indigenous filmmakers used films to counter negative portrayals of Africa while reaffirming Africa's cultural identity. While Nollywood has the potential for social change and has occasionally sparked societal transformation, it is yet to fully harness its potential for societal transformation, due primarily to its commercial orientation. Nevertheless, the industry has consistently served as a reflection of Nigerian society, offering a platform for socio-political commentary.

The Nigerian film industry, might not have been successful, most of the time, in galvanizing societal transformation, but it has stunningly been successful in countering the orchestrated lies and stereotypical representations of Nigeria and Nigerians, that was perpetuated for long in the Western media. Global audiences exposed to Nigerian films have gained a more nuanced understanding of the country, dispelling myths of poverty and backwardness. However, there remains untapped potential for Nollywood to contribute more significantly to societal development.

Despite government's efforts to formalize the Nollywood sector, it is yet to fully leverage films for addressing societal challenges. Unlike colonial and post-independent governments, which engaged filmmakers through dedicated film units, the Nigerian government has not fully acknowledged the transformative power of films. Increased funding from the government, rather than international agencies, could incentivize filmmakers to produce content aimed at fostering unity and national development.

52 Ugochukwu, 'NGOs and the Nigerian Screen: The Film as a Tool.'
53 Channel4, "Saving Africa's Witch Children: Dispatches."
54 Anulika Agina, "Izu Ojukwu, Nollywood and the Social Change Imperative," in *Beyond Fun: Media Entertainment, Politics and Development in Nigeria.*, ed. Lai Oso et al. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2019), 275–85.
55 J. Haynes, "Political Critique in Nigerian Films," *African Affairs* 105, no. 421 (2006): 511–33.

While Nollywood has made strides in offering socio-political commentary, it must be better positioned for societal transformation. Films that raise awareness of societal issues and propose solutions can attract funding from agencies seeking behavioural change. However, filmmakers must be aware of the potential for these agencies to influence the content and agenda of their films. While financial support from funding agencies is crucial for the production of socially impactful films, producers should be wary of compromising their creative autonomy in the process. It is of utmost importance that filmmakers engage in open dialogue with funding agencies to ensure alignment of objectives and maintain the integrity of their artistic vision. By establishing clear boundaries and safeguarding their creative freedom, filmmakers can mitigate the risk of external agendas shaping the narratives in their films. As a matter of urgency, filmmakers should embrace their role as change agents and collaborate with other stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of their films for societal transformation. Diversifying funding sources can also help reduce dependence on any single agency, allowing filmmakers to maintain a balanced perspective in addressing societal issues while aligning their narratives with national development objectives. If the past impacts the present, then the present must be constructed in a way as to evolve a direction for the future, and the Nigerian film industry certainly has a role to play in this.

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9. CONCEPTUAL MAP OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS OF TRADITIONAL AKAN INSTITUTIONS—EXTENDING THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNICATIONS LITERATURE

ABENA KYERAA DUAH

Introduction

There have been many attempts at finding a single definition of communication, however, quoting Griffin[1]:

> Jennifer Slack … declares that 'there is no single, absolute essence of communication that adequately explains the phenomena… (and that) …such a definition does not exist; neither is it merely awaiting the next brightest communication scholar to nail it down once and for all'.

Ansu-Kyeremeh made a similar observation when he conceded that the word communication is eclectic in form and varied in meaning.[2] Littlejohn and Foss noted that definitions of communication often capture one or a combination of the following: 1) level of observation, the plane at which transfer occurs, 2) consciousness in terms of intentionality, and/or 3) judgment in terms of success.

In its basic connotation where the emphasis is on the element of exchange as central to communication, Ansu-Kyeremeh[3] defined communication as 'the sharing of information between an individual and another individual and a group.' Griffin also notes the element of exchange as crucial in his definition of communication as ". . . the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response."[4]

As defining communication is elusive, so is defining what communication media are. The basic understanding of communication media is that they are channels that are used to convey messages from one point to another. Until Jensen's categorisation of media in degrees[5], describing empty spaces as channels seemed to defeat spatial recognitions. Jensen explained that media have degrees to them and that some degrees of media allow themselves to be mediated by others and the degree of a particular medium is determined

1 Griffin, E. M. *A first look at communication theory*. McGraw-hill, 2006.
2 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Critically "Trending" Approaches to Communication Theory and Methods of Inquiry in Ghana." *Changing perspectives on the social sciences in Ghana* (2014): 221-238.
3 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi, "Communication, Education and Development: Exploring an African Cultural Setting." (1997).
4 Griffin, Em, *A First Look at Communication Theory*.
5 Jensen, Klaus Bruhn, "Introduction: The state of convergence in media and communication research." *A handbook of media and communication research*. Routledge, 2020. 1-21.

by how amenable it is to being mediated by other media. The degrees of media are ordered in three categories: media of the first degree, like speech—which is organic, indigenous, and available to all societies; media of the second degree, like a recording—which is technologically based; and media of the third degree, like YouTube—which are digital and web 2.0 based. Lower-degree media like voice can be treated and mediated with an electronic recorder sending it to second degree and posted on web 2.0 platforms like YouTube, thus mediating it via third degree.

This elusiveness of a standard definition of communication stems from the fact that different subdisciplines in communication practice interpret communication differently. The varying forms of the symbols of communication for each culture make communication a manifestation of the cultural norms of each society. Communication acts of every society are dependent on the cultural practices of that society. According to Robert Craig[6] communicative acts are usually acts that involve "talking and listening, writing, and reading, performing, and witnessing, or, more generally, doing anything that involves "messages" in any medium or situation." Then Griffin's list of proxemics, chronemics, kinesics, haptics, occulesics, objectics, numbers, colours, olfactory and gustatory senses, symbolic display, semiotics, picture, dressing and other forms of symbolism can be included among 'message'" in any medium or situation.[7]

Communication research has been influenced by its multidisciplinary roots and accompanying research approaches from physical sciences to the humanities, so mapping the field of communication studies has often been an arduous task.so far, scholars in the discipline have been able to map audiences into intellectual tiers[8], the theories that explain communication phenomenon into meta-theories[9], and the types of channels of communication into degrees[10]. These maps are intended to provide observers with some guide to identify and describe communication problems.

Regrettably, these conceptual maps do no justice to the cultural essence of communication. Culture is widely recognized as one of the benchmarks of the parameters of context in communication, yet there are no standard requirements by which communication researchers can describe culture as there are for demographics and socioeconomic factors. As a result of this gap in communication studies, communication researchers rely on their ingenuity in making a case for cultural differentiation to replicate studies from different cultural contexts.

Communication research looks at the communication phenomenon through the perspective of the researcher by imbibing the researcher's words, as well as the philosophical outlook the researcher selects to interpret processes of communication. This research

6 Craig, Robert T. "Communication Theory as a Field." *Communication theory* 9.2 (1999): 119-161.
7 Griffin, Em, *A first look at communication theory*
8 Powers, John, "On the Intellectual Structure of the Human Communication Discipline." *Communication Education* 44.3 (1995): 191-222.
9 Craig, Robert T. "Communication Theory as a Field."
10 Jensen, Klaus Bruhn, "Introduction: The state of convergence in media and communication research

approach may hold validity in theory building in other disciplines; however, with words like *exchange*, *relational*, and *shared meaning* being integral in the myriads of communication definitions, communication inquiry in theory building needs a different approach. This is much so if communication research is to bring the very needed impact in terms positive social changes.

Ansu-Kyeremeh laments the practice in Communication scholarship on the African continent where scholars concentrate on studies of communication practice in the exogenous sphere[11]. Modern practice of communication channeled through electronic and digital media by bureaucratic and corporate institutions and their social changes is what seems to fascinate African communication scholars much to the neglect of the indigenous, informal sphere that continues to thrive in the present, regardless. Because of this neglect, communication scholars have lost the opportunity to document the indigenous practices of communication in traditional African institutions, the changes that may have occurred in them, and how they could have been appropriated for development. The indigenous sphere is a key aspect of the African peoples and the neglect of that sphere in research has produced half-baked solutions to developmental dilemmas, corruption, and positive social changes. The neglect of indigenous African communication practices has also impoverished the communication discipline as concepts in that paradigm also extend the literature in the conceptual mapping of the discipline. These conceptual maps refer to the philosophical traditions[12], the intellectual tiers[13], and the degrees of media.[14]

This chapter provides insight into the factors that differentiates the indigenous sphere from the exogenous sphere of the communication in Africa. The chapter achieves this by describing the African history, the prevailing philosophies, the political systems, and the communication systems that facilitates them. The chapter then looks at the contributions these factors make to the conceptual maps of the communication discipline. Examples from the Akan people are used as illustrations. The Akan people are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. They consist of different traditional states like the Akyems, Akuapems, Assins, Denkyiras, Fantes, Kwahus, Nzemas as well as the Ashanti kingdom. They have similar cultural practices with slight variations in their dialects. These descriptions and examples present some evidence of the institutions of rule and social relations that exist in the indigenous sphere, and how they have changed and may continue to change the African society through communication.

Moemeka, revealed that Africa as a continent has over 50,000 languages spoken by its natives of about 1.5 billion people[15]. Its peoples have been colonised by Europeans, and Arabs who introduced different official languages like English French, Portuguese and

11 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Critically “Trending” Approaches to Communication Theory and Methods of Inquiry in Ghana

12 Craig, Robert T. "Communication Theory as a Field."

13 Powers, John, "On the Intellectual Structure of the Human Communication Discipline.

14 Jensen, Klaus Bruhn, "Introduction: The state of convergence in media and communication research

15 Moemeka, Andrew A. "Communication and African culture: A sociological analysis." *Communication and culture: African perspectives* (1989): 1-10

Arabic; and exposed them to varying cultures and philosophies duringcolonial rule and then after. Moemeka explained that the similarities in the philosophical traditions of African peoples are the reason why despite the differences in language, ethnicities and cultures, the peoples of Africa are easily described as homogenous.[16] The idea of homogeneity of African peoples is seen in the labeling of Africa as a country instead of a continent. Masango[17] also demonstrates how the similarities in the histories of African people determine the nature of leadership on the continent. So, philosophical traditions and history are key markers that influence the culture of any people. Additionally, the dynamism of culture is what leads to social change. Therefore, it is important to study the indigenous philosophy of the African people, its resultant indigenous political system, and the indigenous communication system to 1) lucidly explain social change phenomena that manifest as communication, 2) correctly predict how certain communications yield certain social changes, and 3) also understand how particular communication approaches yield either favorable or unfavorable social changes.

The Eras of African History and Communication

The history of Africa is marked by varying forms encounters with peoples outside the continent. These phenomenal encounters are in three distinct eras: the religious era, the colonial era, and the global era[18]. The first era is the period before the continent encountered peoples outside the continent. During this period Africans ruled Africans and traded among themselves. The next era is the colonial era which is marked by the period the peoples of other continents came to the continent to trade, do missionary work, and subsequently rule the continent through colonization. The third era is the period when the peoples of the continent got rid of colonial rule and encountered peoples of other nations as sovereign states.

Each encounter introduced particular way of viewing the world and interpreting the data observed in the world. As such, there are specific philosophical worldviews that were and are dominant in each era. The three philosophies that seem to have dominated the continent are the African philosophy [19], modernism, and postmodernism. The dominance of a philosophical outlook reflects in terms of either popularity, hegemony, or both. Each era also had specific political systems influenced by the prevailing philosophical outlook and facilitated by the popular communication system of that time. the succeeding paragraphs explain how this association play out.

In the religious era for which the dominant philosophy was the indigenous philosophy in terms of both hegemony and popularity. The indigenous African philosophy is any worldview that originated from within the continent starkly unlike the western originated philosophies as they view God, spirits, and intuition as valid source of knowledge. During this

16 Moemeka, Andrew A. "Communication and African culture
17 Masango, Maake. "Leadership in the African context." *Verbum et ecclesia* 23.3 (2002): 707-718.
18 Masango (ibid)
19 Moemeka, Andrew A. "Communication and African culture

era, the system of governance that was practiced was largely theocratic. It was basically rule by God through his earthly representatives in the forms of gods and spirits, along with rulers, and priests who make up the class.[20] Communication was facilitated by an indigenous communication system (ICS). This ICS consists of 1) an infrastructure built on social networks,[21] 2) institutions reliant on these social networks, 3) the modes of communication of these institutions, and 4) their constituent genres of messages.

During the colonial era, when Europeans purported to civilize the African,[22] modern philosophy was introduced. Despite democracy and bureaucracy being one of the many ideals of modernization, the former was introduced at the colonial nationalized level only after African countries won independence. However, institutions of the latter were set in motion very early in colonial rule. The dominant philosophy in terms of hegemony was modernization but the dominant philosophy in terms of popularity is the indigenous African philosophy.[23] The system of communication that facilitated colonial rule and the later democratic governments consisted of the press in the form of print, radio and television.

In the global era, the hegemonic philosophical worldview is still modernism. It is easy to foresee that the hegemony of modernism is fast eroding and being replaced by postmodernism. The postmodernist outlook necessitates the simultaneous flourishing of different philosophical worldviews, so the indigenous worldview to continue thrive. The system of governance in this global is influencing as national boundaries have been blurred by internet lines. The governance system of influence is facilitated by lifestyle, PR and marketing influencers, as well as algorithms, and AI technologies via digital communication systems.

The African Philosophy—Its Communication Indicators

During the religious era the dominant philosophical outlook was the indigenous African philosophy, and the African looked upon the world through religious lenses[24]. The principles of African philosophies like Ubuntu, underlie many African communication theories documented by several Africana scholars that cannot be articulated here (see Black/Africana theory edited by Khebuma Langmia)[25]. During the times when indigenous African philosophies prevailed, the principles of these philosophies were what underlined all practices of the African peoples. Though these many philosophies cannot be explained in this chapter, Moemeka[26] provides the indicators that make a worldview an indigenous African philosophy. The indicators of the indigenous African philosophy were seen in, 1) the interrelatedness of communication and culture of everyday life; 2) the supremacy of the

20 Moemeka, (ibid)
21 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).
22 Lugones, Maria, The coloniality of gender. Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise, 2, (2008) 1-17.
23 Yeboah-Assiamah, Emmanuel, et al. "A socio-cultural approach to public sector corruption in Africa: key pointers for reflection." *Journal of Public Affairs* 16.3 (2016): 279-293.
24 Masango, Maake. "Leadership in the African context."
25 Langmia, Kehbuma . Black/Africana Communication theory. London/New YorkVol. 1 (2018).
26 Moemeka, Andrew A. "Communication and African culture:.

community over the individual when it comes to considering interests in decision-making; 3) the sanctity of authority in terms of rulers and the aged where these two groups can do no wrong; 4), the utility of the individual as a source of both fortune and misfortune to the community; and most importantly, 5) the belief in God that He created the world and everything in it where He has delegated priests, rulers and smaller gods on earth.

With this indigenous outlook on life, what is real is either what the community has agreed to or what the spirits have divulged to those in authority. In essence, what is real is either communal, spiritual or both. What is real may be known through communication in that communication and culture are interrelated. So, through communication common and spiritual reality can be known. However, according to Ansu-Kyeremeh, there is a distinction in terms of to whom certain realities can be known and from whom they may be known[27]. Manyonzo reveals that realities are in three forms which are common, technical, and privileged and the people who can be aware of these realities are divided into three: the common people, technical people, and special people[28]. Some kinds of knowledge can only be revealed by certain people, and some information can be known by only some people. The common group consists of ordinary citizens. The technical group consists of the aged, people with special skills and talents, and those delegated by the special group. The Special group consists of the aged, the ruling class, the priests, and spiritual people in the community.[23] The third group occupies the apex of the hierarchy political office in communities. The idea that some political office holders are responsible for spiritual information means that levels of communication can be extended to include extramundane communication.

Due to the utility of every individual in the community, the common, technical, and privileged in communication situations are not static, and certain contextual factors determine who is common, technical, or special actor in social interactions. A common social actor can be a privileged knowledge actor in a certain situation if they receive extramundane communication that the entire community, or the special actors ratify as such. Manyonzo theorized this as the "context is the message theory" which he propounded in 2018[29]. This theory helps us to understand which messages are credible due to who is communicating them. Alas, unlike other dominant philosophies, the methods of knowing certain realities will always elude some people. This elusion means that when some type of information is known by some categories of people, others will never deem the knowledge as credible, or that knowledge will cease being privileged knowledge.

Since Craig mapped out the seven traditions of communication research, the field of communication has largely been enriched by these distinctions of philosophical underpinnings[30].

27 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).
28 Manyozo, Linje. "The context is the message: Theory of indigenous knowledge communication systems." *Javnost The Public* 25.4 (2018): 393-409.
29 Manyozo, Linje. "The context is the message
30 Craig, Robert T. "Communication Theory as a Field."

The inaccessibility of certain realities to certain social actors has methodological implications in researching some communication phenomenon, especially considering recent ethical stipulations. This, thus, speaks to a new tradition of communication research by extending the metatheories beyond the seven proposed by Craig in 1999 and the pragmatism he reviewed in addition in 2009. This new tradition is verified by what it has in common with other traditions by its amenability to the available methods of the other traditions. It also distinguishes itself from the other traditions by how it provides means of inquiring into a spiritual phenomenon, intuition, and being unsearchable beyond except by following Tietaah and Yeboah-Banin's recommendation of modelling with already accepted explanations found in wise sayings like proverbs.[31]

Communication Actors

The way certain realities of the indigenous African philosophy can be known and/or communicated provides the framework of the hierarchy of actors in political systems of indigenous African societies. As indicated earlier, special people with privileged knowledge are often rulers. These special people are the social actors mostly in charge of extramundane communication, and they communicate with the deities on behalf of the people, relay information from these deities to the people, and formulate some rules and regulations that govern the people.[32] So, extramundane messages are regarded as credible if they are communicated or endorsed by privileged and specialised knowledge actors. Non-specialized actors are those delegated by the special group to undertake certain duties in community like communicating and implementing rules and regulations drawn by the special group.[30] Common people are the ruled who are guided by the two other groups and are regarded as credible communicators and worthy recipients of common knowledge. Forms of common knowledge messages are news (*Kaseɛ*), stories (*anansesem*), situational reports (amaneɛ), flirtation (*sirihehe*), game (*agorɔ*) and innuendoes (*akutia*), to mention a few. The apt use of some genres of communication genres like proverbs, songs, symbolism, institutions, and performances can elevate common knowledge actors to technical and even privileged knowledge communicators.

Therefore, among the Akan common people, comprising the citizens of the community, are the individuals who come together to form families known as *Abusua*. The families are headed by the *Abusuapayin,* and membership is determined by matrilineal inheritance. These families come together to comprise the clans. Some of the leaders of these clans are selected as elders of the town. The *Abusuapayin* is often a technical knowledge actor, but clan heads may be privileged knowledge actors when they are selected as part of the council of elders. The elders in the office of clan heads are part of the ruling group which also consists of the chief (*ohene*) and the queen (*ohemaa*). Unlike in other jurisdictions, the office of the queen is not attained through marriage neither is it ceremonial but is an institution with its own powers just like the chieftaincy institution. The spokespersons for the chief and the queen (*okyeame*), though always accompanying the ruling class, are not classified as privileged actors but are

31 Tietaah, Gilbert *et al*, after class discussion on the explanatory power of proverbs for communication phenomena. (2020)

32 Manyozo, Linje. "The context is the message

technical knowledge actors. The main duty of an *okyeame* is to filter communication going from and coming to the queen and chief to mitigate offense and errors[33].

Communicative Institutions

Within the political system are institutions that facilitate the marking of key milestones in the lives of the individual, family or community. Examples of indigenous institutions are the family, marriage, funeral, chieftaincy, etc. Institutions are in the forms of rites, societies, and symbolic connotations[34]. Most of these institutions, being communicative acts in themselves, are accessible to certain degrees to the different categories of social actors. To illustrate this institutional accessibility, the rites of passage are for individuals, inheritance system for the family, and festivals for the community. Rites of passage as institutions are established and enacted and communicated through the institution of family. Then there are other occupational rites that are enacted by societies. Institutional communication in the form of societies are used to pass technical or privileged knowledge to certain key actors in communities. The two forms of societies, open or secret societies, are used to pass on technical or privileged knowledges respectively, and the members of these societies oversee rites at the community level, symbolic connotations, and the installation and approval of other institutions be them traditional like chieftaincy, or new like schools. This approval process means that it is important for any innovation to be vetted by privileged people in each community before the people will wholeheartedly accept or abide by them.

A recent well-known manifestation of this was during the outbreak of COVID-19 when the government of Ghana instituted a lockdown and social distancing in public places in Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi. Places like the markets were not put on lockdown but their patrons were directed to socially distance themselves. There were news reports of traders flouting the rule until the king of the Ashantes, Otumfuor Osei-Tutu, whose jurisdiction covered the market, , threatened to close down his market wich prompted strict adherence to the protocols. Another example can be cited about the Kwahus. The lockdown in 2020 occurred close to the Easter celebrations, and at a time Indigenes of Kwahu in the Eastern region of Ghana, noted for their elaborate Easter celebrations, were getting ready to leave Accra, the capital of Ghana, for their hometown for the celebrations. However, the Omanhene of the Kwahu state announced that he did not need them on his land during that period. In the scenarios where the traditional political leaders stepped in, there was strict compliance to the COVID-19 protocols. In the traditional areas of the Ga State, there were flagrant violations of the protocols with people visiting the beach, and attending public gatherings for rites like naming and funerals which are facilitated by institutions under the indigenous sphere. I noted interestingly that there were no news reports of the traditional political leaders of the Ga State speaking against the violations. It makes sense to conclude that the lack of compliance was because institutions like naming and funeral were not under the jurisdiction of the President. As such, the President did not have the perceived legitimacy to place sanctions on them. The sanctions on them will then only hold if they are endorsed by the traditional leaders who have the perceived legitimacy to

33 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).

34 Moemeka, Andrew A. "Communication and African culture

place sanctions on their subjects in this sphere. It was, thus, not surprising that a Member of Parliament for the Ledzokuku constituency in the Ga state, Dr Bernard Okoe-Boye, a minister of health who was part of the COVID-19 Management team, believed he lost his seat because he refused to attend these traditional ceremonies as they were in violation of the protocols.[35]

Institutions such as the rites of passage, chieftaincy, festivals and others like them which are structures of the political system are also structures of the indigenous communication system. In addition, individual social actors and their network of relation interact to constitute media channels. A more intricate version is described in the succeeding section.

The Communication System

Indigenous communication systems are made of the forms of communication and channels of communication. Ansu-Kyeremeh provides the conceptual framework of the indigenous communication infrastructure,[36] and Wilson's taxonomy of traditional communication[37] help classify the various genres of communication. Indigenous communication infrastructure is based on social lines of relations and categories of communication modes, just as the exogenous electronic media infrastructure is held by electricity lines, and radio waves that transmit various modes of communication[38]. The channels of communication which are based on social relations are—primary groups and secondary groups. The primary group consists of family relations and people within a household. This means that all persons with whom one shares a bloodline or private living quarters are the first channel through which a person receives information and is their primary media.

The secondary media entails friends, neighbors, occupational colleagues, and all other persons the individual encounters directly or indirectly[39]. These social relations constitute the channels that make up the indigenous communication system just like the exogenous communication system is made up of print, radio, television, and computer devices as they are the means through which information is passed from one social actor to the other. Thus, social relations of individuals were how individuals in indigenous societies received messages. The individual social actors and their network of relations are established by and within institutions. For instance, the primary group is established within the family institution which is established by the marriage institution that manages the funeral institution when the occasion arises.

The reach of social relation channels could extend very far due to some permutation of the primary and

35 (Okoe Boye Reportedly Lost His Seat Because He 'Refused To Attend Naming Ceremonies, Others) https://www.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/politics/202012/434503.php.

36 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).

37 Wilson, Des, "A taxonomy of traditional media in Africa." *Perspectives on Indigenous Communication in Africa: Theory and Application* 2 (1998): 172-89.

38 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).

39 Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Communication, education and development: Exploring an African cultural setting." (1997).

secondary groups. For example, all the members of a person's secondary group automatically become secondary media to all the members of their primary group and information from their established private space can be transmitted through the person to this secondary media. This transmission will occur with or without the knowledge of the individuals in the primary group. When combined with indigenous transport means, some of which even conveyed exogenous media like print, channels of social relations are stretched farther This form of message transmission is the engine of grapevine communication.

The channels of social relations were not limited to one-on-one transmission. Group-to-one, one-to-group, and group-to-group transmission were also common. These numerical dynamics, coupled with primary and secondary interrelations, give reach to indigenous communication to the extent of mimicking mass communication. If mass communication has any edge over indigenous communication in terms of reach, it is in the synchronicity of message reaching audiences and the time it takes to reach them. Nevertheless, the social actors of indigenous African communities interact with certain signs and symbols within established codes to make meaning and some of these codes restrict communication of some groups within certain boundaries. According to Ansu-Kyeremeh, the modes of communication are distinguished by criteria of direction, nature, destination, purpose, and the process of the message. Combinations of these result in modes of communication that are known as venue, events, games, and performance-oriented communication.

Within the modes of communication are the forms of messages that constitute the communicative acts that are used to interact. In exogenous western circles communicative examples of communication genres are textbooks, research proposals, inaugural address, toasts, and mission statements. Speech communities also have genres that are unique to them. For instance, the academic community has their abstracts, and the medical field has the prescription. The indigenous communication system is also constituted of some communicative genres. These genres are also specific to institutions. For instance, *nsaabodie*—citations during funeral donations, *adesiedie*—cants made during the display of burial items, *esuu*—lamentations of the exploits of the dead person are some communicative acts peculiar to the funeral institution. Some common everyday communicative genres are *ammanebo*—statement of purpose which is mandatory at every gathering. Some genres are lengthy and made up of other subgenres while others are short and straight to the point. Wilson categorises some other genres of communication to be demonstratives: music, storytelling, rhetoric, proverbs, and all other literary and performing arts; symbolography: cryptic writings, and symbols like *Adinkra*; iconographies: objects in flora and faunae; visuals: color symbolisms and color combinations. These genres can be studied to inform how to develop persuasive messages for development and advertising campaigns.

Some communicative genres are facilitated by some form of technology. This technology is in the form of instruments that are categorized by their means of transmission of sound (Wilson)[40]. Aerophones are those instruments that produce sound because of wind passing through them like the flute, *atentenben*, *aben* and the likes. There are membranophones that produce sound due to the strike on the surface of a stretched membrane mostly animal

40 Wilson, Des, "A taxonomy of traditional media in Africa on (1989, ibid)

skin like the *fontomfrom*, *atumpan*, and *dondo*. Then there are idiophones like the *akasa*, *seprewa*, gong-gong which produce sound from hard surfaces being struck by other hard surfaces. In some scenarios, different instruments come together to constitute an ensemble to facilitate the communication of genres. For example, the gong-gong is beaten to signal an announcement of important community developments so that citizens pay the necessary attention. The talking drum (*Atumpan*) which is used in the form of relay messaging is used to spread from one village to another when the drummer (*okyeremah),* beats a pattern that is heard, interpreted, and repeated by drummers of surrounding communities. This form of messaging is akin to radio transmission waves.

Some of the instruments of communication make an alteration to Jensen's media categorization of musical instruments as media of the first degree[41]. It is necessary to categorize the use of *Atumpan* in relay messaging as media of second degree as it can be used transmit messages that transcend space and time the foremost criteria of media of the second degree. Also, the genres of communication addressed makes key contribution to Power's intellectual tier of communication by adding another layer. Powers listed intellectual tiers of communication to be one-on-one, group, public, organizational, and mass communication[42]. Wilson's category of extramundane communication mode which constitute genres like prayer, incantations, divinations, revelations, and ordinations[43] become another tier to adapt Power's intellectual list. This addition present communication researchers another domain of inquiry into the communication practices of Africans which is very important in defining normative belief concept in most nomothetic theories.

Conclusion

To relate with other peoples of the world as a sovereign state in the global era, African nations must prove that they follow established requirements. Most of these requirements are seen as states that foster modernization ideals and concepts largely projected through UN charters and diplomatic negotiations that often favor the West. These ideals have largely been formulated with nomothetic underpinnings, most of which have not yielded their expected result in widespread positive social changes in African societies. For example, democracy is yet to result in widespread economic development in the African states that practice it. The African countries that seem to do well economically seem to have or have had some lack of democracy in their recent histories—precisely South Africa, Rwanda. Countries that practice the exogenous form of democracy have their leaders perceived as corrupt; constitutions overthrown through either military, or parliamentary interruptions of constitutional run; next to no form of infrastructural development and being riddled with insurmountable foreign and local debts that leave Bretton Woods institutions at their wits end on how to resolve these debts.

The philosophical traditions, the specific histories, and the extent of global exposure to political systems ought to be benchmark indicators for cultural specifics in communication theoriz-

41 Jensen, Klaus Bruhn, "Introduction: The state of convergence in media and communication research
42 Powe Powers, John, "On the Intellectual Structure of the Human Communication Discipline.rs (ibid)
43 Wilson, Des, "A taxonomy of traditional media in Africa

ing. The reason for these indicators as benchmark is that culture is dynamic largely due to the diffusion of innovation. Innovation can come from within or without the community. However, like the diffusion of matter, the presence of the molecules of the diffused matter is affected by certain environmental conditions like temperature, the concentration of the matter being diffused, and the nature of the matter in which diffusion is occurring. For instance, the rate at which a spritz of perfume will diffuse in the air of a certain volume will greatly outweigh the rate at which that same spritz of perfume will diffuse in the same volume of water. In essence, the rate at which any innovation brings a particular social change depends on the conditions of the benchmarks above. For example, due to the Ghanaian history of British colonialism, the official language of the country is English. This means that the rate at which innovation communicated in English will bring social changes will be faster than the rate at which an innovation communicated in French. In similar fashion, the rate at which innovation communicated through indigenous language will bring about change will be faster than the rate at which innovation communicated in English which is most often a third or second language of the people.

If communication of the people in a society is the matter in which diffusion of innovation occurs, then environmental conditions that affect the rate of diffusion of innovation are the indigenous philosophical paradigm of the people, the indigenous communication system of those people, the history of those people, and social change is the homogenous mixture resulting from the diffused innovation.

Communication studies need to learn about communication processes through the listed cultural parameters of the actor or actors interacting in the social process that is under study because it is with that outlook that actors interpret and exchange meaning. It is only through that window that the actual meaning of the interaction can come across. And it is only through this outlook that the result of communication processes can be predicted. So, at the very least, inquirers into communication phenomenon need not only disclose the philosophical underpinning of their methodologies, but they must also provide insight into the philosophical outlook with which the communicative act is produced or is to be consumed, and as well articulate the philosophical exposure through colonialism the actors have had.

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SECTION 3:
COMMUNICATION, ALTERNATIVE MEDIA, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

10. EXPLORING COMMUNITY RADIO AS A STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

MANFRED A. K. ASUMAN

Intoduction

This chapter navigates and explores the practice of community radio as a channel for social change in Africa. The chapter discusses how community radio has been used throughout the years and how it affects the development of the various communities in which community broadcasting is practiced.

The chapter has a dual objective. The first is to identify and explore how various communities and their development partners (NGOs and government) have taken advantage of the opportunities created by community radio in promoting inclusive and equitable development within their immediate communities and broadcast areas. Secondly, I aim to use this chapter to discuss the opportunities that exist within community radio and how these opportunities can be used as launch pads to target, promote, and include community members in the social change process.

As such, this chapter reviews and discusses how communication through community focused media initiatives such as community radio, can affect community development through social change. It also puts into perspective, how community radio can be used as a social inclusion platform in the social change and empowerment process.

The Role of Community Radio in Rural Development and Social Change

Evidence from academic inquiry indicates that each community has specific reasons for starting and setting up a community radio station; therefore, the reasons why communities invest in setting up community radio stations are not monogenous and vary across the board. Community radio stations are most often the unifying force in the community for development. Through community radio, community members can mobilize themselves for one purpose, such as the improvement of household and community sanitation or building a community hospital[1].

There are instances where community radio has aided communal development actions. For instance, in Uganda, community radio campaigns about the importance of voluntary HIV/AIDS testing and counselling by Mega FM has improved attendance at the local clinic. Thus HIV/AIDS testing, treatment, and anti-retroviral therapy (ART) have increased significantly. In Mali,

1 Myers, Mary. "Voices from villages: Community radio in the developing world." *Center for International Media Assistance* 3 (2011): 271-292.

Radio Fanaka airs a program about using manure to improve local agricultural productivity. The popularity of this program is seen, notable in terms of how people outside the broadcast range erect antennas to listen to the program. In one village, a farmer claims he can now make compost fertilizer from farm and household waste because he listened to and followed the instructions on a radio program aired on the local community radio station.

These examples demonstrate how community radio serves as a vehicle for community and self-development and presents a top-down approach to social change by the mode of information dissemination.

The production of radio programmes starts through audience surveys which study the social structure, demographics, economic levels and livelihood practices of a particular village, activities are then recorded, which leads to recorded programs in which the people who participate are the same people from whom the survey data is collected. The recorded radio programs are usually in the form of a drama performed by villagers or radio documentaries and interviews with local farming experts[2]. Community radio stations have been described as major catalysts for information and knowledge that create the context to help improve the living conditions of the rural poor through better and more sustainable livelihood strategies[3]. The Food and Agricultural Organisation[4] also considers community radios as a "powerful engine for rural development and a preferred instrument in the fight against poverty".

Community radio offers the potential to share information across traditional barriers, to give a voice to traditionally unheard peoples and to provide valuable information that enhances economic, health and educational activities[5].

Community radio broadcasting has greatly reduced communication costs, thereby allowing communities and their development agents to send and obtain information quickly and cheaply on a variety of economic, social, and political topics. An emerging body of research shows that the reduction in communication costs associated with community radio has tangible economic benefits which include advancements in agricultural production systems, rural livelihood improvements and poverty reduction[6].

Community radio broadcasting has provided new possibilities for accelerated economic and social development. These effects can be particularly dramatic in rural communities where community radios have represented the first modern communications infrastructure of any kind. As the general media landscape matures in developing countries, community

2 Fisher, Harold. "Community radio as a tool for development." *Media development* 4 (1990): 19-24.
3 UN, E. "Government Global E-Government Readiness Report, Towards Access for Opportunity." *Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management. UN, New York* (2004).
4 Girard, Bruce, ed. *The one to watch: Radio, new ICTs and interactivity*. Food & Agriculture Org., (2003).
5 Gerster, Richard, and Sonja Zimmermann. *Information and communication technologies (ICTs) and poverty reduction in Sub Saharan Africa: a learning study (Synthesis)*. Switzerland: Gerster Consulting, (2003).
6 Nolen, Patrick. "Does ICT benefit the poor? Evidence from South Africa." (2008).

radio stations are evolving from simple communication tools into service delivery platforms. This has shifted the development paradigm surrounding radio from one that simply reduces communication and co-ordination costs to one that can transform lives through innovative programs and services.

The role of community radio in development as discussed above supports the thinking that there are different ways community radio can aid local development. For instance, it could be a means of achieving specific development goals, or a means of ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable or marginalized people in societal dialogue by giving them a voice through mass media[7].

As argued by previous communications and social change theorists, there is still no precise mechanism or methodology for evaluating the effect of community radio broadcast on household development. Nevertheless, research confirms that some communities through discussions of content aired on their radio stations, have been able to succeed in undertaking crucial social changes and development initiatives. To people who may not be members of these communities, the changes achieved may appear trivial, but in the context of the prevailing poverty within these communities, the people admit that community radio fires up the energy and will for social change and development within these communities. For example, through community radio, gambling which was a canker amongst men and boys of school going age, has become socially unacceptable. Through a series of radio documentaries and interviews which were aired on the local community radio station, men were made aware of the hardships caused by their losses. As a result of this broadcast, the number of gambling centres within the community reduced massively.

There is also record of community radio's ability in inciting community and social change action when an illegal logging business in rural Zambia was ended because community members brought their complaints to the radio station. The local forestry officers, who had been bribed and therefore turned a blind eye to the activities of this logging business, were brought to account because the community members were able to express their views and criticisms on the local community radio station.

These examples go a long way to illustrate the role of community radio in development and how it can contribute meaningfully to the lives of the people in its immediate community. Given the necessary opportunity and conditions, community radio can help communities to identify, analyse and solve problems at the grassroots level. Evidently, community radio can stimulate communities and help them become proactive in the pursuit of their own development.

7 Manyozo, Linje. *Media, communication, and development: Three approaches*. Sage Publications, (2012).

Social Change within the Context of Expanding Capabilities

Within the discipline of social change and development communications, the focus of development and social change switches from economic growth to that of expanding and facilitating the capabilities of people, including the rural poor and other marginalized groups, to be free and knowledgeable enough to achieve their desires[8]. In the 70's and 80's, one key variable of how the media participated in the development discourse was through the inclusion of "development news". Development news captured issues that lead to economic improvement, it included issues from several fields including family planning, literacy, personal hygiene, and political education. For some development practitioners, improved literacy, food availability and good sanitation are the indicators of development. This idea of development was adopted into the capabilities approach as described by Sen and Nussbaum. The Capabilities Approach to development is an approach that views development as a comparative quality of life assessment. In other words, the approach sees development as a means, but not as an end, asking not the total quantifiable improvements in people's lives, but rather about the opportunities available to everyone for improvement. The capabilities approach recognizes people may have different development needs and the immediate development concerns of people in one community will be entirely different from the concerns of people in another community. As such, the capabilities approach emphasizes a

development strategy which creates an enabling environment where marginalized people like women can meet their own development needs[9]. In addition to people using their own skills to achieve their own advancement, the government and other external development agencies or partners create the opportunities for people to exercise agency in all aspects of their lives to give room to a wider freedom of choice. Capabilities is not just the ability of people to pursue development, but also the freedom to pursue opportunities given a combination of personal abilities within the political, social, and economic environment. Therefore, government and other social actors, have the responsibility to formulate laws and create positive social and economic conditions which can encourage socially underprivileged groups like women to achieve better lives for themselves.

We can infer from Nussbam and Sen that the capabilities approach largely seeks to address social justice and inequality. Most importantly, it aims to correct failures in development which arise because of systemic discrimination and marginalization.

In analysing the capabilities approach there is the need to understand where the two proponents Nussbaum and Sen differ. Sen places more emphasis on issues that deal with people's quality of life. Sen argues that some capabilities - for example, political participation and non-discrimination based on race, gender, and religion - are more important than others. Whereas Nussbaum's version of the capabilities approach introduces additional elements such as democratic liberalism and human dignity.

8 Nussbaum, Martha C. *Creating capabilities: The human development approach*. Harvard University Press, (2011).

9 Sen, Amartya K. "*Inequality re-examined*". Oxford: Clarendon Press. (1992)

Even though the proponents differ in some aspects of their arguments about the capabilities approach to social change and how it can be achieved, it is obvious that communication, through community focused mass communication enterprises such as community radio can contribute significantly to how capabilities can be promoted or achieved. For this chapter and my objectives, the capabilities approach of Sen and Nussbaum where development and social change are described as a process which expands the freedoms of people and a process where people are empowered to add value to their lives and improve their human dignity - are adopted[10]. These descriptions of development and social change are employed in this chapter because, whereas some capabilities may be beyond the power of community radio and may need government and political strategy to implement, Research proves some capabilities, such as empowerment through social change in the global south, can be achieved and intensified through the proper use of community radio. Sen's argument is the best fit strategy for understanding how community radio empowers under-privileged people by expanding and improving their capabilities because the key idea underlying the capabilities approach is that social arrangements, like community radio, must be able to "help people achieve and promote what they value doing or being"[11].

Community Radio, in the Context of New Social Movements

Throughout history, underprivileged and underrepresented groups such as immigrants, refugees, women, and the rural poor have adopted the use of community radio as one of the means of informing and mobilizing themselves for political action. Community radio is also one of the means through which underprivileged and underrepresented groups criticize the people in authority, such as governments and the mainstream media.

Community radio provides a working model for oppositional media because it can be used to spearhead attempts by the marginalised to shift power relations and advance themselves[12]. Research has proven that all forms of community media, which include community radio, are counter hegemonistic. Evidently, community media can help in shifting the hegemonistic structures of society by using explicit political actions or by adopting diversionary means to attack and change society through experimentation and the transformation of existing roles and routines.[13]

The content, the processes of production and the interpretive strategies of its audience are what differentiates community radio from commercial radio and other forms of broadcasting.[14] Community-owned radio projects are instrumental in eliminating the culture of silence which

10 Sen, Amartya K. "*Development as freedom*." Oxford: Oxford University Press. (1999)

11 Alkire, Sabina, and Séverine Deneulin. "The human development and capability approach." In *An introduction to the human development and capability approach*, pp. 22-48. Routledge, (2009).

12 Spatig, Linda. "Feminist critique of developmentalism: What's in it for teachers?." *Theory and research in education* 3, no. 3 (2005): 299-326.

13 Atton, Chris. *Alternative Media.* London: Sage. (2002)

14 Atkinson, Giles, Simon Dietz, Eric Neumayer, and Matthew Agarwala, eds. *Handbook of sustainable development*. Edward Elgar Publishing, (2014).

exists amongst women in the household and communal settings.[15] In addition to eliminating the culture of silence within the household, community media possess the potential to help marginalised groups such as women and small holder farmers who are involved in program production activities to develop literary, analytical and creative skills. These skills go a long way to help in their livelihoods outside the radio station.[16]

Community radio stations offer participatory platforms to marginalised people. The platform created by community radio stations allow underrepresented community members to debate and exchange ideas on social, political, and cultural issues. This is a helpful opportunity and a good step towards inclusion because the rural poor in the global south, such as small holder farmers and women, under normal circumstances do not have the opportunity to be included in the political and social debates which are championed by the mainstream media.[17] The involvement of ordinary people in the media is a form of discursive politics and activism. Local community members can support social change initiatives when they are made aware of their situation and the improvement that change can bring.

Taking the argument above as a starting point to elucidate the relationship between community radio, local people and social movements, it is evident that community radio provides the opportunity for community members, who have the training and expertise to produce news content, radio documentaries and radio blogs which can be used as alternative educational and instructive material to capture the interest of other community members who may be at the grassroots in the social change process.

Drawing upon academic discussions of community radio and other activist media, we realize that community radio is part of tools for social change and contributes to new social movements. This is because the spread of community radio into otherwise politically and socially neglected sections of society marked a pivotal cultural shift, away from the bureaucratic control structure and hierarchical social relations of society, toward a fresh society built on equality and an emerging class of highly informed, creative citizens.[18]

In analysing the potential of adopting community radio as a social movement tool for change, writers such as Lievrouw have proposed collaboration as a key principle. He asserts that projects, programmes, and radio content which target marginalised people must not be produced in isolation but must be produced in collaboration with development partners. This idea of collaboration is based on the notion that external development agents must be involved in social change movements which empower community members to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities.

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15 Kramarae, Cheris, and Dale Spender. *Routledge international encyclopedia of women: Global women's issues and knowledge*. Routledge, (2004).

16 Hamilton, James. "Alternative media: Conceptual difficulties, critical possibilities." *Journal of communication Inquiry* 24, no. 4 (2000): 357-378.

17 Gumucio-Dagron, Alfonso. "Vertical minds versus horizontal cultures: An overview of participatory process and experiences." *Communication for development and social change* 2 (2008): 68-81.

18 Lievrouw, Leah A. *Alternative and activist new media*. John Wiley & Sons, (2023).

Such a process of conscious collaboration and critical exchange of opinions can be a good step toward communal consensus building which ultimately can lead to or support the process of women using community radio as a social movement tool for political, economic, and cultural change.[19]

Community Radio and the Spread of New Ideas (Diffusion of Innovations)

After most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had gained independence from their colonial masters in the late 1960's, the newly independent states of Africa began to make several changes to the political, social, and economic structures that existed during colonialism, so as to achieve economic development for their citizens.[20] One of the most important aspects of this journey was restoring confidence in the new political leadership and increasing the economic opportunity with the states so that development could be spread to all regions. In Ghana, for example, the first government decided to pursue industrialization as a major poverty alleviation strategy. This means the government had to shift the strength of the economy from one which produced cash crops and raw materials for the international market to one which manufactured and sold manufactured products.[21] In order for the government's planned agenda of massive industrialization to be successful, the media (radio and print) had a key role to play, because when people are not properly informed about economic transformation initiatives, it always leads to a centralized control of power and a monopoly of knowledge amongst the political elite and technocrats.[22]

Communication for development programs in the early days were directed and informed by the concept of modernization. The application of the concept of modernization, was practiced on the assumption that the development which had happened in the 1st world could be replicated in Africa and other parts of the developing world. The concept of modernization assumed that economic progress and development was a straightforward, evolutionary process that changed traditional societies, who relied on subsistence production methods and primitive cultural practices into modern, industrialized and technologically advanced societies through economic growth.[23]

19 Denscombe, Martyn. *EBOOK: The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK), (2017).

20 Ackah, Charles, Charles Adjasi, and Festus Turkson. *Scoping study on the evolution of industry in Ghana*. No. 2014/075. WIDER Working Paper, (2014).

21 Arthur, Peter. "The state, private sector development, and Ghana's "golden age of business"." *African Studies Review* 49, no. 1 (2006): 31-50.

22 García-Avilés, José-Alberto. "Diffusion of innovation." *The international Encyclopedia of media psychology* (2020): 1-8.

23 Banuri, Tariq. "Development and the politics of knowledge: A critical interpretation of the social role of modernization theories in the development of the third world." *Dominating knowledge: Development, culture, and resistance* 29 (1990).

Figure 1: Billboard of Radio Builsa in Ghana, showing their motto. Voice for the Voiceless.

The emergence of communication studies happened around the same time as the acceptance of modernization as the preferred model for development in the 1960's. The new discipline of communication studies, included elements from already existing fields such as sociology, marketing and psychology. The earliest communication researchers tried to measure the effect of mass media on individuals and communities. They concluded that a planned and purposeful use of radio broadcasting could help in influencing people's attitudes and be an effective strategy for social development.[24] These academic ideas about how radio and other media affect the development of traditional societies later became known as diffusion of innovations. Diffusion of innovations are deliberate processes where professional behavioural change agents such as radio and other mass media techniques are used to target and influence members of traditional societies into accepting a new change or innovation and subsequently spreading that new change throughout their communities.

Spreading technology and new ideas using broadcast media has become one of the most powerful strategies for linking radio broadcasting and the development of rural and periphery societies. By using community radio as a tool in the diffusion of innovations model, underprivileged people such as women in rural and traditional communities can play active roles in the development of their communities and the nation at large. They can play the role as active change makers, because of their access to information provided on community radio.[25] In

24 Ev, Hippel. "Democratizing innovation." Cambridge: MA, MIT Press (2005).
25 Dearing, J. W. "The cumulative community response to AIDS in San Francisco." *Public Communication*

rural Africa, community radio is seen as one of the most effective methods of spreading new change to achieve developmental goals. Community radio is accepted as an effective tool in spreading change and new ideas in rural Africa because of its localized nature.[26] Compared to the print media, radio is seen as a cheaper way of reaching large audiences with enlightening and convincing information about development in real time.[27] Also, the fact that community radio broadcasts in the local dialect means an individual's literacy level doesn't become a barrier and a distinguishing determinant of who can participate and who cannot.[28]

Community radio has helped government agencies to spread change and new innovations to areas that can otherwise be considered rural, poor, or agrarian.[29] Community radio also plays a central role in helping NGOs and multinational development agencies spread change through educational and social programming. Through community radio, these development-focused organizations can provide services, information, and opportunities to marginalized groups and people in places where government is unable to reach. In Latin America, as well as Africa, community radio has helped civil society and other private organizations start conversations which have led to change and improvement in many social development issues that official government agencies refuse to speak about. Such issues include the rights of socially neglected people like women and the physically challenged.[30]

Radio Sutatenza, the oldest community radio station in the world, was the first to champion a literacy campaign on radio. Similarly, Radio Suyapa and the Miner's Radio, both of which are community radio stations in Honduras and Bolivia respectively, were one of the first to successfully use community radio as a medium for non-formal education.[31]

In contrast, academic evidence warns that funders and political actors can take advantage of community radio station to push agenda and spread ideas and information which may not be beneficial to local people.[32] It is therefore suggested that a of a community based editorial

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Campaigns. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (2000): 305-308.

26 Asuman, Manfred Kofi Antwi, and Subeshini Moodley. "Livelihood Improvement Through Participatory Mass Communications: A Study on Community Radio and the Lives of Women in Northern Ghana." In *Indigenous African Language Media: Practices and Processes*, pp. 381-399. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, (2023).

27 O'Sullivan, Sara. "'The whole nation is listening to you': the presentation of the self on a tabloid talk radio show." *Media, Culture & Society* 27, no. 5 (2005): 719-738.

28 Asuman, Manfred Kofi Antwi, and Moodley Subeshini. "Women's participation in indigenous language media: An analysis of five community radio stations in Northern Ghana." In *African Language Media*, pp. 225-240. Routledge, (2023).

29 Kamau, Fridah N. "Assessment of the Influence of "janjaruka" Programme in Social and Economic Development in Korogocho: Case Study of Koch FM." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, (2019).

30 Asuman, Manfred K., and Africanus L. Diedong. "Multiplicity of voices in community development through radio in Fanteakwa district, Ghana." *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 16, no. 2 (2019): 178-198.

31 Addams, Jane, Theodor Adorno, Gordon Allport, Sherwood Anderson, Raymond Bauer, Daniel Bell, Bernard Berelson et al. *Mass communication and American social thought: Key texts, 1919-1968*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, (2004).

32 Brown, David, Mick Howes, Karim Hussein, Catherine Longley, and Ken Swindell. "Participatory methodologies and participatory practices: Assessing PRA use in the Gambia." *Agricultural Research*

team which scrutinizes programmes before they are approved must be established by the community radio station. This way, there are checks and balances which prevent donors and external partners from using community radio stations for their own interest.

Community Radio, Conflict Resolution and Communal Peace Building

In conflict reportage by the international news conglomerates, rural Africa is painted as a place stricken by civil wars, religious conflicts, and hunger. Yet the international news agencies do little to help the peace building process.[33] The reality is that conflicts are increasing amongst many rural Africans because of the struggle for control and ownership of property and economic tools such as natural resources and land.[34] As a result, the socio-economic growth of the people is stunted. Conflicts expose marginalised and underprivileged people to displacement, rape, and abject poverty. As such women, girls and other marginalised groups are the worst sufferers in times of civil war and conflict.

Traditionally, people in conflict areas, have always relied on strategies such as dialogue as a means of resolving conflict and maintaining peace. In eliminating conflict and maintaining peace, community radio presents itself as a new platform to strengthen the process of dialogue which leads to peace building. Community radio can improve the peace building process through the provision of public information, and radio programs like radio documentaries and radio drama. Community radio can be used for programming that improves community inclusivity and prevents the relapse of violence.[35]

Community radio is a major instrument for peace because of its ability to bring together people with opposing points of view and help them reach a consensus on how to solve common problems, this includes resolving conflict and upholding communal unity. Community radio stations which operate in areas of tribal conflict, violent gangs and land disputes can bring together chiefs, community members and opinion leaders to make them pledge peace and track this peace through radio programs which are recorded through progress reports. Stations can work with unemployed youth who are prone to be used as tools of violence. Community festivals can also be hosted. These festivals will include the various clans and ethnic groups and celebrate them while promoting unity in diversity. Community radio can also be used in promoting unity and peaceful co-existence amongst religions. The Mzimba Community Radio Station in Malawi is known for fostering peaceful relations and understanding between the various Christian denominations as well as amongst Christians and Muslims in its broadcast area.

and Extension Network Paper 124, no. 07 (2002).

33 Jallov, Brigitte. *Empowerment radio: voices building a community*. Empowerhouse, (2012).

34 Alumuku, Patrick Tor. *Community radio for development: The world and Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines, (2006).

35 Bøås, Morten, and Karianne Stig. "Security sector reform in Liberia: An uneven partnership without local ownership." *Journal of intervention and statebuilding* 4, no. 3 (2010): 285-303.

Figure 2: Community radio is used by opinion leaders in rural communities to settle disputes and encourage unity amongst community members.

The station operates on a free access basis, to all religions even though the ownership of the radio station can be traced to a Seventh Day Adventist.[36]

Furthermore, equal opportunity is given to all religious groups to broadcast programs reflecting their faith. Muslims in the area constantly express their appreciation on how the radio station allows them to broadcast their Friday worship programs.

To conclude, community radio can be adopted as one of the peace building mechanisms in Africa. Through community radio, the pockets of disputes and conflicts which displaces people and drives most women off their farmlands can be reduced.

Conclusion: Sustainability Challenges in Operating Community Radio (A Critique)

All community radio stations start operations with preconceived ideas on how to develop good quality programmes, be of service to their communities and how to maintain the sustainability and longevity without depending on support and influence from actors who are outside their communities.[37] The practice of community owned initiatives such as community radio stations

36 Fairchild, Charles, and Thomas L. Jacobson. "Community radio and public culture: Being an examination of media access and equity in the nations of North America." *(No Title)* (2001).

37 Asuman, Manfred Kofi Antwi, and Subeshini Moodley. "Promoting Political Participation and Accountability through Popular Culture." *Political Economy of Contemporary African Popular Culture: The Political Interplay* (2024): 15.

do not always produce the desired results, sometimes negative and contradictory results are obtained. In this section, I discuss some of the disadvantages and negative results that come along with the practice of community radio.[38]

Most community radio stations operate in poverty. As such, it is difficult for these small community-owned initiatives to attract and maintain volunteers. This makes it difficult for community radio stations to produce content which have any real effect in the people's lives. Eventually, the radio station starts producing and airing content which is intended to attract sponsors, and this leads to the community losing control of the radio station.[39]

Digital migration is also a critical challenge facing community radio stations. Previous research posits that because community radio stations operate mostly within rural and low-income communities, they are unable to make use of the advantages that come with the internet and other digital platforms. This is because most of the intended beneficiaries of community radio have low literacy and are usually unable to use digital technology and social media, even though these methods are cheaper and can help sustainability efforts of community radio. Community radio stations are therefore stuck in the era where they must raise money to maintain technicians and remote transmitters. This therefore affects the sustainability of most community radio stations, especially in instances where the community radio station is unable to attract donations and funding from international NGOs and development partners.

Arguments can be made that community radio stations need to limit their dependence on NGO and donor support because these eventually lead to a non-participatory culture of developing and producing radio content. Evidently, the radio station starts producing programmes which are accepted and promoted by the funders and not programmes which are needed by the community it serves.[40] For community radio stations to be self-reliant, there is a need to promote a more inclusive manner of community participation and inclusion in the affairs of the community radio station since this can lead to and strengthen the social and institutional sustainability of community radio stations.

Therefore, one of the angles of analysing participation in this thesis is to discuss how community members contribute to the financial sustainability of their community radio stations. The financial sustainability of community radio stations is a very important aspect of participation because true communal ownership can only be realised when the community is able to fund its radio station, as this prevents the involvement of outside interests in the production of programmes and the eventual control of the community radio station.

Lastly, the challenge of sustainability in community radio is not only linked to financial sustainability, but also how the radio station maintains editorial control over the programs which are recorded and broadcast by outside interests such as government agencies and NGOs. Community radio stations which maintain editorial control over the pre-recorded programmes

38 Ibid
39 Masolane, T. "Community Radio Being Neglected." *Sunday World* (2005).
40 Bosch, Tanja. "Sustaining community radio." Paris: Unesco (2007).

they broadcast are more likely to be sustained longer. This is because they can maintain community interest in the programmes they broadcast even when they are recorded by outside interests such as government agencies and NGOs. By maintaining a strict editorial policy on pre-recorded programmes, community radio stations can eliminate content which are alien and opposed to the ideals of the community. Community radio stations can sustain community interest in the radio station when they broadcast content which are of interest to their community members. This fortifies the sustainability of community radio stations because the interest and participation of community members is maintained.[41]

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41 Bresnahan, Rosalind. "Community radio and social activism in Chile 1990–2007: Challenges for grass roots voices during the transition to democracy." *Journal of Radio Studies* 14, no. 2 (2007): 212-233.

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11. VOICE, LISTENING, AND DIALOGUE IN COVID-19 COMMUNICATION IN GHANA: COMMUNITY RADIO AND HEGEMONIC RESISTANCE

EMMANUEL ESSEL AND ELIZA GOVENDER

Social Change Communication in Ghana: Where is Community Radio?

Although mass media can be employed as a tool for social change, it has been used as a weapon to stifle minorities and clamp down on different and opposing views.[1] An example of such situations can be during acute health emergencies like COVID-19. In Ghana, government pandemic responses used persuasive top-down approaches to communicating COVID-19 prevention messages. Ghana's official COVID-19 prevention information was mainly shared via press releases, conferences, radio, and televised presidential addresses,[2] [3] giving less attention to other alternative media forms, such as community radio (CR). Government agencies spearheaded these campaigns with little community input.

Consequently, pandemic responses in many Global South countries have overtly and subtly reinforced the politics of exclusion and erasure.[4] Some scholars have questioned the utility of top-down approaches to pandemic communication, arguing for bottom-up participatory approaches that are contextually relevant to beneficiary communities.[5] Community radio is often argued to be participatory through its use of dialogue to facilitate engagement with the audiences and serve the needs of communities.[6] Yet, not all CR efforts are deemed participatory and dialogic; tokenism is often a vital feature in communication, especially in cases of pandemics such as COVID-19. For instance, the

1 Gumucio-Dagron, Alfonso. 'Vertical minds versus horizontal cultures: An overview of participatory process and experiences', in Jan Servaes (eds.) *Communication for development and social change,* Paris: UNESCO, 2008, pp. 1-25.

2 Adu Gyamfi, Prince and Adwoa Sikayena Amankwah. 'Effective communication during a global health crisis: a content analysis of presidential addresses on the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghana', *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research 4*.2 (2021): 193-219, https://doi.org/10.30658/jicrcr.4.2.1

3 Anoff-Ntow, Kwame Akuffo, and Wisdom J. Tettey. 'COVID-19 narratives and counter-narratives in Ghana: The dialectics of state messaging and alternative re/de-constructions', *Journal of African Media Studies*, 14.1 (2022): 125-142. https://doi.org/10.1386/jams_00069_1

4 Manyozo, Linje. 'Mobilizing rural and community radio in Africa', *Ecquid novi*, 30. 1 (2009): 1-23, https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2009.9653389.

5 Dutta, Mohan J., Christine Elers, and Pooja Jayan. 'Culture-centered processes of community organizing in COVID19 response: Notes from Kerala and Aotearoa New Zealand', *Frontiers in Communication 5* (2020): 1-15, https://doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.00062.

6 Manyozo, Linje. 'The practice of participation in broadcasting for development initiatives in post-independent Malawi.' *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 20.1 (2005). https://doi.org/10.4314/jsda.v20i1.23895

language used during CR-mediated discourses can cause harm when used inconsiderately and unreflectively. Consistent with this position, Dutta and his colleagues note that "dialogue offers a discursive opening for creating spaces of social change by transforming the structural inequities in the distribution of resources through the presence of subaltern voices in the discursive spaces".

Meaningful dialogue and community engagement are crucial in designing health communication interventions during acute health emergencies. Such dialogue-oriented approaches are more grounded, local and incorporate everyday viewpoints to examine listeners' experiences from a subtle and multi-layered perspective.[7] As such, dialogic-oriented communication is expected to engender interaction and flow by sharing local knowledge and experiences. However, this is often overlooked, creating the risk of simplistic, didactic, and mundane discourses on CR's mediated platform, as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community radio's facilitated discourses are expected to be collaborative, liberating, and empowering for host community members and practitioners alike but not necessarily simplistic and acquiescent. However, there are only a few research works to understand CR's dialogic discourses during pandemics, particularly the structural arrangements for activating voice and listening among CR stakeholders in the Ghanaian context. As such, CR's potential to offer a voice to those at the margins of the margin to activate their meaningful participation in pandemic discourses, particularly COVID-19,[8 9 10] may be at risk if the structures for dialogue within CR practices are assumed as a given. Also, reflections on CR's dialogic processes are often given less attention than other aspects of CR practice and research in the Ghanaian context. Yet, inclusive, responsible, and liberating discourse seems essential in using alternative media, such as CR, as a counter-discursive and dialogic tool for health communication concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.[11]

Further, the cultural and critical approaches to health communication that recognise the target audience's agency and active participation in improving health outcomes are

7 Fox, Juliet. *Community radio's amplification of communication for social change.* Zurich: Palgrave, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-173166.

8 Laskar, Kaifia Ancer, and Biswadeep Bhattacharyya. 'Community radio stations' production responses to COVID-19 pandemic in India', *Media Asia 48*. 4 (2021): 243-249, https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2021.1970421.

9 Laskar, Kaifia Ancer, and Biswadeep Bhattacharyya. 'Community radio stations' production responses to COVID-19 pandemic in India', *Media Asia 48*. 4 (2021): 250-257, https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2021.1970421.

10 Pavarala, Vinod, and A. Jena. 'Expanding discursive spaces: Community radio during COVID-19 and beyond', *Economic and Political Weekly* 55. 49 (2020): 69-78, https://www.epw.in/sites/default/files/engage_pdf/2020/12/18/157735.pdf

11 Dutta, Mohan J., Christine Elers, and Pooja Jayan. 'Culture-centered processes of community organizing in COVID19 response: Notes from Kerala and Aotearoa New Zealand', *Frontiers in Communication* 5 (2020): 1-15, https://doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.00062.

gaining popularity among scholars and practitioners.[12] [13]A critical approach to health communication opposes mainstream strategies in that the former offers a voice to hitherto communicatively marginalized people and employs strategies accountable to the communities they seek to serve. Previous research has argued that the structural arrangement for dialogue employed by some CR stations has limited the potential for community participation.[14] Additionally, while meaningful dialogue is critical to CR's health communication, it is not immune to the threat of being distorted and co-opted by hegemonic forces under the weight of capitalism and over-corporatization.[15] [16] For instance, syndication allows giant media organisations in big cities to dominate even the remotest corners of Ghana, where CR typically operates. The broadcast of these 'big city commercial stations' is syndicated to other parts of Ghana where the country's broadcast laws do not permit direct broadcast. Commercial media syndication in Ghana may threaten community media's potential to facilitate meaningful community-level dialogue among all local health-related stakeholders as local discursive spaces shrink. This is because the unwarranted competition posed by commercial media conglomerates to community broadcasters does not only threaten the audience share of community radio but may also relegate local development issues to the background since the content that typically circulates on commercial radio platforms is the commercially appealing headline national issues. Thus, the peculiar developmental problems, such as health, including COVID-19, specific to Ghana's rural and semi-urban sectors, will likely be given less attention as hegemonic media platforms co-opt local discursive spaces. As such, CR stakeholders acknowledging the potential threats to the medium's ability to provide a voice and public space to facilitate meaningful dialogue on local issues of concern, including health among host community members, is necessary. This could help avoid the situation where contemporary media are co-opted as instruments for furthering class domination and protecting the capitalist interest of the elite.[17] It, therefore, begs the question, to what extent are the health-related contents generated by CR stations authentic representations of the communication needs of their host communities or a mirror reflection of dominant conceptions of reality? Thus, the contemporary realities of Ghana's broadcasting sector need scholarly attention and critical reflection.

12 Airhihenbuwa, Collins O. 'Culture, health education, and critical consciousness', *Journal of Health Education*, 26. 5 (1995): 317-319. https://doi.org/10.1080/10556699.1995.10603125.

13 Dutta, Mohan J., Christine Elers, and Pooja Jayan. 'Culture-centered processes of community organizing in COVID19 response: Notes from Kerala and Aotearoa New Zealand', *Frontiers in Communication* 5 (2020): 1-15, https://doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.00062.

14 Hart, Thomas Bongani. *Community radio: the beat that develops the soul of the people?: A case study of XK fm as a SABC owned community radio station and its role as a facilitator of community based development*, PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 2011.

15 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa: IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

16 Dutta, Mohan J., Christine Elers, and Pooja Jayan. 'Culture-centered processes of community organizing in COVID19 response: Notes from Kerala and Aotearoa New Zealand', *Frontiers in Communication* 5 (2020): 1-15, https://doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.00062.

17 Real, Michael. 'The challenge of a culture-centered paradigm: Metatheory and reconciliation in media research', in: Deetz, Stanley A. (eds.) *Communication yearbook 15,* New York: Routledge, 2012, pp. 35-46.

Commenting on how CR's theorized participatory model sometimes differs from the reality in the East African context, David Conrad noted that "rather than engendering meaningful participation in media-making, this study also demonstrates that donor funding has caused some communities to assume recipient roles in the communication process."[18] These issues discussed above raise concerns about the essentiality of CR as a counter-discursive and dialogic tool for health communication.

This study explores CR's dialogic process for communicating COVID-19 through voice and listening, and anti-hegemonic structures instituted in the medium's pandemic communication efforts, if any. This paper also focuses on challenges activating CR host community members' voices via the CR medium. Interrogating the social and institutional structures that govern dialogue, voice, and listening provides new ways of understanding CR's potential for facilitating nuanced and multi-layered discourses in the context of COVID-19 in Ghana. To this end, this chapter focuses on the following questions: How do community members involve themselves in CR's COVID-19 discourses? What factors influence community members to participate in CR-facilitated discourses?

This is important since listening and voice of CR's host community members, practitioners, and all those involved in this media presents a way of subverting and resisting hegemonic structures in pandemic communication, particularly COVID-19 related public health communication. The paper intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of the potential of CR to offer a public sphere for meaningful community-level dialogue among the medium's stakeholders.

This chapter conceptualizes dialogue as activating the voices of ordinary people and the community-level exchange of meaning via CR's mediated platform, leading to community members' involvement in the conceptualization, design, and broadcast of health-related messages, including COVID-19. For this chapter, host community members considered themselves as owners of the study CR, at least conceptually, and participated in the station's activities, including listening to its programs. For this study, voice is the ability of hitherto communicatively marginalized communities to articulate their reality.

Community Radio's Role in Facilitating Community-Level Dialogue in Ghana

Community radio (CR) forms part of the broader field of community media. According to Louie Tabing, 'community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community'. [19] Community radio broadcast in the local language of its host communities. This provides the advantage that the active

18 Conrad, David. 'Deconstructing the community radio model: Applying practice to theory in East Africa', *Journalism* 15.6 (2014): 773-789, https://DOI: 10.1177/1464884913504257.

19 Tabing, Louie. *How to do community radio: A primer for community radio Operators.* New Delhi: UNESCO Press, 2011, http://portal.unesco.org/ci/fr/files/17593/11014593681Com_radio.pdf/Com_radio.pdf.

listeners can understand the station's broadcast.[20] [21] [22] The global CR concept and practice are inherently different from other media forms because it facilitates and catalyses access, participation, self-management mandate, increased democratic involvement, more significant equity, and accountability of the medium to its listeners.[23]

The normative nature of CR provides a dialogic platform for building consensus among communities and health-related duty-bearers on community-specific health enablers and inhibitors[24] This is vital since a communication approach where powerful elites are willing to listen to the assertive voices of ordinary people is necessary for improving health outcomes.[25] Community media provides a platform for ordinary people to express their reality instead of hegemonic platforms where the dominant reality is projected as the only reality.[26] Under these conditions, CR protects the conceptual principle of the medium for the people, by the people, and about the people.[27] Unlike top-down persuasive approaches to communicating health, dialogic structures are implicit within the normative CR practice and their interactions with listeners. These dialogic structures determine how listeners can participate and dictate what CR stations should do.[28] Some studies have established the role of CR in health communication in resource-limited settings.[29] [30]

However, some criticisms were levelled against the participatory and anti-hegemonic media, including CR. Participation as praxis does not exist in a vacuum but within communication practices or structures.[31] For instance, some researchers warn against the

20 Fox, Juliet. *Community radio's amplification of communication for social change.* Zurich: Palgrave, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-173166.

21 Diedong, Africanus L., and Lawrence Naaikuur. 'Ghana's experience in participatory community radio Broadcasting', *Global Media Journal: African Edition* 6.2 (2012): 123- 147, http://globalmedia.journals.ac.za

22 Jallov, Birgitte. 'Assessing community change: development of a "bare foot" impact assessment methodology', Radio *Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 3.1 (2005): 21-34, https://doi.org/10.1386/rajo.3.1.21/1.

23 Buckley, Steve. *Community media: A good practice handbook*, UNESCO Publishing, 2011, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002150/215097e.pdf.

24 Manyozo, Linje. 'Mobilizing rural and community radio in Africa', *Ecquid novi*, 30. 1 (2009): 1-23, https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2009.9653389.

25 Campbell, Catherine, and Kerry Scott. 'Community health and social mobilization', in Obregon, Rafael Obregon and Silvio Waisbord (eds) *The handbook of global health communication,* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 177-193.

26 Rodríguez, Clemencia. *Citizens' media against armed conflict disrupting violence in Colombia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

27 Dutta, Mohan J. *Poverty at the margins*: *Communicating social change: Structure, culture and agency*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

28 Backhaus, Bridget. 'Community radio as amplification of rural knowledge sharing', *Asia Pacific Media Educator,* 29.2 (2019): 137–150. https://DOI: 10.1177/1326365X19864476.

29 Srivastava, Sonali. 'Role of Community Radio in Health Communication: A Case Study of Sharda 90.8 FM in Greater Noida', *Pragyaan: Journal of Mass Communication* 18.2 (2020): 31-35.

30 Medeossi, Bonnie-Jeanne, Jonathan Stadler, and Sinead Delany-Moretlwe. "I heard about this study on the Radio": using community radio to strengthen Good Participatory Practice in HIV prevention trials', *BMC Public Health* 14.1 (2014): 1-8, https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-876.

31 Manyozo, Linje. 'The practice of participation in broadcasting for development initiatives in post-

'tokenism' of participation by hegemonic forces as a tool to entrench the status quo. Again, commodifying people's voices hinders ordinary people's participation in the communication interventions that matter to them. [32] Brian Sumujji's work found a similar occurrence in Uganda. [33] He established that access to community media platforms, which were supposed to be free and tilted towards the welfare of its beneficiary communities, was highly commercialized, further alienating those at the margins of the margin. Therefore, the challenge of self-exclusion and unequal power relations among beneficiary community members is real.[34] This situation begs the question, how participatory are community radio COVID-19 oriented activities in Ghana?

How Participatory Are Community Radio Activities?

This article adopts Guy Bessette's ten-step participatory communication model as the theoretical framework to understand the participatory aspects of CR's COVID-19 communication messaging and if they are dialogic.[35] These steps include (1) Establishing a relationship and understanding of the local setting; (2) Involving the community in the identification of a problem and potential solutions; (3) Identifying the different community groups and stakeholders; (4) Identifying communication needs; (5) Identifying appropriate communication tools; (6) Preparing and pre-testing communication content and materials; (7) Facilitating partnerships; (8) Producing an implementation plan; (9) Monitoring and evaluating and; (10) Planning the sharing and utilization of results.[36]

Participatory approaches promote dialogue, interpersonal communication, local decision-making, and networking on essential issues of community life, such as health, culture, power, and democracy.[37] [38] Bessette explains that within the ten-step participatory model, all the constructs have an interdependent relationship, implying that their application by CR operators may instigate continuous and meaningful interactions among the medium's stakeholders. Although CR may only apply some steps in their activities, some fit into some CR operations in Ghana. For example, with step one, establishing a relationship with a local

independent Malawi.' *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 20.1 (2005). https://doi.org/10.4314/jsda.v20i1.23895

32 Thomas, Pradip Ninan. 'Development communication and social change in historical context', in Wilkins, Karin Gwinn, Thomas Tufte, and Rafael Obregon (eds) *The handbook of development communication and social change*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014, pp. 7-19.

33 Sumujju, Brian, R. *Community media narrowcasting in Uganda: An assessment of community audio towers,* PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 2014.

34 Cornwall, Andrea. 'Unpacking 'participation': Models, meanings and practices',*Community Development Journal,* 43.3 (2008): 269-283, https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsn010.

35 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa: IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

36 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa: IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

37 Thomas, Pradip Ninan. 'Development communication and social change in historical context', in Wilkins, Karin Gwinn, Thomas Tufte, and Rafael Obregon (eds) *The handbook of development communication and social change*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2014, pp. 7-19.

38 Dutta, Mohan J. *Poverty at the margins: Communicating social change: Structure, culture and agency*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

community and understanding the local setting, Bessette explains that it is a continuous process of building a long-lasting working relationship with the community by development communication facilitators, in this case, CR operators. Again, step two focuses on the beneficiary community as co-creators in 'identification of a problem, its potential solutions, and the decision to carry out a concrete initiative'. Community radio operators facilitate on-air and off-air dialogue with host community members on issues that concern them, including health. This is sometimes achieved through community durbars, FGD sessions, one-on-one discussions, meetings with key community stakeholders, and live program phone-ins.[39] [40]

The meaningful interactions among community members, CR practitioners and other stakeholders in the context of CR's COVID-19 communication and how such discourses are facilitated are fundamental issues in this article. The utility of this is to help understand how CR could facilitate meaningful dialogue in COVID-19 discourses among CR stakeholders from a participatory perspective. This article explores CR's dialogic social structures for communicating COVID-19.

It must be noted here that participatory communication interventions must reflect the needs of the different community groups, sub-groups, and stakeholders to promote social change. After all, CR-facilitated dialogue among the medium's stakeholders must facilitate expressing multiple voices rather than relying on a monologue.

Methods

Setting

The single CR station case study for this paper, Radio Peace, broadcasts on 88.9 MHz, mainly in three local languages: Fanti, Effutu, and Awutu[41] The station is located at Winneba, Ghana's Central Region, with a catchment area including Agona East, Agona West, Kasoa Municipal, Ekumfi Municipal, Gomoa East, Gomoa West, Effutu Municipal, and Awutu Senya West Districts.Radio Peace was purposely selected for this study as its mission, typical of CR practice in Ghana, is local development.

Study Design

The study employed a qualitative exploratory methodological approach because it allows a nuanced understanding of the social construction of health and wellbeing compared to positivist approaches.[42] A qualitative exploratory approach allows people to express themselves

39 McKay, Blythe. 'Using community radio in Ghana to facilitate community participation in natural resource management', *Ecquid Novi 30*. 1 (2009): 73-93,https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2009.9653393.

40 Jallov, Birgitte. 'Assessing community change: development of a "bare foot" impact assessment methodology', *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media* 3.1 (2005): 21-34, https://doi.org/10.1386/rajo.3.1.21/1.

41 Radio Peace (88.9 MHz-FM). *Programs document,* Radio Peace, Winneba, 2019.

42 Zoller, Heather M., and Kimberly N. Kline. 'Theoretical contributions of interpretive and critical research

on the case study, COVID-19, and the social structures that facilitate listening and voice of community members through a local CR station, Radio Peace, Winneba. The study explores CR's dialogic processes in the context of COVID-19 communication.

Participants included community members within Radio Peace's catchment area and station staff. Participatory approaches facilitated qualitative methods to explore the phenomenon under study.

Participant Selection and Data Collection

Purposive sampling was employed to select this study's participants. The participants were deliberately selected based on the personal experience of the first author, who collected the data. In-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD were employed to collect qualitative data between July and December 2021. The participants were selected based on specific criteria, including membership in Radio Peace's official social club, position, responsibility, or active listenership.

Radio Peace is associated with an official listener social club, *Hyewbo kuw*. Membership is exclusively for residents and indigenes from the station's catchment area. The association, established on 25 May 2005, is an offshoot of Radio Peace's morning program, *Anopa Hyewbo.* Social club members are accorded extended access to the station's physical location and on-air programs. For instance, group members are accorded up to one hour to phone in (although non-members may also call in during this time) and discuss various social concerns between 6:30 am and 7:30 am daily on the station's flagship morning show, *Hyewbo,* which runs from Mondays to Fridays between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Community members, including *Hyewbo Kuw members'* access (physically and conceptually) to CR is essential to deepen their sense of belonging and greater participation in the medium's activities.[43]

In-depth Interviews

With IDIs, the researcher employs open-ended questions to encourage participants to elaborate on discussion topics.[44] Two (2) participants were selected for the IDIs due to their position within Radio Peace's official social club, *Hyewbo kuw*: the founder and chairperson. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are relatively unstructured conversations with a moderator to understand people's attitudes and behaviour.[45] Participants in each FGD group were purposively

in health communication', *Annals of the International Communication Association* 32.1 (2008): 89-135.

43 Fox, Juliet. *Community radio's amplification of communication for social change.* Zurich: Palgrave, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-173166.

44 Croucher, Stephen M., and Daniel Cronn-Mills. *Understanding communication research methods: A theoretical and practical approach*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

45 Wimmer, Roger D., and Joseph R. Dominick. *Mass media research: An introduction*, 9th edition, Boston:

selected to reflect a common social-demographic attribute, membership of *Hyewbo kuw,* or otherwise. Participants were selected from the Effutu Municipal, Gomoa West, and Awutu Senya West Districts of Ghana's Central Region.

Five (5) FGDs were held with a panel of four exclusively *Hyewbo kuw* members and one consisting of non-members of the social club. The non-social club FGD session, held at Effutu Municipal, consisted of six (6) participants. There were seven (7) participants for the Awutu Senya West District social club FGD session. The other four (4) social club FGD sessions held at the Effutu Municipal and Gomoa West Districts had six (6) participants each. Participants were aged between 19 and 80 years. The FGD sessions lasted between 58 and 110 minutes. All sessions were conducted at a public place agreed upon by members of that group and audio recorded. Pseudonyms were used to achieve anonymity. All FGD sessions were audio-recorded.

Data credibility is akin to internal validity in quantitative studies. We employed multiple data collection methods to enhance credibility, including IDIs and FGDs. Also, we instituted measures to ensure dependability (the equivalent of reliability in quantitative studies). Since qualitative data requires multiple constructions of meaning by participants within a social context, analysis of preliminary data collected informed further data collection to enhance dependability. Again, points of departure during data analysis and reporting, such as varied and multiple participant opinions, were captured to ensure dependability. As such, we did not privilege one voice over others in the data collection, analysis, and report writing.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's inductive reflexive thematic analysis (TA) approach was employed to analyse and interpret the qualitative data generated from the verbatim transcripts of the IDI and FGDs sessions. Reflexive TA allows the researcher to code data to generate themes subjectively.[46] The raw data were subjected to Braun and Clarke's six-step reflexive thematic analysis process: (1) Familiarizing oneself with the data and writing notes; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) Generating initial themes; (4) Developing and revising themes; (5) Defining, refining and renaming of themes and; (6) Report writing. The data analysis generated the following themes: (1) Community members' access and participation in community radio activities; (2) Community radio content and official social club, and (3) Inter-group tensions and community radio practice.

Wadsworth, 2011.

46 Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 'One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis?', *Qualitative research in psychology* 18.3 (2020): 1-25, https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238.

Findings and Discussions

Community members' access and participation in community radio activities

Consistent with the global CR practice, listeners are expected to have access to and be involved in the medium's activities.[47] [48] As such, community members within Radio Peace's catchment area are expected to have access to and participate in the station's COVID-19 communication interventions. In line with this position, this study sought to answer the question: How do community members involve themselves in Radio Peace's COVID-19 discourses? This study found that Radio Peace provided community members access to its on-air and off-air activities within its catchment area. In particular, the participants shared that the extended allocated listener call-in time on the *Hyewbo* and *Woso kabi* programs on Radio Peace provided them with opportunities to activate their voice on local issues of concern,

> They have introduced two main programs which accord listeners extensive time to phone in, one is Hyewbo, and the other is Woso kabi. Everyone can call to express their opinion' (P1, male, FGD#1 participant, official social club, Effutu Municipal, 18 August 2021). Another participant stressed this: 'I listen to the Hyewbo show because they dedicate much time to explaining issues to my understanding using the Akan language. Secondly, the Hyewbo program allows listeners to call in and freely express their opinions without any time restrictions' (P4, male, FGD#2 participant, official social club, Gomoa West District, 21 September 2021).

Community members' access and opportunities to express their views to others via the CR platform means that the medium aligns with the idea of participatory approaches of tilting the power and knowledge compass towards locals.[49] This opposes the mainstream practice of providing access to so-called experts and journalists as information gatekeepers. Under these conditions, CR in Ghana protects the conceptual principle of the medium for the people, by the people, and about the people[50] Access to programming and community input means that the information sources, the radio announcer, and the names involved in the program broadcast are familiar to people within the station's catchment area. The following statement typifies this position:

> Let me take the opportunity to commend Kofi [Radio Peace's morning show host] on his excellent work. He is very objective and balanced and demonstrates a genuine concern for the people of Winneba by always offering solutions to our developmental challenges (P4, male, FGD#3 participant, official social club, Effutu Municipal, 21 October 2021).

47 Fox, Juliet. *Community radio's amplification of communication for social change.* Zurich: Palgrave, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-173166.

48 Manyozo, Linje. 'Mobilizing rural and community radio in Africa', *Ecquid novi*, 30. 1 (2009): 1-23, https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2009.9653389.

49 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa: IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

50 Rodríguez, Clemencia. *Citizens' media against armed conflict disrupting violence in Colombia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Further, this study's findings revealed that broadcasting in local languages, including Fante, Effutu, and Awutu, influenced participants' choice of Radio Peace for their COVID-19 information needs. Broadcasting in the local language implies that the CR medium departs from the predominant use of the official language, English, for broadcast on some mainstream platforms. This provides the advantage that community members can access and understand the station's broadcast. Factors such as mutual generation of meaning leading to consensus building and community-driven action on issues of communal concern are vital to CR-facilitated social change imperatives.[51] For instance, when participants were asked about the choice of Radio Peace as a source of COVID-19 information, one of them explained:

It [Radio Peace's broadcast] has helped because the messages are comprehensively broken down to everyone's level of understanding, including the aged and even people who do not speak and understand the English and Effutu languages. So, everyone, including senior citizens, truly understands the disease's nature and how to avoid infection (P6, female, FGD#1 participant, official social club, Effutu Municipal, 18 August 2021).

The above quotation means that reliable information cannot be privileged or weaponized in health emergencies but should be readily available to CR host community members in ways that meet their everyday media habits. Community members' access to the CR medium is a pre-requisite for meaningful dialogue and their ownership of the content that circulates on the CR-mediated medium.

Community Radio Content and Official Social Club

This section focuses on local social movements and their potential to contribute to Radio Peace's dialogic structures for communicating COVID-19 regarding voice, listening, and anti-hegemonic strategies, if any. Since CR use for COVID-19 communication was still going through a maturation process during the data collection for this study, it was imperative to draw on existing CR-facilitated social change activities among host communities, including local social movements that may be escalated for efforts to contain the virus. This is consistent with the line of thought within the field of communication for development and social change, which focuses on social movements and their communicative practice to enhance community-level engagement and social change.[52] Again, CR programming can empower local social movements through on-air and off-air facilitated connections among listeners.[53] As discussed above, Radio Peace is associated with an official social club, *Hyewbo kuw,* with members accorded enhanced access to the station's on-air and off-air activities. The point on enhanced access to community groups and how it helps to preserve CR normal nature is a widely understood concept in community media literature. To this end, we explored how

51 Manyozo, Linje. 'The practice of participation in broadcasting for development initiatives in post-independent Malawi.' *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 20.1 (2005). https://doi.org/10.4314/jsda.v20i1.23895

52 Tufte Thomas and Tacchi Jo (eds) (2020). 'Communicating for Change', in *Communication for Social Change: Concepts to think with.* Cham: Palgrave, 2020, pp. 1-16.

53 Fox, Juliet. *Community radio's amplification of communication for social change.* Zurich: Palgrave, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-173166.

Radio Peace's official social club membership could be escalated for the station's COVID-19 efforts. This study found that the involvement of Radio Peace's official social club members in the station's programming increased their tendency to be active rather than passive listeners. *Hyewbo kuw* members who participated in this study shared that they considered themselves an integral part of the station,

> We are part of the station. On anniversaries, we are there; anything that the station [does], we don't force ourselves on them, we don't. But whatever the station wants us to be part of, we are' (P4, male, FGD#1 participant, official social club, Effutu Municipal, 18 August 2021).

Consequently, by associating with Radio Peace, *Hyewbo kuw* members were empowered to engage with local duty-bearers through on-air and off-air follow-ups on community developmental concerns, including health. This finding is illustrated by statements such as:

> Another thing that Hyewbo kuw does is to take the initiative to visit some duty-bearers like the assembly or the MCE [Municipal Chief Executive] to draw their attention to some issues of local developmental concern that may have escaped their notice' (P4, male, FGD#1 participant, official social club, Effutu Municipal, 18 August 2021).

This quotation is not surprising since radical media, such as CR, have been at the forefront of popular resistance movements and mass control of radio infrastructure among communities with limited resources in Africa.[54] [55]

Although the above quotations may not be directly linked with CR's COVID-19 communication activities, they suggest a shift in power from hegemonic forces to ordinary community members. This suggests that ordinary people could demand accountability via CR's on-air and off-air activities, making duty-bearers more responsive to community needs. This indicates that CR-facilitated empowerment of host community members is critical for their involvement in discourses concerning local development issues among themselves and with duty-bearers, including health, thereby questioning central control of developmental policies. Such power dynamics could be escalated for CR's COVID-19 related discourses. This position is consistent with the assertion that the empowerment of ordinary people to find solutions to local problems actively is an integral part of the concept of participation.[56]

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54 Teer-Tomaselli, Ruth. 'Community radio's impact on community building: Case studies from Kwazulu-Natal', in Hipfl, Brigitte and Hug, Theo (eds), *Media communities*, New York: Waxman Münster, 2006, pp. 189–208.

55 Karikari, Kwame. 'The development of community media in English-speaking West Africa', in Boafo, Kwame S. (eds), *Promoting community media in* Africa, Paris: UNESCO, 2000, pp.43-60.

56 Fernández-Aballí Altamirano, Ana. 'The importance of Paulo Freire to communication for development and social change', in Servaes, Jan (eds), *Handbook of communication for development and social change,* Singapore: Springer Nature, 2011, pp. 309-327.

The accepted role of *Hyewbo kuw* in Radio Peace's activities means that it is easy for the association members to approach and engage the station on how programming could be more responsive to community needs, such as COVID-19. Participants expressed the association's watchdog role of monitoring Radio Peace's on-air content to provide feedback to the station managers for improvement. One of the association's members explained:

> We also monitor the station day in, day out. [...] we also monitor and give feedback to management on every program aired on the station from morning till evening' (P1, IDI participant, Effutu Municipal, 30 July 2021).

By having enhanced access to the programming of Radio Peace, it becomes easy for *Hyewbo kuw* members to express their reality as opposed to hegemonic platforms where the dominant reality is projected as the only one.[57] This position aligns with Paulo Freire's idea of critical participation, where people submerged in the culture of silence and monologue are encouraged to take control of local developmental discourses through community-level dialogue.[58] Accordingly, such enhanced access to CR-facilitated activities gives community members authority to express their social reality, including health. This means that any member can initiate off-air and on-air dialogue on local health issues, including COVID-19, via Radio Peace's platform, leading to transformation. For instance, *Hyewbo kuw* members who participated in this study shared that they felt it was their civic responsibility to help everyone stay safe from COVID-19 infection by re-framing and re-sharing prevention messages on Radio Peace. One of them stated:

> What we have been doing is that once the presenter introduces the COVID-19 topic on-air [Radio Peace], all of our members call to express their opinion of the issue. The commitment of members to call into the show and share COVID-19 prevention messages is really encouraging. [. . .] So, I can say through Radio Peace, we have helped (P4, male, FGD#1 participant, Effutu Municipal, 18 August 2021).

The above discussions suggest that the working relationship between *Hyewbo kuw* members and CR operatives empowers them and creates a sense of belonging among members. This could enhance their tendency to involve themselves in CR's facilitated on-air and off-air dialogue on health-related issues of local concern, such as COVID-19.

Inter-Group Tensions and Community Radio Practice

This section focuses on challenges activating CR host community members' voices and participation in the medium's facilitated community-level dialogue on issues of local concern, including health. To start with, the paragraphs below discuss inter-group differences threatening meaningful CR-facilitated discourses and their dialogic principles among community members. Participants reported indecorous language and unhealthy disagreements between Hyewbo kuw members and non-members during on-air discourses.

57 Rodríguez, Clemencia. *Citizens' media against armed conflict disrupting violence in Colombia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

58 Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Herder, 1970.

This study established unhealthy tensions between *Hyewbo kuw* members and other community members who did not belong to the association. This study found gaps in understanding CR's non-partisan, community-oriented, and non-sectarian ideals between members and non-members of *Hyewbo kuw*. The following statement paints this picture:

> They express their minds. Only we are going too political, and I am not interested; I want to be neutral; if the NDC [Opposition National Democratic Congress in Ghana] is there and they are doing something terrible, I am on their neck. The same applies to NPP [Ruling New Patriotic Party in Ghana] (P2, IDI participant, Effutu Municipal, 21 October 2021).

The above quote suggests a tendency of hegemonic discourses, such as national political issues, to dominate local discursive spaces, including CR, which is expected to offer a public sphere for community-level dialogue on local issues. This suggests that the normative principles of CR, including its non-partisan nature, may be threatened if CR operators abdicate their responsibility of preserving the medium's community development ideals.

Moreover, when non-social club members had access to Radio Peace's on-air programs to express their opinions via call-ins, participants raised issues of intimidation and verbal abuse from some *Hyewbo kuw members*, illustrative of pro-hegemonic tendencies of silencing multiple and divergent voices, a pre-requisite for meaningful community-level dialogue among host communities. Non-social club members who contributed to this study reported feeling disrespected due to the hostile treatment from some *Hyewbo kuw* members. They opined that such less-than-desired behavior obfuscates meaningful involvement in CR's discourses. The excerpt below illustrates this point:

> This habit [the phenomenon where some callers attack the personality of other callers] nearly influenced me to stop listening to Radio Peace. A particular member of the Hyewbo kuw always counters whatever I say on air. So, I confronted him one day about whether he owed the station. He even referred to us as kids on air. Meanwhile, he didn't even know us in person (P5, male, FGD#5 participant, non-social club, Effutu Municipal, 13 August 2021).

The above quotation opposes the principles of moderating CR's on-air discussion for meaningful exchange among listeners by CR operators. The above quotation means that meaningful community-level dialogue via Radio Peace is threatened, as victims may decide to exclude themselves from public discourses about their health. This may lead to those at the margins being unlikely to actively share or seek health information, including COVID-19, which places them at a heightened risk of infection. Within Bessette's model, he argues that discussion moderators 'must listen to the various viewpoints expressed, create opportunities for interchange, encourage participants to state their views, resolve conflicts, and be judicious in the use of the time available, while keeping the discussion on track'.[59] Again, the above

59 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa:

quotation is worrying since CR practice is expected to create mediated participatory spaces that offer entry points for listening to subaltern voices in disrupting the hegemonic process of health-related knowledge production,[60] not entrenching them.

The challenge of hegemonic tendencies attendant in CR-facilitated discourses offers an entry point to guard against listener behaviors that may threaten meaningful community-level dialogue via CR. In view of this, CR COVID-19-related efforts should analyze inter-group differences in participation and access to the medium's health information resources. This finding signposts the importance of acknowledging the heterogeneity of society and incorporating group-specific (sub-group specific) strategies in Radio Peace's COVID-19 discourses.

The above discussions underline the essence of community input in CR programming. Thus, mediated community-level dialogue via CR offers opportunities for host community members to activate their voices and be listened to on health issues of personal and community concern, such as COVID-19.

Conclusion

This chapter explored CR's dialogic structures for communicating COVID-19 regarding voice, listening, and anti-hegemonic strategies.

Radio Peace's on-air discourses, including COVID-19, are dialogic since they allow every community member to activate their voice. Some factors influence community members' involvement in Radio Peace's COVID-19 oriented discourses. These include broadcast in the local languages, association with an endogenous community group (*Hyewbo kuw*), and topics for discussion reflecting local communication needs. This study concludes that the most valued work of CR for public health communication during acute health situations, such as COVID-19, is based on the amplification of multiple local voices and meaningful facilitated inter and intra-community engagements.

However, while Radio Peace incorporates structures facilitating dialogic interactions among host community members, practitioners, and other stakeholders, some factors hinder these activities. These challenges include unhealthy inter-group tensions, weak on-air discussion moderation practices by CR practitioners, and some community members' hegemonic tendencies.

Our study has theoretical and practical implications. Our research shows that for CR to be a tool for meaningful dialogue among the medium's stakeholders, particularly host community members, programming and discourses must be based on local needs and interests. Also, host community members are inclined to engage in CR programming that facilitates healthy interactions among community members and projects multiple voices. In this way,

IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

60 Dutta, Mohan J. *Poverty at the margins*: *Communicating social change: Structure, culture and agency*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

Guy Bessette's theory of involving beneficiary communities in social change interventions is enhanced.[61]

This study recommends that CR operators be trained in facilitating on-air discussion and exchanging viewpoints shaped by decorum, tact, and circumspection. In this way, CR's health-related discourses, including COVID-19, could lead to consensus and collective decisions about implementing locally generated solutions. We suggest that future studies should focus on the potential influence of inter and intra-group conflict on community members' involvement in CR-facilitated discourses on local health issues, such as COVID-19.

Finally, we pose the following questions for future research. How have the different manifestations of CR practice globally influenced the dialogic structures employed by the medium? How have local forms of domination influenced the meaningful participation of community members in CR-facilitated discourses about developmental issues of local concern?

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61 Bessette, Guy. *Involving the community: A guide to participatory development Communication*, Ottawa: IDRC/Southbound, 2004.

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12. EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNITY RADIO TO IMPROVEMENT OF SANITATION IN WA MUNICIPALITY, GHANA.

AFRICANUS LEWIL DIEDONG, LYDIA DARLINGTON FORDJOUR, AND KWABENA BADU-YEBOAH

Introduction

It is estimated that in Ghana, only 20% of urban residents have improved household sanitation facilities such as latrines whereas open defecation is practiced by 7% of urban dwellers. Domestic public expenditure on sanitation (excluding households) amounted to GHS 49 million (USD 11.3 million) in 2014. The Wa Municipality of the Upper West region is notorious for having one of the poorest sanitations in the region. A study conducted in 2018 revealed that over 52% of households in the municipality do not have access to private latrines at home and resort to open defecation either in nearby bushes or uncompleted buildings.[1] Studies have noted that participatory consensus building and collaborative decision-making process to get the various sectors of society; adult males and females as well as children to understand the need to adopt a different approach towards ending open defecation is key.[2]

Some of the studies proposing education as one of the tools have gone a step further to prescribe the use of mass media in order to reach a wider audience. Irrespective of this, sanitation has been at the bottom of governments' priorities, whether at the national level or local levels. Low prioritization and inadequate funding mirrors the insufficient demand among urban residents for improved services, partly due to an entrenched reliance on and acceptance of public toilets.[3]

Despite interventions such as the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) by United Nation's Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and Government of Ghana's to improve sanitation, according to the Regional Environmental Health and Sanitation Department (REHSD) the sanitation situation in the Wa Municipality is still problematic. Whereas in Bangladesh and Uganda, it is reported that the media is actively involved in the fight against poor sanitation, much cannot be said about the media in the Wa Municipality despite the presence of a number of radio stations.[4] The involvement of radio stations in efforts aimed at improving sanitation is barely noticeable.

1 Kosoe, E. A., & Osumanu, I. K., 'Entertaining risks to health: the state of human faecal matter management in Wa, Ghana'. *Ghana Journal of Development Studies, 15*(1), (2018): 151.

2 Essuman, M., *Addressing Open Defecation Sanitation Problem: The case of Dry Toilet Implementation in the Wa Municipality, Ghana.* Raseborg, 2015.

3 Mansour, G., & Esseku, H., Situation analysis of the urban sanitation sector in Ghana. WSUP, 2017.

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For decades, radio has remained the primary tool that enhances rural peoples' involvement in decision-making on development activities at the community levels.[5] Community Radio in particular has played pioneering role as one of the most reliable and most inclusive media of communication, allowing rural communities' active participation in communication processes and decisions that affect them. Community Radio has since penetrated the very fiber of rural communities and reached a wider audience than other mass media platforms.[6]

Although water and sanitation are closely related and said to be for each other, the media in Ghana is believed to have widely concentrated on the water aspect to the detriment of sanitation. According to the World Bank efforts by various stakeholders in water and sanitation issues have overly concentrated on access to water to the detriment of good sanitation.[7] In the Wa Municipality, 49.8% of households have no form of toilet facility and resort to either the use of communal/public toilets or practice open defecation in uncompleted buildings and nearby bushes or small repositories that are available for defecation.[8] The Wa Municipality, according to the Upper West Regional Environmental Health and Sanitation Department adopted the CLTS in 2017 like other districts.

Since 2016, the Municipality has placed last on the district sanitation league table prepared for the region and unveiled to the media. The main objective of the league table is to name and shame assemblies that are underperforming in terms of good sanitation and to praise those that are doing well. It, however, appears that the publicity given by the media only concentrates on the figures that are released without necessarily highlighting the relevance of community members' participation in improving sanitation. To make CLTS more functional and applicable in urban and peri-urban centers such as Wa, innovations need to be introduced and blended with the original plan of implementing the intervention as stipulated by the proponents of the sanitation intervention.[9] The involvement of other stakeholders is very relevant to the course of CLTS in urban centers. Stakeholders such as the community radio can play central roles in prioritizing and objectives of water and sanitation initiatives to ensure relevance and appropriateness.[10]

5 Mtimde, L., Sustainability for Community Radio. A paper presented at the Namibia Community Broadcasting Conference, 2000.

6 Jennings, V. E., & Weideman, V., *Community Radio Sustainability, Policies and Funding.* UN: UNESCO; Section for Media Development and Society, 2015.

7 World Bank., *The World Bank*. Retrieved April 29, 2022, from The World Bank. (2011, January 3). https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2011/01/03/as-ghana-grows-demand-for-water-follows

8 Osumanu, I. K., Kosoe, E. A., & Ategeeng, F., Determinants of Open Defecation in the Wa Municipality of Ghana: Empirical findings highlighting sociocultural and economic dynamics among households. Hindawi, Journal of Environmental and Public Health, (2018): 10. doi:https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/3075840

9 Wellington, N. L., Larbi, E., & Appiah, J., Innovative approaches to implementing CLTS in an urban setting: successful lessons from piloting the approach in a small town of Lekpongunor in the Dangbe West District of Ghana. 22nd Mole Conference. Mole, 2011.

10 Oduro, Y. A., *Analysis of sanitation promotion strategies of Kanehsie Market Complex, Accra.* Accra: ugspace.edu.gh, 2015.

The combined effects of poverty and lower levels of literacy place a limitation on the use of certain media platforms such as newspaper and television in Northern Ghana. Under such circumstances, radio remains the most accessible, effective and appropriate medium of communication for development purposes for the people of Northern Ghana.[11] The research attempts to respond to how are sanitation programs are produced at Radio Progress produced and why is community participation is important in sanitation broadcast as well as the nature of collaboration between Radio Progress and stakeholders in its sanitation programming?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The research is guided by two theories of communication: Diffusion of Innovations and Participatory Development Communication theories. Diffusion can be used in two forms; diffusion of innovations and diffusion of news.[12] Some researchers have however criticized this theory as lacking cohesion, because it appears top-down its orientation. It is expert-driven and transmitted by them with little to no participation from stakeholders.[13] The Diffusion of Innovations Model which was propounded by Rogers has since seen over four thousand articles across many disciplines with some adopted changes to the original theory thereby making it difficult to apply to many real-life situations as it lacks consistency with emerging societal problems. Irrespective of criticisms of the model the Diffusion of Innovations theory is favorably disposed towards the importance of local community members and opinion leaders as nodes of influence in communication networks.[14] In line with the objectives of the study, issues of sanitation continue to evolve and are issues of concern for stakeholders particularly community leaders and those directly affected by poor sanitation. This has led to the development and acceptance of several interventions aimed at addressing poor sanitation with particular attention to open defecation. One of such interventions is the CLTS, a novelty that is gradually sweeping across Africa with extensive acceptability.[15]

The diffusion of innovations theory prescribes a number of important elements that should be incorporated into the spread of new ideas and innovations, key among this is the involvement of local community members and opinion leaders as nodes of influence in communication networks, which are also components of the CLTS.[16] Under CLTS, the involvement of influential people and community members in the spread of the innovation is key to the achievement of good sanitation.

11 Amadu, M. F., & Alhassan, A., 'Community access and participation in community radio broadcast: Case of Radio Gaakii, Ghana'. *Journal of Development and Communication Studies, 5* (2017): 2305-7432.

12 Rogers, E. M., *Diffusion of innovations.* New York: NY: Free Press, 2003.

13 Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., Macfarlene, F., Bate, P., Kyriakidou, O. & Peacock, R., 'Storylines of research in diffusion of innovation: a meta-narrative approach to systematic review'. *Social Science and Medicine*, (2005): 417-430.

14 Seeger, H., & Wilson, R. S., 'Diffusion of Innovations and Public Communication Campaigns: An Examination of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Programme'. *Journal for Applied Communications, 103*(2), (2019).

15 Hickling, S., & Bevan, J., Scaling up CLTS in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya, 2008.

16 Kar, K. & Chambers, R., *Handbook on Community-Led Total Sanitation.* London: Plan UK, 2008.

However, considering the complex nature of issues of behavioral change, it has been argued that adoption of an innovation cannot be attributed to the use of this theory even in instances where the theory has been applied.[17] The researchers have noted that it is difficult to measure the direct variable that is responsible for the adoption of an innovation. In the area of health for instance, it has been argued that many other variables can account for the adoption of an innovation and not necessarily the application of the theory of innovation, especially when the impact cannot even be measured because there is no room for feedback.

Building on this critique, the concept of innovation of ideas amplifies the one-way flow of information from the implementer to its target recipient.[18] It does not allow for feedback from the respondents. The goal of the sender of the message is to persuade the receiver of the message without recourse to getting feedback on the outcome of the message. This process, however, has been described as suitable in some cases but not suitable in other cases where participation is supposed to be key in the implementation plan.

The criticisms leveled against the innovations theory make it inadequate to be used as a stand-alone tool to examine the contribution community radio in improvement of sanitation. This is because community radio employs participation and provides feedback whereas innovation of ideas theory does not make room for adequate participation and feedback.[19]

Considering that sanitation interventions employ experience sharing of basic innovations that are pursued by successful communities to tackle their sanitation issues coupled with the involvement of opinion leaders in implementing these interventions, it is appropriate that a theory that can help spread an innovation with the involvement of all stakeholders is integrated into the theoretical framework. Sanitation interventions such as the CLTS is expected to trickle down to other areas but must make use of participation. Therefore, a blend of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory with Participatory Development Communication (PDC) theory will help achieve the objectives of the research.

Participatory Development Communication

The participatory theory (PDC) was born from development communication and participatory research.[20] It was defined by Bessette and sanctioned by the Communication for Development Roundtable organized by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 2005 as a planned activity based on participatory processes. PDC makes use of participatory media and interpersonal communication forms to facilitate dialogue among different stakeholders, around

17 Plsek, P., & Greenhalgh, T., The challenge of complexity in healthcare. Complexity Science. (323), (2001): 625-628.

18 Giesler, M., 'How Doppelganger Brand Images influence the market creation process: longitudinal insights from the rise of Botox cosmetics'. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(6), (2021): 55-68.

19 Diedong, A. L., & Naaikuur, L., 'Ghana's experience in participatory community radio broadcasting'. *Global Media Journal, African Edition,* 6(2), (2012): 123-147.

20 Muñiz, S., Participatory development communication (PDC): rhetoric or reality? The analysis of community-based level interventions in Latin America and Africa with dialogue and empowerment as intended outcomes. Msc Thesis at the University of Reading, England, 2008.

a common development problem or goal with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution.

Participation leads to interventions that generate dialogue and collaboration towards a better life and results are achieved through participatory communication. Participation ensures that different voices and perspectives of community members are heard in a bid to promote bottom-up approaches and it employs a lot of tools.[21] Among these tools participatory media is a subset of direct media that uses participation and self determination to enable feedback or exchange.[22]

Participatory development projects such as Community Radio employ a participatory approach to decision making processes and enable the voiceless to define their own development paths through the identification and implementation of projects that are initiated by them.[23] The participatory nature of interpersonal and participatory media gives rural people an active and important role in their own development.[24] One such medium that has over the years, encouraged peoples' participation and provided the platform for engagement in development planning processes among rural folks is the Community Radio Broadcasting Service and perfectly fits the context of PDC. The use of such a blended theoretical framework is relevant because the working philosophy of CLTS and community radio hinge on participation of stakeholders in their programs.

Despite the arguments in favor of the PDC, other scholars argued that participation is rarely the starting point for any development process as the problem is naturally identified by implementers and objectives are drawn before community members are introduced into the intervention.[25] They argued further that beneficiaries are introduced after the two broad necessities have been achieved and said that although they are allowed to participate, beneficiaries are still guided along a similar path to achieve set goals and objectives which may actually not even reflect the felt needs of the people.[26]

The PDC theory has been criticized for its cost factor as participation requires time and resources.[27] Involving various stakeholders at every level of decision making for a particular initiative can increase the time needed for a decision to be arrived at.

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21 Inagaki, N., *Communicating the impact of communication for development. recent trends in empirical research.* Washington: World Bank Working Papers No. 120, 2007.

22 Amadu, M. F., & Alhassan, A., 'Community access and participation in community radio broadcast: Case of Radio Gaakii, Ghana'. *Journal of Development and Communication Studies, 5* (2018): 2305-7432.

23 Mhagama, P. M., 'Donor funding to community radio stations in Malawi and its impact on their performance'. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 41*(6), (2005): 1301-1314.

24 Okunna, C., 'Small participatory media technology as an agent of social change in Nigeria: a non-existent option?' *Media Culture Society, 17*, (1995): 615-627.

25 Holland, J. & Blackburn, J., *Whose voice? Participatory research and policy change.* Intermediate Technology Publications, 1998.

26

27 Mosse, D., *Cultivating development: an ethnography of aid policy and practice.* London: Pluto Press, 2005.

Despite criticisms against the PDC, the theory moves away from merely informing and persuading target audience to changing their behavior and attitudes and also facilitating exchange among different stakeholders to address a common problem.[28] With CLTS as the case study the focus is, the theoretical stance of the study is that programs and activities on improvement of sanitation in communities should move beyond educating people on what they need to do about their sanitation to seeking their input and views into various interventions by development partners.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

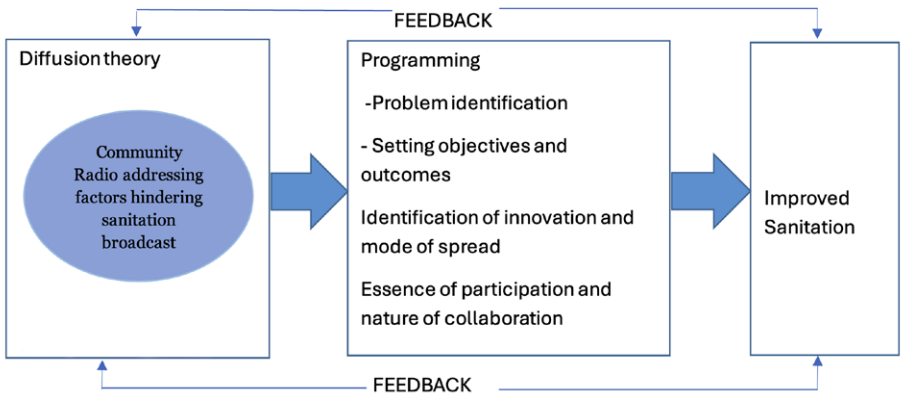

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the study

Source: *Researchers' construct, May, 2021.*

Methods

The study was conducted in the Kagu, Dandafuri and Mangu communities. These communities were selected because according to the Municipal Environmental Health and Sanitation Department (MEHSD), they either have undergone CLTS or have experience with open defecation. Whereas Kagu and Dandafuri have had experience with the CLTS intervention, Mangu has not been included in the intervention due to its location and complexity according to the MEHSD. The study used one community radio station - Radio Progress. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents. The study used face-to-face interviews, focus group discussion and observation to collect data.

28 Bessette, G., *Involving the community: a guide to participatory development communication.* Ottawa: South Bound printing, 2004.

Table 1: Sample Size

Community/Unit	Sample size (interviews)	Focus Group Discussion
Kagu	15	1 (10 participants)
Dandafuri	20	1 (10 participants)
Mangu	25	Nil
Radio Progress	1	Nil
MEHSD	1	Nil
Community Development Alliance	1	Nil
Total	63	(20 participants)

Two focus discussions were conducted in two of the study communities: Kagu and Dandafuri. The discussion involved 20 community members: a 10-member focus discussion group for each community. Face-to-face interview was conducted with the Programs Manager of Radio Progress, the Wa Municipal Environmental Health Officer, and the Executive Director the Community Development Alliance (CDA), a non-governmental organization in sanitation.

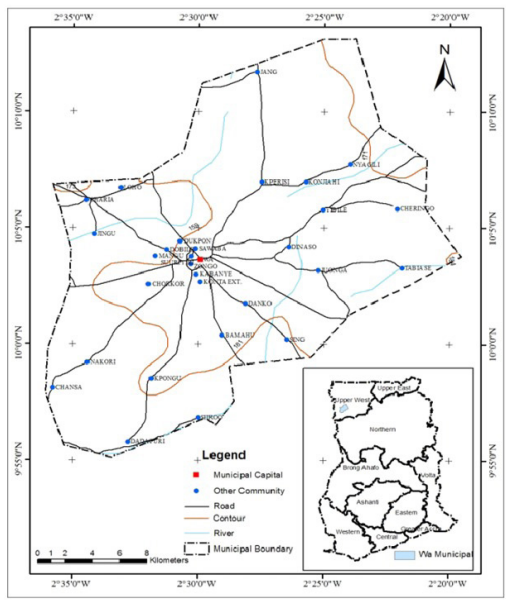

Figure 2: Map of Ghana with the location of the study area in Wa Municipality

Source: *https://wamunicipalassembly.wordpress.com/*

Figure 3: Studios of Radio Progress

Data Analysis

The researchers conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The discussions were recorded with a mobile phone after permission was granted by the respondents. The audio recordings were then transcribed by the researcher with the help of three interpreters: one interpreter for the Waali language and two for the Dagaare language. The two interpreters were selected for the Dagaare so that the second acted as a censor. The transcribed data was arranged according to the sampled communities of the study. Based on the literature reviewed and research objectives, the themes for the study were defined (Ryan, Health & Bernard, 2003). Several themes were identified and examined, and those that fit into the context of the research objectives were categorized as major themes for discussion.

Results and Discussion

The ideal situation is that Radio Progress as a community radio station is expected to collaborate effectively with the MEHSD as a stakeholder in sanitation broadcast. This collaboration would guide the broadcast and ensure that messages were targeted. The Programs Manager described the collaboration as poor and said once the MEHSD was not involving them, it was difficult discussing issue-based challenges of sanitation because they were not privy recent happenings on such issues at the MESHD. The Program Manager observed that the seeming lack of interest in the business of the environmental health was probably because of the low of involvement by the stakeholders. Interestingly, the Municipal Environmental Health Officer (MEHO) also had similar concern and said they were only able to involve the journalists in their field visits when they had sponsored programs.

Collaboration between the two is not solid and they hardly get the opportunity to go into the studios to discuss topics that were even determined by the radio station. Once the collaboration between the MEHSD and Radio Progress has not been that strong, the community-radio engagement would suffer because the MEHSD is expected to act as an intermediary between the two sectors. Through their involvement, they would have brought to fore communities that had issues with sanitation, how they were tackling them with and those that were doing well and needed to be put in the limelight for others to emulate. Most of the responses painted a picture of the absence of all of these as seen below. The MEHO stated that.

The organized programs we pay for on radio by Water Aid and others, we are responsible for the synopsis, but for the free airtime, we are given, we don't set the agenda, and we don't even take part in the agenda setting. They just call and say, 'oh we have seen this so what is your take about it' and a lot of them when they come, they just make it general and say 'oh Mr. MEHO, can we talk about the sanitation situation… They don't really approach us to help develop a synopsis, not even Radio Progress that gives us enough airtime to educate the public. They always have their topics (Key Informant-Interview, October 2021).

Another respondent believed involving community would help bring to the fore real sanitation issues begging for discussion.

Other respondents said:

> Even though sanitation is a major problem in Mangu, we have specific things that we think can be done to improve upon sanitation so if the radio station people will want to seek our opinions on what to discuss, why not they are most welcome because we want to contribute. For instance, we can discuss why open defecation still exist when there are public toilets. The females especially say they pick up infections after using the public toilet, so they prefer the bush" (Individual Interview, October, 2021).

It is important that hygiene education adopts a non-authoritative and avoid one-way communication approach but rather employ participatory communication whereby people about whom the issues are concerned are involved in the discussions for success. For instance, a natural leader who was known to be actively involved in the implementation of CLTS in his area, had expected that the MEHO would invite him to the radio station to share his experience and successes with others in the municipality in a collaborative way. According to the natural leader:

> I was privileged to receive training from the assembly people on the construction of the household latrine as a community artisan. I have a lot of experience to share when it comes to construction of latrines and what has gone into achieving this improved sanitation situation, we have now but then I have not really been able to share my knowledge with other people as I expected because I think the opportunity has been very limited. Sometimes I think if we are given the opportunity to be on radio, others could learn from our experience I have heard discussions on sanitation from other areas on Radio Progress; that is my number one station. Sometimes you hear that they will be talking about container, container, container, and public toilets. Those things

> cannot help because people need to get their own toilets. I was hoping the assembly people will inform the radio stations about our success so that they can invite us to the station for a discussion. If the assembly people don't tell them, the radio stations will not know what has happened in our communities. (Individual Interview, October 2021).

Water Aid, a non-governmental organization assisted communities in Uganda to harness community radio for improved sanitation through participatory community broadcast. Issues that accounted for poor sanitation set the tone for the various discussions that yielded positive consensus on how to work for improved sanitation through combined efforts of affected community members.

The application of PDC and the Diffusion of Innovations blended theory could help promote the spread and success of innovations in sanitation practices. Muñiz (2008) stated that the involvement of various stakeholders could lead to the identification of a permanent solution for a development problem at hand.

About 80% of persons who responded to questions believe the assembly members have done enough to mobilize people to solve sanitation problems. Their statements seemed to indicate that the assembly members are mostly at the forefront of sanitation interventions and led the campaign for good sanitation whether it concerns mobilizing people for clean-ups or getting a sanitation issue resolved in the community. For Kagu and Dandafuri communities, unit committee members were responsible for such roles. Below are some responses from focus group discussions at Kagu and Dandafuri. A focus group discussant at Dandafuri said:

> We used to sit as a community to discuss sanitation issues and our unit committee organized such meetings and even led the discussion and it helped us to keep the community clean. We shared ideas on how to keep our homes and community clean but these days we don't meet anymore because of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic (Focus Group Discussion, October 2021).

At Kagu, a discussant indicated that:

> As a community we meet to discuss issues about sanitation often and this helps us to improve daily. At first when we were not having latrines, our children used to run diarrhea but now that we have constructed latrines to prevent the children from defecating outside, we don't experience the diarrhea anymore. Our unit committee member is always with the assembly people so when we meet, we tell him our challenges, and also suggests alternatives to help improve on sanitation (Focus Group Discussion, October 2021).

The Role of the Environmental Health, Municipal Assembly and Other Partners in Improving Sanitation

The Environmental Health and Sanitation Department is at the center of the sanitation interventions and expected to bind all the other sectors together to function appropriately. It is expected to champion the collaboration between the community, radio station and the municipal assembly. The municipal assembly on the other hand is expected to augment the effort. Respondents were confused about the difference between the municipal assembly and the MEHSD. Some discussants in a focus group discussion at Dandafuri scored the assembly based on available sanitation facilities in their community, which according to them were not even there. Therefore, the municipal assembly was not doing much to support sanitation improvement in communities. Focus group discussants at Kagu were full of praise for the MEHSD for its support in improving sanitation in their community.

The MEHO explained that the municipality had not enjoyed much donor support probably because of its status as most of the sanitation interventions were targeted at rural communities. He stated said, however, that the MEHSD had over the years enjoyed the partnership of Zoomlion Ghana Limited, a waste management company that had helped to provide waste bins at vantage points for residents and collected them at a fee. He lamented that support from the municipal assembly on sanitation issues was quite low. From the MEHO's point of view, a sanitation by-law and taskforce would probably solve all the sanitation problems of the municipality.

A study in the Ga West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana where there are by-laws, demonstrated that even the by-laws were not adequate in themselves to halt open defecation and poor sanitation.[29]. About 51% of landlords and 43% of tenants were aware of the existence of the by-laws but did not care about its existence. While tenants feared eviction if they reported the absence of latrines in their homes to the municipal assembly, the landlords were also not bothered because they did not have the space and money to construct the latrines.

The Environmental Health Department was unable to prosecute defaulting landlords because it involves a lot of resources (time and money). As a result, the laws were literally nonfunctional hence the provision of by-laws seemed unnecessary. Enforcing existing by-laws on sanitation in the Wa Municipal assembly will not be out of place but evidence from other areas have shown that it will not be sufficient to turn around the sanitation situation of the municipality.

29 WSUP., *Smart enforcement of sanitation by-laws in Ghana: Policy Brief.* Accra, 2018

Role of Community Radio in Addressing Factors that Hinder Sanitation Broadcast

Stakeholders are unable to patronize the community radio to discuss issues of sanitation of all as result of cost involved. Stakeholders such as the MEHO, assembly and unit committee members have so much to tell the public but until a donor comes in to get him airtime, the department cannot afford the airtime with its own resources because the resources. So, the issues never get discussed irrespective of their relevance to improve sanitation in the municipality. Radio Progress has allocated one hour every week to some three departments which includes the MEHSD to discuss issues of concern.

It is possible for Radio Progress to make deliberate interventions such as regular invitations to stakeholders to the studio to discuss sanitation issues. However, Radio Progress efforts are limited by inadequate funding for such activities. Seven common funding methods for community radio stations which included applying for competitive grants, support from the station's own community, service contracts and commercial advertising and sponsorships, among others.[30] Such financial support can better position the station to serve its mandate and not renege on its duties with the excuse of no funds available.

Another issue from the responses collected was the issue of accessibility. Access is defined as "the ability to derive benefits from things" and looks at access as one's power over an item rather than their rights to it.[31] They believe that if someone has power over an item, then they have access to it rather having just rights because power increases accessibility more as compared to rights. The responses revealed inadequate exercise of power of community members over the community radio, which in theory was supposed to be owned and utilized by them.[32]

Respondents believed that people without affluence or some form of technical expertise cannot access radio stations to make their voices count. Some may have the resources but see the radio as something sophisticated, they cannot access. A respondent at Kagu said:

> I have never participated in any radio discussion either via phone or personally because I don't have a phone and who will even invite me to the radio station to discuss issues with them. I don't know anyone over there and I am just a woman in the village. The radio appears very sophisticated and has sophisticated and rich people who go there to talk, how can I be invited to the station when I am staying in Kagu (she had a frown on her face) (Individual Interview, October 2021).

Other respondents said that even when they try to join in a discussion via phone, their calls were sometimes not answered. As a result, they are demotivated from contribute radio dis-

30 Gordon J., How community broadcasting is funded- a useful resource for community broadcasters. *3CMedia* (8), (2016, May): 30-39.

31 Ribot, J., & Peluso, N. L., 'A Theory of Access'. *Rural Sociology, 68*(2), (2003): 153-181.

32 Fraser, C. & Restrepo-Estrada, S., 'Community Radio for Change and Development'. *Society for International Development, 45*(4), (2002): 69-73.

cussions. None of the respondents interviewed at the various communities confirmed that they had been to the radio station, not even the Assembly Member of Mangu, one of the communities earmarked for improved sanitation. The assembly member for Mangu stated emphatically that,

> As for Radio Progress, they have never invited me to the studio, they only called twice during their news hour to discuss issues of refuse that had piled up at the entrance of the community and in both instances, the blame was on the assembly member (Key Informant Interview, October 2021).

Accessibility of community members to programs, particularly sanitation is problematic. Inagaki (2007) stated that participation ensures that different voices and perspectives of community members are heard in a bid to promote bottom-up approaches. It allows community members' access to the community radio. However, community participation in community radio broadcast is limited to listening and phone-in segments as alluded to by some respondents involved in this study earlier.[33] In effect, if a resident has no radio device to do the listening or a mobile phone and call credit to call into the program, they are unable to have access to the radio station. From the responses, women seem to be more disadvantaged when it comes to access because some of them do not even own radio devices like their male counterparts. This is although women carry the burden of ensuring good sanitation.[34]

In a study about women's participation in social discourse it was confirmed that interpersonal communication and media participation was limited due to the workload of domestic chores.[35] More women are poorer than men and are unable to own communication devices to allow them to participate in communication. This study's evidence confirms their observation since some of the women do not even own mobile phones to participate in radio discussions via the phone-in segment of discussion. The issue of accessibility seems to be a pointer to a mismatch between what was aired on radio and what community members would love to talk about concerning their own sanitation situation.

The Issue of Feedback on Matters Related to Sanitation

Communication is not complete without feedback (Dixit, 2018). The conceptual framework of the study highlights the relevance of feedback in communication. The study examined the views of community members about feedback from broadcast on sanitation issues. Some respondents observed that there was no feedback on radio discussions, hence they were not encouraged to use the medium even if they had all the resources. This raises a question about community participation in community radio broadcasting. Consequently, commu-

33 Amadu, M. F., & Amin, 'Community radio in rural development in Northeastern Ghana: the experience of radio Gaakii in the Saboba District'. *International Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(5), (2017): 1-12.

34 Nabembezi, D., Nabunya, H., Abaliwano, J., & Ddamulira, D., *Harnessing the Power of Community Radio Broadcasting to Promote Accountability; Transparency and Responsiveness of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Service Provision in Uganda,* 2010.

35 Malik, K. K., & Bandelli, D., *Community Radio and Gender - Towards an inclusive public sphere.* Hyderabad, 2012.

nity participation in radio programming on improving sanitation in the study area can best described as "tokenistic".

Feedback enables the sender of the message to know how the recipients received the message and their level of understanding.[36] Feedback allows the receiver to suggest new angles and ideas to an on-going discussion. Therefore, feedback can only happen and be measured when the target population are actively involved in a communication discourse such as discourses on radio about improvement of poor sanitation in communities. Community members and stakeholders have issues they wish were discussed on radio, but they have limited access. Issue-based discussions with set objectives, which they want to see achieved remains a far cry from reality. This evidence confirms the assertion that "the exclusion of the poor and the marginalized from mainstream broadcasting gives the lie to claims of broadcasting pluralism; at best we have multiplicity but not pluralism."[37]

Yet communities desire to improve sanitation through collaboration to construct latrines. Access to community radio as a common platform to share ideas on how to create healthy environment had yielded dividends elsewhere. The agenda-setting roles of community radio entails that they mount pressure on duty-bearers, public officials involved in local governance, regarding the most pressing and pertinent issues affecting the local community. For example, Radio Ada reportage on rubbish-dumps in the market areas, especially the ones near Kasse market near Ada constrained local authorities to take action to solve the problem. "The community members called at the radio station to express appreciation on the effort the station had made to bring about this change".[38]

Conclusion

The chapter concludes that even though Radio Progress is a community radio and should adhere to the tenets of participation by onboarding community members to discuss issues of sanitation, the reality seems different. It is important that Radio Progress prioritizes sanitation programming with community members' active participation to tap their perspectives on solutions to poor sanitation. Stakeholder participation should not be limited to a few prominent people such as the assembly members and staff of the MEHSD and some listeners who own mobile phones with credit units to call into the program.

The mismatch between what is being aired as sanitation programs and what listeners want to hear can be ironed out within a context of participatory engagements whereby the inputs of all stakeholders are recognized in efforts aimed at improving sanitation in communities. In line with Sustainable Development Goal 17, it is recommended that development partners such as UNICEF and Water Aid support Radio Progress in their field programs on sanitation and

36 Dixit, A., 'Communication is Incomplete without Feedback'. *Pens Acclaims, 2* (2018): 2581-5504).

37 Akpabli, K. (ed), *Plenty talk dey 4 Ghana. Radio eye plural broadcastin &democracy*.Accra: Anansesem Publications, 2020.

38 Alumuku, P, *Community radio for development. The World and Africa*. Nairobi: Pualines Publicaitons Africa, 2007.

community engagements on development issues in general. Nevertheless, Radio Progress needs to appreciate that "its specific focus is to make its audience the main protagonists, by their involvement in all aspects of its management and program production. It also provides the audience with programming that help them in development and social advancement of their community".

Therefore, it is important that Radio Progress re-orient its sanitation programs to offer ample space for active community participation in the planning and identification of sanitation topics for discussion on live radio as well as in the implementation of activities emanating from the discussions in communities.

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13. ADÉJỌKẸ́ ẸWÀÈDÈ, YORÙBÁ ARCHIVAL SYSTEM: CHANGING MEDIA NARRATIVES AND STEREOTYPES OF THE YORUBA WOMAN

BUKOLA CHRISTIANA AJALA

Background

Traditionally, during the pre-colonial era, the Yoruba kingdom extended beyond the shores of the Oyo empire in Nigeria to Togo and Dahomey in the Benin Republic. The onslaught of the trans-Atlantic slave trade also systematically displaced many Yoruba people from their homeland. The slave trade made it possible to ferry indigenous Yoruba people to South and North Carolina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Trinidad, Cuba, and Jamaica, to mention a few. Countries like Brazil, Cuba and Saint Domingue (Haiti) are currently heavily populated with Yoruba-speaking people.[1] Today, a village in South Carolina in the United States is called Oyotunji, which literarily translates to Oyo renaissance. This suggests that the Yoruba language and culture are being revived in the diaspora. But to what extent is this the case in Nigeria? The reverse seems to be the situation in Nigeria.

Nigeria's unalloyed acceptance of the English language can best be described as a form of neocolonialism and not the result of a perceived deficiency in the indigenous languages. Historically, a foremost Nigerian, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, in his quest to develop the Yoruba language ensured its documentation in written forms. He formulated the first Yoruba dictionary and a grammar book in the 1840s. This facilitated the standardization of the language, and it could have promoted the establishment of the first indigenous Yoruba newspaper ('*Ìwé Ìròyìn fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba'*) in 1859 by a missionary, Rev Henry Townsend. This newspaper, we understand, was however not a tabloid but a newsletter published fortnightly. Nowadays, indigenous Yoruba newspapers are equally characterized by their fortnightly publications, as they grapple for survival amidst poor patronage. Nonetheless, the objective behind the creation of *Ìwé Ìròyìn* was not language engineering but evangelism and cultural imperialism.[2] The publication was produced initially in Yoruba before it assumed a bilingual status. It published stories on happenings in the area and provided missionaries a discursive platform on political development in the region.[3] It fostered the literacy skills of the local people, which probably inspired the translation of the King James Version of the *English Bible* into Yoruba in 1884 by Samuel Ajayi Crowther.

1 Michael, Udo Emeem. The Vitality of Yoruba Culture in the Americas. *A Journal of African Studies* 2020 https//scholarship.org/uc/item/17c6d1sb.

2 Rotimi, Fasan. Alaroye: Political Contestations, Genres, Innovations and Audiences in a Yoruba Language Newspaper. Cambridge University Press 2018.

3 Fasan, Political Contestations, Genres, Innovations and Audiences in a Yoruba Language Newspaper. 840.

Emerging Problems

The developmental strides in the documentation of the Yoruba language aided the archival status of the language. However, the production of the *Ìwé Ìròyìn* could not be sustained; it died a natural death in 1867, eight years after its creation. One of the earliest Yoruba newspapers in contemporary times is the *Aláròyé* established in 1985 by a former broadcaster, Alao Adedayo. This, (*Aláròyé*) was soon to be followed by *Akéde Àgbáyé* and other more notable indigenous prints. Both the *Aláròyé* and *Akéde Àgbáyé,* produced by the same publisher, share uniqueness about the fusion of Yoruba oral discourse in a written medium,[4] a focus on human interest stories and sensational headlines.

The debut of the print and broadcast media no doubt led to the rapid development of the Yoruba language, but with it came stereotypical notions of our womenfolk. Women were presented as unequal partners to men, and this was enhanced by the visual imagery of the television.[5] The debut of television increased media content and expanded audience choices, thereby making broadcasting content no longer relegated to local programming but to transnational influences. Big conglomerates with advertising revenue dictated the nation's broadcast program schedules and content. Consequently, prevailing popular culture's portrayal of Yoruba women was lopsided and cast along stereotypical divides. The patriarchal nature of the society also favored such gender colorations as the mass media depictions of the women relegated them to home making and family tending.[6] Women were thus, not regarded as active change agents in society but as laid back and subservient to their male counterparts. Many of them at the time, lacked the economic power to influence things in the society. Gender occupational distribution in conventional mass communication was also for a long time skewed in favor of men. This was particularly the case with the print media. The issue of gender inequality persists; it is evident in diverse areas of endeavor in Nigeria, such as enrolment in institutions of higher learning, the labor force, wages, and leadership positions.[7]

The following description paints a vivid picture of the media's perpetuation of gender inequality through their content:

> Gender inequality appears to be supported by the media treatment of women who are mostly ignored, denied or invisible. When they do attain visibility, it is done with biases and negative stereotypes since all they do is to play supportive roles for the natural order. They are given little voices, demeaned through various forms of behaviours, which further increase their vulnerability. Women's exclusion from the media is not surprising, since the media in Nigeria serve as government mouthpieces or the mouthpiece of their owners who more often than not are men.[8]

4 Salawu, Abiodun. The Yoruba and their language Newspapers: Origin, Nature, Problems and Prospects 2004.

5 Olusegun, Ojomo and Grace, Adekusibe. Portrayal of Women in select Nigerian Television Contents. *Ebonyi State University Journal of Mass Communication* vol 7 issue 1 29-40, 2020.

6 Baoping, Shang. Tackling gender inequality, definition, trends and policy designs December 2022

7 Shang. Tackling gender inequality, definition, trends and policy designs. December 2022: 5

8 Ifeoma, Amobi. Portrayal and participation of women in the Nigerian Mass Media. 2013:4

The above scenario describes the media's role in creating mental maps in people's minds on women's participation in society. By its heuristic function, the mass media facilitate viewers' believability of such messages and intrinsic adoption of observed behavior. Nonetheless, at the inception of television in Nigeria, one of the major requirements for our women to feature in front of a television camera was the possession of beautiful faces combined with sonorous voices. In fact, the nation's broadcast industry, particularly television, records having more women in employment than men.[9]

More women were, thus, employed as newscasters, on-air personalities, and program producers/presenters. The likes of Adesuwa Oyinukwe, Eugenia Abu and Abike Dabiri are examples of Nigerian female broadcasters who played remarkable roles that left an indelible mark in people's minds as viewers during their stint at the Nigerian Television Authority Network Centre. In an interview, Eugenia Abu observes that despite the huge numerical representation of women in NTA over the years, 'no woman has ever been considered worthy to head the institution in almost 50 years of the station's existence'.[10] Could it be because women are incapable of occupying leadership positions? No! Eugenia's statement further reaffirms the absence of gender parity in leadership positions in the Nigerian mass media. With the advent of digital technologies, the participatory culture of the new media has now allowed more of our women to create unique contents that promote their careers, businesses, ministry, or belief systems. Digital media allows individuals to display innate potential, capabilities and creative ingenuity. Our women have leadership potential that can only be fully explored in the media because of their potential gatekeeping efficiency and resistance to censorship. This essay therefore examines the extent to which digital media is an alternative platform for our women in heralding their voice in society.

This Chapter projects a contemporary young lady who is promoting indigenous Yoruba cultural heritage on different social media handles. She is Adéjọ́kẹ́ Shomoye, popularly referred to as Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹ̀wàèdè, a native of Abeokuta, in Ogun state, Nigeria. This lady is changing the status quo regarding women's roles as change agents in society. Her contribution to the growth and development of the Yoruba language on social media has earned her the title of cultural ambassador in her state. She also runs a cultural foundation offline but deploys her social networking platforms to x-ray and disseminate cultural issues. With her content on social media handles, the archival status of our language is enhanced, and the media enable her to fulfill her cultural transmission function.

Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are veritable tools for teaching young people indigenous practices. As it is, globalization has disconnected most African youths from their roots. It is necessary to deploy the tools of globalization to bring these children back to their roots. Each social media handle has common qualities regarding the audience's ability to communicate with the content creator. Social networking platforms

9 Alhassan Amina and Bassey, Rosemary. 'It's Baffling that a Woman is yet to Head NTA'- Eugenia Abu Daily Trust Newspaper, Sun Nov 13 2022

10 Alhassan Amina and Bassey, Rosemary. 'Its Baffling that a Woman is yet to Head NTA'- Eugenia Abu Daily Trust Newspaper, Sun Nov 13 2022:7

also allow for immediate feedback during communication. In contrast, there may be delayed feedback when audiences respond to opinions, editorials or news commentaries on the conventional means of mass communication. Audiences may also not receive instantaneous feedback from the mass media. For broadcast media, such as radio and television, audiences may experience feedback delays because of heavy traffic of incoming calls from other listeners/viewers. In Africa, systemic issues such as power outages may delay feedback in broadcast operations. Media convergence has, however, blurred existing boundaries between conventional media forms and new media, particularly, with the availability of radio, television and newspapers on online platforms. Media convergence has, thus, boosted the visibility, patronage and accessibility of traditional media forms. This explains why many 'on-air presenters' encourage their fans to share program content widely among fans' networks.

African Folklore, Poetry, and Proverbs on Social Media

African societies are known for their rich repository of folklore, poetry and proverbs, which constitute the people's rhetoric and are transmitted across generational divides. These expressive aspects (proverbs, folklores, poetry) of culture are peculiar to different ethnic leanings on the continent. The Yoruba culture has diverse folklore, poetry (*ewi*) and proverbs, but not many are known by the young people. Folklore entails cultural expressions, such as stories/fables that depict moral lessons, while proverbs are 'metaphorical short sayings that express some traditionally held truth'.[11] Chinua Achebe aptly alludes to proverbs as the 'palm oil with which words are eaten."[12] Yoruba proverbs reflect the oral tradition and constitute part of the people's mores. It is an integral aspect of the Yoruba language, poetry and oral tradition. Historically in Africa, adults and youths enriched their conversations with generous doses of proverbs. At a point in time, they (proverbs) were part of the recommended poetry for students in our high schools. I remember that as a high school student, we were made to read the poem, a *Salute to the Elephant,* which contains some proverbs. An excerpt of the poem is below:

> Oh elephant possessor of a savings basket full of money
> Oh elephant, huge as a hill even in a crouching posture
> Oh elephant enfolder of honour
> Demon flapping fans of war
> Demon who snaps tree branches into pieces and moves on to the forest farm[13]

The first line in this stanza of the poem is proverbial. The poem is a translation of the Yoruba *ijala* chant in English. *Ijala* is a native song or poem sung by native hunters while they are game hunting. It could also be a dirge for a departed hunter. In the poem, the elephant is referred to as a possessor of a savings basket full of money because of the enormous economic benefits in the animal's skin, hoof, tusk and other body parts. The elephant is equally referred to as an enfolder of honor because titled chiefs, for example, use its tusks on their caps for beautification. The tusk is also useful during traditional wedding ceremonies as wine glasses for the couple and important guests.

11 Isaiah, Fortress. A. Yoruba green-proverbs in English: a green study of Niyi Osundare's midlife fortress.
12 Chinua, Achebe. Things Fall Apart Penguin books: London (2010:pg 7)
13 Ridwan, Adedeji Content analysis of Salute to the Elephant Literature PADI 2023

Folklores

Folklore in Yoruba land was used in prehistoric times for acculturation purposes. Sometimes folklore is spiced with fables/songs and performed in public spaces. Globalization and the advent of new media have limited opportunities for such public performances. Critics now argue that the pristine orality of folklore is not effectively captured in the new media.[14] Nonetheless, important life lessons could be learned through such folklore disseminated via the new media. There was a story of a beautiful lady, Abeni (not her real name), who rejected every prospective suitor. This situation disturbed her parents who warned her about the consequences of such a behavior, but she turned a deaf ear. Eventually, Abeni was lured into marrying an extremely handsome man who turned out to be a roaming spirit in human form. She was held in his captivity for a long time until some hunters came to her rescue. We learn from this story that beauty is vain while character development is more important. Folklore is usually embedded in songs to aid their memorability. There is a folklore about Oluronbi, a barren woman who desperately sought a child of her own. She alongside other women decided to ask the spirit in an *Iroko* tree for help. It was the tradition in Oluronbi's village for women who needed a child to consult the spirit for assistance.

As each woman sought the spirit's help, it asked her, "What would be offered in return for a child?" Many of the women promised different items such as goats, yams, and sundry items. Oluronbi, in desperation, however, promised to offer her firstborn child. She eventually regretted her rash promise when a year later she gave birth to a beautiful child. The folklore goes thus:

Folklore as sung in Yoruba	**Translation**
Onikaluku jeje ewure	*Others promised a goat*
Ewure, ewure	*A goat, a goat*
Onikaluku jeje aguntan	*Others promised a sheep*
Aguntan, bolojo a sheep, a sheep	*Oluronbi promised her only child*
Oluronbi jeje omo re	*Her beautiful fair skinned child*
Omo re apon bi epo	*The last two lines are mere choruses*
Oluronbi o jo jo	
Iroko jo	

As we delve deeper into the discussion, we will examine how the standpoint theory provides an explanation of knowledge creation based on existing power structures in our society.

14 Azeez, Sesan. A. Yoruba Folktales the new media and post modernism *Khazar journal of humanities and social sciences* 17 no 2 2014. 74-86 https://www.researchgate.net.

Theoretical Background

Sandra Harding, Feminist Standpoint

We need a framework to validate claims, test propositions or make decisions to guide our actions. This framework could be in the form of other people's mistakes, our observations, and our perception of a situation. Therefore, knowledge creation should reflect this diversity. It should be from multiple realities such as the perspectives of marginalized individuals, in terms of gender, class and ethnicity.[15] Research and theory have however ostracized our women/girls' way of thinking.[16] Therefore, there is an absence of objectivity in empiricism because the way we conduct our investigations is androcentric/sexist. Thus, the outcome cannot be representative of the views of women or the downtrodden in the society.[17] Standpoint explains the point of view of a group who, through political consciousness, seeks a change in their circumstance. Marxist philosophy is the underlying principle of the Standpoint theory. The philosophy states that 'what we do shapes how we behave and what we know.'[18] Our perspectives are thus shaped by our socio-cultural and political realities. Our society, for example, places a social demand on women to attend to domestic issues while our men are at liberty to pursue their dreams. It would, therefore, be erroneous to cast our women in stereotypical roles devoid of their lived experiences.

The American Feminist, Sandra Harding, coined the term *Standpoint* and explains that those at the top echelons of the social ladder are likely to lose sight of important facts in knowledge creation because they fail to share in the struggles of the downtrodden.[19] In contrast, those in the lower strata of society are likely to produce representative opinions as they are sensitive to the social realities that govern knowledge creation. Our views on issues may align with those of others if there are shared similarities in terms of environment, age, gender, tribe, or occupation. However, the more the nature of our differences, the more divergent our opinions on issues will be.[20]

Standpoint has been applied to examine the lived experiences of African American women who are a disadvantaged race because of the color of their skin, ethnicity, and gender. We also propose to use standpoint as a framework to examine the works of a Yoruba female content creator on social media. It is deemed appropriate in this discourse because the media has presented a skewed perspective of our women since time immemorial, and this has negatively

15 Elizabeth, Borland. Standpoint theory Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2014. https://www.britannica.com/topic/standpoint-theory

16 Borland, Standpoint theory Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2014. https://www.britannica.com/topic/standpoint-theory

17 Borland, Standpoint theory Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2014. https://www.britannica.com/topic/standpoint-theory.

18 Julia, Wood. T. 'Feminist Standpoint Theory' *Encyclopaedia of Communication* ed… Thousand oaks, CA. SAGE, 397-99. 2012.

19 Wood. T. 'Feminist Standpoint Theory' *Encyclopaedia of Communication* Ed… Thousand oaks, CA. SAGE, 397-99. 2012.

20 Borland, Standpoint theory *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 2014: 397. https://www.britannica.com/topic/standpoint-theory 397.

affected women discourse and gender studies. There is, however, an argument that since gender hierarchy was largely introduced into African consciousness and cultures through colonialism, caution should be exercised in adopting Western feminist ideals in knowledge deconstruction.[21]

Methods

At the outset of this investigation on Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè, a Yoruba content creator in the digital space, we initially planned to combine different methods. Thus, we scheduled an interview with the content creator (Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè) at different points. However, due to unforeseen contingencies, it could not hold. Meanwhile, the Internet and social media platforms have extended the availability of Yoruba archival materials from physical enclosures, such as libraries, to an unbounded, flexible digital space that has enabled the creation of long-lasting memories. Given the foregoing observations, we did a textual analysis of selected Yoruba cosmology with the active support of four research assistants. We created a content coding sheet to identify **the patterns of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's posts on selected social media platforms.** We also investigated **the ways the impact metrics of her posts reflect her role as a change agent in the Yoruba society**. The poetry and proverbs of the content creator were sampled on TikTok, and Instagram. Forty-three posts were purposively selected from the social media platforms. We then analyzed and discussed emergent issues based on the posts.

Figure 1. Tye and dye fabric

21 Luqman Opeyemi Muraina and Abdulkareem J, Ajimantanraeje Gender relations in indigenous Yoruba culture: Questioning Current Feminist Actions and Advocacies 2022.

Results

The Pattern of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's Posts

Many of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's posts seem to suggest that the poignancy of meaning is couched in the language of communication. Let us examine this proverbial saying in one of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's posts 'Kòkòrò tó n jẹ ẹ̀fọ́, ìdí ẹ̀fọ́ ló wà'.[22] This implies that betrayal does not come from your enemies; it comes from your most trusted friends. This is a truism that has been ignored by some, leading to their premature death. There was a newspaper report of a young man[23] whose kidnap was masterminded by his biological sister. When security operatives arrested his sister, she confessed to the crime, stating that the kidnap was arranged because her brother was miserly. Various other interpretations may be drawn from this saying. For example, one may understand from the saying that ladies fall prey to men's deception easily because of blind trust. Though it is good to trust people, they should never earn your trust until they are tried and tested. Many people, however, fail to see beyond their noses. It brings to the fore that when Africans are knowledgeable in proverbial sayings such as this, they acquire native intelligence and are better equipped to function progressively in society. Similar to this is one of her sayings on Instagram and TikTok, which says 'Olóògúnná kan, kìí ṣeré etí omi'.[24] This translates to 'Never hold on to anything tighter than you are holding unto God'. People feel betrayed because they unwittingly create such scenarios by reposing too much confidence in men.

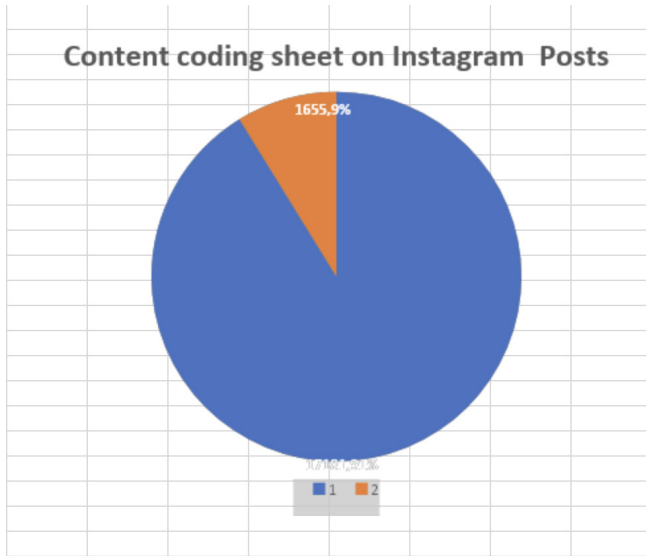

Figure 2: Pie Chart on Instagram Posts, Color 1: Number of Likes, Color 2: Number of comments

22 Adejoke ewaede, Kòkòrò tó n jẹ ẹ̀fọ́, ìdí ẹ̀fọ́ ló wà' 7th September 2023
23 Ibid
24 Adejoke ewaede, Olóògúnná kan, kìí ṣeré etí omi', 9th December 2023

Even the holy book advises against putting one's trust in the arm of flesh. More importantly, the proverbial saying also alludes to our penchant as humans to trust in our riches more than in the creator. We observe that in each of **Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's** videos, her manner of introducing her topic with a respectful bow was consistent. This shows that she is an *Omoluabi* (one who is well-behaved) and she is passionate about nurturing a similar behavior in others.

Another interesting dimension to the pattern of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's videos on social media is their instructional nature. Adejoke's poetry and proverbs are, in fact, Yoruba counsels that can foster a just and egalitarian society. The emphasis on gratitude as an important virtue aligns with her counsel on showing consideration for others. Gratitude is taken for granted in our contemporary society.[25] Many fail to show gratitude to their parents, those in positions of authority, and sometimes their creator. Ungrateful people are unlikely to be considerate of others, which explains why some Africans are cocky and set in their ways. There is a tendency for individuals with such characteristics to embrace the get-rich-quick syndrome such as ritual moneymaking, cyber fraud or the now, infamous Ponzi schemes (MMM).

Most of Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's counsels center on what the holy writ describes as the rules for living. Some of her contents are specific prayers at the beginning of a new month, while others are aimed at promoting elements of Yoruba artifacts such as the popular tie and dye cloth also known as *adire*. In the latter video and other similar ones, we understand how Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè's ancestry is instrumental in her social reality and knowledge creation.

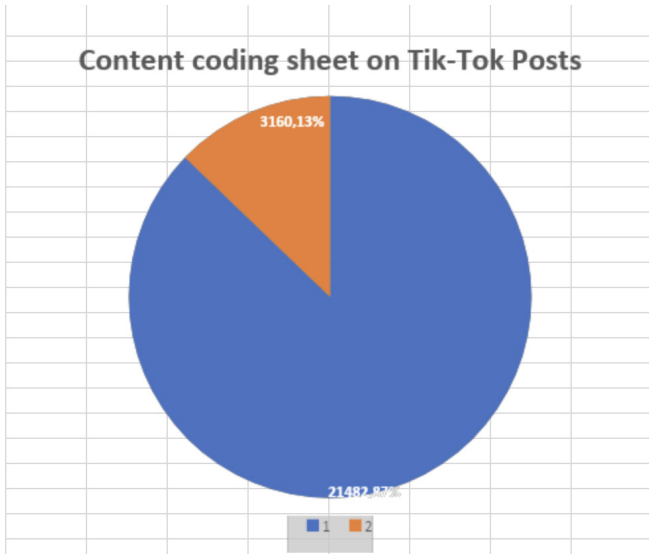

Figure 3: Pie Chart on Tiktok Posts, Color 1: Number of Likes, Color 2: Number of comments

25 Adejoke ewaede, Gratitude is a powerful tool at the end of the day,9th December 2023

According to her, one of her forebears was a warlord who led the Abeokuta people in a battle with other villages. Her passion for the Yoruba culture stems from the perception that the culture is under the invasion of Western ideals. This is apparently in contradiction with existing stereotypes regarding women in the Yoruba oral tradition. Some of the native proverbs describe women as irrelevant in society. Male children are, for example, referred to as *Adekunle*, while females are called *Adetule*.[26] Males are so named because of the belief that a male child's birth is an addition to the family whereas female children are bound to drop the family name when they are married. This leads us to the second question, which examined if the impact metrics of the videos depict her role as a change agent in society.

Adéjọ́kẹ́ Ewàèdè's Impact Metrics

The impact metrics point to audiences' varying levels of engagement with her videos. We observe a high level of audience engagement with many of her posts where she deployed poetry as a tool to convey her messages. Poetical messages in Yoruba are referred to as *ewi*. They are not merely evocative but usually songlike. Such messages are naturally profound and thought-provoking, which explains their resonance with the audience. A case in point is her video on gratitude where 6,745 viewers liked the video, 4,075 shared it but only 440 viewers actively commented on it. Audience comments depict a higher level of engagement based on their implication on Yoruba language development as such comments are employed to negotiate meaning or express identities. However, users exhibit a low level of engagement when they merely like a video; social media users oftentimes subconsciously click the 'like button' without necessarily reading a post. Facebook users, for example, have reportedly liked obituaries and other unpalatable posts to the chagrin of others. Users who share Adejoke ewaede's posts engage with the post to an extent. Though they may fail to comment on the video, the act of sharing a post has implications for the promotion of the uptake of the Yoruba language, particularly among speakers who are not adept in using the language and who regularly codeswitch from Yoruba to English. Meanwhile, over 28,000 viewers liked the video titled '*ori mi gbemi, ko ma pada leyin mi*' (this is a prayer for the creator's constant guidance).[27] Of the 7,280 who shared the video, only 1615 actively commented on it. This video is equally poetic and evocative. The percentage of users who actively engaged with the video is lower in comparison to the earlier mentioned video on gratitude. Perhaps, this is attributable to the differences in the themes of the video and/or users' disposition to it. As with other forms of communication, audience receptivity to a message hinges heavily not only on the content but on the mode of delivery. The audience had minimal engagement with her videos that employed heavy doses of proverbs. Many users were probably oblivious to the latent meaning of the proverbs. Let us assume there was shared meaning between the content creator and her audience, it could foster deeper levels of interaction with greater implications for the development of the Yoruba language. Out of all the sampled videos in this category, the one with the highest audience engagement (1,877 likes; 1,231 shares and 375 comments) is a prayer for a breakthrough in the eleventh month of the year. This is

26 Olumuyiwa Familusi. African culture and the status of women: The Yoruba example. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5 no1 (2012):299-313

27 Adejoke ewaede, *ori mi gbemi, ko ma pada leyin mi*'9th December 2023

followed by another video that records –1,883 shares, 1761 likes and 53 comments-- that video counsels on being selective in one's battles.

From all indications, Adéjọ́kẹ́ ẹwàèdè is a social media influencer who is making a tremendous impact on her generation. The proverbial nature of some of the sampled videos may, however, have been too complex for the audience, hence the low level of engagement in some of the videos. The complexity is probably a result of the content creator's background and deep interaction with eminent personalities grounded in Yoruba cosmology.

Figure 4. Image of Adejoke Ewaede in a traditional regalia

Conclusion

This paper focused on a female Yoruba social media content creator, Adéjọ́kẹ́ Ewàèdè (one who explores the beauty of language). It sought to identify the pattern of her Instagram and TikTok posts on Yoruba language and culture as a means of investigating how the advent of the digital space may be instrumental in providing a discursive platform for Yoruba women and changing the narrative in gender discourse. It went further to highlight the level of audience engagement with her posts as a means of determining their acceptability and impact metrics. To this end, it recognized changes in gender discourse as it relates to women's role in Yoruba society. In the precolonial Yoruba society, there was, to some extent, gender parity as evidenced by our women's long history in social mobilization and warlike roles. Contemporary discourse on Yoruba women has, however, depicted their roles as ancillary to those of men. This trend in women narrative, according to some scholars, is traceable to factors, such as the impact of colonialism in Southwestern Nigeria, the patriarchal nature of the society, and

male domination in mass media ownership. Others argue that though gender hierarchy in the Yoruba country may have largely been imported from the West, some of the oral tradition points to the existence of gender-based stereotypes. Yet, the new media offers immense opportunities for our women to break through the stereotypical divide and chart a new course.

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CONCLUSION: TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE AFRICAN VOICES IN COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

MANFRED ASUMAN, THEODORA DAME ADJIN-TETTEY AND MODESTUS FOSU

This book has presented an eclectic survey of what may be described as differentiated contemporary thinking and inclinations about development communication in the global south, focusing on Africa. The contributions and issues discussed cut across almost the entire African continent with diverse genre types, approaches, and theoretical and methodological sophistication reflecting the subtleties and complexities of the African experience. The book's uniqueness stems from the systematic concentration on some of the major issues facing contemporary Africa. This is indicated in the three broad thematic clusters of the contributions that characterize the book. The first cluster concerns healthcare and the tensions associated with it in Africa. The second cluster's eye-opening attempt to reconfigure scholarly conceptualizations for communication for social change across different genres strongly situates the issues within the African condition. The last group focuses on developmental issues of the continent from the perspective of community media. Collectively, these Chapters make a strong enough initial statement of the decolonial voice of this book indicating that the solution to Africa's development challenges resides in communicating the challenges through authentic African transformative narratives.

Therefore, this book, *Communication for Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies,* joins other recent African-focused efforts in the scholarship of communication such as Salawu et al's (Eds) (2023) *Indigenous Language for Development Communication in the Global South* and Mano and Milton's (Eds) (2022) *Routledge Handbook of Africa Media and Communication Studies* in championing African indigenous knowledge and the African presence in media and communication studies. Such books should serve as worthy study material in institutions of higher learning, and other intellectual spaces within the African society.

The book may be touted as panoramic given the geographical spread of authors and the settings of the content of the contributions, which is a major strength of the book because of its African spread and theoretical grounding. In the foreword to this book, Prof. Franz Kruger echoes Mano and Milton (2022) (mentioned earlier in this Conclusion) that African approaches should be centred within the global context of knowledge creation. Franz is convinced that this current collection has responded to calls for textbooks and other published material to bring an "African perspective to bear on the study of African communications."

However, we make haste to accept modestly that this book may not be adequately comprehensive to cover all the provocative, nagging, inspiring, and trending issues implicating the development of Africa, and which could be given vent and remedial and sustainable solutions through communication for social change. We acknowledge that there are more development-related issues that could be uniquely communicated in the African context using more

varied communication avenues. Germane issues such as computer-mediated communication, large language models, use and implications of artificial intelligence in communication practices and education, the adoption of African languages and African modes of communication into modern technology, and many other relevant areas remain to be explored.

Thus, the concluding part of the book serves to call for more similar work within development communication with a focus on communicating for social change and narrowing to those aspects, such as those mentioned above, that are not covered in this current book. As editors, we deem it necessary to produce a second volume to this current book to continue exploring ontological and epistemological perspectives from the Global South, especially Africa, on the gaps identified. This should provide more insight into the field that should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the Africa-focused development and communication issues covered in this book.

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Theory on Demand #55

Communication and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies
Editors: Manfred A. K. Asuman, Theodora Dame Adjin-Tettey and Modestus Fosu

This book invites you to join leading Africa-focused scholars in a conversation that vividly highlights the intricate relationship among communication, media, culture and social change. *Communication and Social Change in Africa: Selected Case Studies* provides a timely and thought-provoking exploration of diverse and unique understandings in the way communication, in its vast and varied manifestations, is reshaping the continent's future. Collectively touching base with almost every part of Africa, the book demonstrates a firsthand and grassroots understanding of the continent. The thirteen case studies in the book from across the continent illuminate the challenges, opportunities, and successes of communication-driven narratives, offering valuable lessons for scholars, policymakers and practitioners.

It goes without saying that this book is ideal for students, researchers and everyone interested in appreciating Africa and its cultural and developmental dynamics, which have been presented from different cultural and stylistic perspectives. While sufficient in its coverage to provide decent insights into the transformative power of communication in African societies, this book would undoubtedly provoke the reader's curiosity and anticipation for a follow-up to this volume for more width and depth about the continent through communication and social change in Africa.

Printed on demand
ISBN: 9789083412542

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