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Is Media Assistance Obsolete? A Practice-Based Perspective on the Potential for Digital Technologies to Achieve Media Development Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Is Media Assistance obsolete?

**A practice-based perspective on the potential for
digital technologies to achieve media development
goals in Sub-Saharan Africa**

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ABSTRACT

The area of media assistance is not a widely known part of the Development Aid sector, even though it has been in existence since after World War II and has grown significantly since then as part of the development agenda. Media Assistance has been included in the strategies of Western and non-Western donors as part of their overseas Aid programmes in many regions, supporting journalism and media with the objectives of contributing to accountability, transparency, governance and ultimately, democracy. This thesis examines the impact on the Media Assistance sector of the arrival of digital technologies into the ‘information ecosystems’ in which it operates. Whereas historically in Media Assistance, broadcast media and the press have been the preferred (or available) media for achieving development objectives, digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media are radically altering the landscape of Media Assistance. In Africa, where mobile phones are heralded as a “gift to development”, donors have been exploring the potential of these tools to achieve their development objective. As a consequence, the area of ICTs for Development (ICT4D) has flourished. At a time when the narrative in the western media has been of an “Africa Rising” and of techno-determinism, this research asks whether these digital technologies are indeed being used to achieve Media Assistance objectives in practice. If they are being integrated into media development programmes – or even replacing media development programmes - to what level of success? To answer this question, the thesis focuses on two countries in East Africa – Kenya and Tanzania – and interviews 40 stakeholders working in media assistance in these countries. The research finds that in fact many projects continue to use traditional methods. This is due to issues such as the digital divide, technical literacy, and continuing preference for traditional media by wider populations in these countries. Furthermore, the study notes that the virtual public sphere facilitated by the internet is not accessible to all, nor is it an ideal public sphere. Finally, citizens of these countries, the research finds, do not necessarily use these technologies for participation or accountability ends. Thus, despite widespread diffusion of technologies such as mobile phones in both these countries, there is still an important role for traditional media development approaches to achieve donor objectives in the new information ecosystem.

DECLARATION PAGE

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for graduate study by research of the Technological University Dublin and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the guidelines for ethics in research of TU Dublin.

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

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Thanks also to my family, in particular my three young children, who have wondered with curiosity what a research PhD is all about and who may one day even pick it up, if even for a brief flick through, to understand what their mother was doing during all that time.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C4D	Communication for Development
M4D	Media for Development
MAO	Media Assistance Organisation
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information Communication Technology for Development
USAID	United State Overseas Aid Development
DFID	Department Foreign International Development (UK)
NORAD	Norwegian Overseas Aid Department
CIMA	Center for International Media Assistance
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
UNESCO	United National Education Science Cultural Organisation
KMP	Kenya Media Programme
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It is no exaggeration to say that the world of media has changed dramatically in the past two decades. Technology has changed how people consume and interact with media. Innovations in communications technology have changed the way in which information is produced and shared. Where once the audience passively listened or watched news, today end users – the audience – now create media, comment, participate, interact, discard. Academic debates talk of a communications revolution that has changed human relationships, “between individuals, between government and citizens and even between states” (Voldtmer and Sorensen, 2016:19).

This thesis is an investigation into the field of media assistance in two Sub-Saharan countries and the possible impact these changes in media technologies have had on this sector. Media assistance, as will be explained in more detail below, focuses on supporting media institutions and media systems, journalists and media organisation so that they can better fulfil their democratic role as the fourth estate, as public sphere and a watchdog on power.

The central question of this thesis asks:

RQ1: is media assistance still relevant given the digital transformation in the media and communications environment?

How have digital technologies impacted on media assistance in practice? Has this communications revolution rendered media assistance obsolete? And what is the

potential for digital technology to achieve the goals and objectives of donors of media assistance?

In order to answer these broad aims, this thesis puts forward the following research sub-questions:

RQ1a. What is Media Assistance and how does it relate to the policy aims of its donors?

RQ1b. What are media assistance donor goals and what are the methods by which the sector addresses these objectives?

RQ1c. Is there evidence to show that media makes a positive contribution to donor goals?

The Media Assistance sector is a little-known part of the international aid sector and is founded on certain assumptions about media's positive role in society and democracy. Also known as 'Media Development', Kumar describes it as "assistance designed to promote robust, independent media" and adds that "such assistance is based on an underlying assumption that independent media contributes to the building of democracy and economic development" (Kumar, 2006:1).

This thesis provides a critical introduction to these assumptions and gives a history of the sector in order to contextualise the issues raised. Often, these goals have centred on improving standards of journalism and building capacity in media systems with the aim of strengthening democratic institutions. This is pertinent because if media assistance projects have been successful to date, then it will be of further interest whether digital technologies can do any better to achieve the same goals. Therefore,

the thesis includes an historical evaluation of whether media development has been successful in its goals. The research also looks at the methods the sector uses in projects to address these objectives.

Related to media's link to democracy are theories that explore media's relationship to development, and these will also be examined. The research contextualises media assistance within the larger Aid/Development industry as it is situated in this industry and funded by the international aid donors to achieve certain objectives. Who these donors are and what their objectives are will be examined as they have been the main driver for media development in the past decades.

There is considerable debate amongst international actors, and academia, on how ICTs and digital media might contribute to democracy and development. For instance, there are optimistic (some might say utopian) views of what ICTs can do for development goals such as freedom of expression and participation. The thesis therefore investigates the literature on whether ICTs and digital media impact positively on democracy and whether they can replace the role of traditional media and journalism in media development practice. Thus, their potential contribution for achieving donor objectives will be assessed. So, the thesis also examines:

RQ1d. How do digital technologies (or ICTs) relate to development? Furthermore, what is the relationship between ICT in Development and Media Development (or Media Assistance)?

As the research is focused on the Sub-Saharan African countries of Kenya and Tanzania, the thesis looks at the current state of journalism and media in these countries and the political economy of the media systems there. To address whether media assistance is still relevant in these two profile countries, the thesis queries:

RQ2. Have digital technologies impacted on the relevance of media assistance in the chosen case study countries?

In order to answer this, this thesis puts forward the following research sub-questions:

RQ2a. What are the characteristics of the current media and information environment in the selected case studies of Kenya and Tanzania?

This will give a picture of what the weaknesses of the media systems are and audience needs in these countries. The research can then assess whether digital media can better address the needs of Kenya and Tanzania's media systems in media assistance interventions. To do this it looks at:

RQ2b. What are the characteristics of current media development practice in a modern East African context?

RQ2c. Have ICTs impacted on the practice of media assistance in the chosen case studies?

This question reviews current projects undertaken in the region and through primary research with those working directly in the practice of media development assesses the potential of digital technologies to address both individual project and broader development goals.

Through the primary research, the thesis examines the extent to which media development organisations have adopted a digital agenda on the ground in Kenya and Tanzania, the reasons underpinning such adoption and with what effect.

In so doing, the research examines:

- The nature of media assistance projects taking place in Kenya and Tanzania
- Whether digital technologies are being used to address project goals

This will help address the question of what the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies are compared to traditional media development approaches for achieving donor goals. It will therefore address:

RQ2d. What is the rationale for a continuing emphasis on traditional media methods?

As noted, the arrival of new media or digital media has changed the dynamic of the relationship between media and development, and subsequently the landscape for the media development sector. It has been called transformative for consumers but it has also altered the ways media businesses are run and even threatens their existence. The internet has impacted on the traditional media economic model and many well-known media outlets, especially newspapers, have closed. Many are struggling with finding successful business models for the digital age, both in Africa and elsewhere.

As the old revenue model comes under pressure, journalism standards have suffered in some places, with an emphasis on the bottom line and survival rather than support for balanced coverage and good investigative journalism. The new economic model has also meant a decline in the number of journalists employed. At the same time, citizen journalism and user generated content (UGC) means readers can get different sides to a story. Digital technologies have disrupted the news space and media has become more fractured as a result of the explosion of choices available to media consumers.

This research examines whether these technological changes have affected the role of media assistance, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. It asks whether new digital

technologies have the potential to achieve media assistance goals such as transparency and accountability and good governance. If so, does it render traditional media development approaches redundant?

The research adopts a practice-based perspective and therefore investigates whether media development NGOs in Kenya and Tanzania are changing the structure and form of the projects on the ground as a result of the growth in these technologies. The thesis garners the views of those working directly on the ground as to the potential of digital technologies for their project goals. If digital technologies can better address the needs of the media systems and audiences, it will be reflected in these projects which are trying to strengthen and bolster the media sector and media environment in the respective target countries.

In answering the above questions, the research will critically examine the broader field of media development and assistance, identify changes and tensions experienced in the sector and the trends likely to affect it in the future. As such, it contributes new knowledge to the study of transformations within the international media landscape brought about by digitalisation and how this has impacted on the field of media development.

First, however, the thesis offers a clarification of the meaning of media development as deployed in this thesis.

What is Media Development?

The discipline of media assistance (also known as media development, and used interchangeably) is a complex and not widely understood area of international aid and

the first priority is to clarify it here. ‘Media development’¹ is a part of the international aid sector that focuses on using media to improve the quality and availability of information to audiences and citizens in developing and transitional countries. The field of ‘media development’ aims to improve the quality of news and content and news delivery to citizens, by supporting free and independent media, and enhancing media systems.

The importance of a free media in supporting democratic development is often acknowledged both in academic literature and in the policy statements of development agencies (Norris and et al, 2010; DFID, 2008). There is wide-ranging consensus around the idea that the evolution of a free and plural media is essential for holding government to account and enabling an informed citizenry (Islam, 2006; Norris, 2006). This relationship between media and democracy will be examined further in later chapters as it is the basis for much media development work.

For the purpose of this research, ‘Media Development’ is understood as a sub-division of the international Aid industry which focuses on media and journalism as a catalyst for development objectives.

According to the Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) website, the term media development refers to “evolution and change in the fields of news media and communications. Such change relates to a range of institutions, practices, and behaviours including the rule of law, freedoms of expression and press, education systems for journalists, business environments, capacities of journalists and managers,

¹ Inverted commas are used to here to differentiate Media Development, as a division within the overseas aid sector and an industry in itself, from media development which could be just understood as development of media over time.

as well as support for a diversity of views in society” (“What is Media Development?,” n.d.).

So, in this research, media development is understood as the collective term given to activities that are undertaken to strengthen journalism, media systems and enhance the public sphere in developing and transitional societies. These activities are meant to be catalysts for this change. And very often with the intention that it will contribute to a strengthening of democracy.

As such, media development activities can include improving the capacity or skills of media outlets, training of journalists, creating networks for the support of journalists, revising or refreshing journalism education in third-level institutions, and providing equipment for better quality reporting. Larger and more ambitious projects can involve transforming previous state broadcasters to a public service model.

The organisations within this sector who implement these media development projects on behalf of the funders or sponsors are called Media Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or are also referred to as Media Assistance Organisations (MAOs) (Drefs and Thomas, 2015)

The major donors in international media assistance include both governmental overseas aid departments and also the multi-lateral agencies such as the United Nations. The largest funders are the United States government overseas aid programme (USAID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the European Union, through agencies such as European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the European Endowment for Democracy. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Global Affairs Canada, the Government of Norway (NORAD), Japan

International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) are also considerable donors (Angaya Juma and Myers, 2018; Kalathil, 2017; Kalathil and Cauhape-Cazaux, 2015).

Multi-lateral organisations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNDP and UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are also significant contributors.

In addition to these governmental agencies, media assistance is also supported by a large group of foundations and philanthropic organisations. These include the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation, the Mac Arthur Foundation, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations.

More recent private donors include Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Jigsaw (formerly Google Ideas), Knight Foundation, Omidyar Network (eBays Pierre Omidyar) and the Skoll Foundation (eBays Jeff Skoll) who emanate from Silicon Valley.

It has been suggested that philanthropists who come from the world of digital technology have sought to create new models of philanthropy that emphasise the roles and principles of digital media. Anne Nelson claims “vast new fortunes have been made in the field over the past decade, and some of these are now creating new models of philanthropy that display a keen interest in the role of digital media in the world” (Nelson, 2012). This may impact on the tools being prioritised in development projects and this is the subject of later discussion. As Nelson argues “the Gates

Foundation may not have invented “media for development,” but in recent years it has undoubtedly helped to set the agenda” (Nelson, 2012).

Different generations of donors also correspond to different eras of regional emphasis. In the post-war period, the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation played a central role in the creation of the Marshall Plan (1948-1952) to rebuild European economies and institutions, including the news media. In the aftermath of the 1989 collapse of the Soviet Union, the Open Society Institute and other foundations contributed substantial funds into an effort to help the former Soviet bloc countries transition to a democratic free-market system (Nelson, 2012).

In terms of geography, the new generation of tech-based foundations devotes most of its international attention to Africa and India. Interestingly, both regions are also considered among the most dynamic markets for digital media, which makes them “fertile ground for experimentation in media and development” (Nelson, 2012).

So, whereas historically media assistance efforts and interventions have focused on traditional print and broadcast media, more recently digital technology has gained more attention as tools in development projects.

Media development vs. Media for development

In addition to its low profile within the aid sector, media development is often confused with ‘media for development’, otherwise known as ‘Communication for development’ (C4D). The distinction is qualified here. As noted by Cauhaoe-Cazaux and Kalathil (2015), ‘media for development’ is

the employment of media and communication in order to promote or facilitate development goals, for example, when media is used to organize health campaigns or to promote human rights. In these cases, media is more an instrument than a target

But with *Media development* projects they stress: “The main purpose of these projects or programs is to strengthen the quality, sustainability, and/or independence of the news media. Media organizations are the main “direct” beneficiaries of these projects and frequently the counterparts” (Kalathil and Cauhape-Cazaux, 2015: 7-8).

Scott (2014) refers to media development as “donor-led initiatives designed to develop the media sector within a specific country or region. ... these include efforts aimed at promoting independence, plurality, professionalism, capacity, an enabling environment, economic sustainability and media literacy” (Scott, 2014: 4). He argues that the distinction between media development and M4D projects is that the focus in media development is on developing the media, rather than using the media as “a mechanism for achieving other development outcomes”. Or as Geertsema-Sligh notes “in media development, the focus is on the development of the media themselves, and not on the message communicated through the media” (Geertsema-Sligh, 2019: 2439).

Scott also explains that with media development activities, the media are understood as “more an institution, acting upon and in concert with many institutions in society.... Media are implicated, not necessary in individual behaviour change of collective empowerment but in aspects of democracy, good governance and economic growth” (Scott, 2014:6).

‘Media *for* Development’ or Communication for Development (C4D) is using media as an outlet to broadcast, transmit and communicate information to individuals in the

developing world which will be of benefit in their lives or increase knowledge of their rights. Very often this is done in the form of radio or TV programmes, often soap operas and dramas, but can also take the form of direct educational shows or humanitarian programming.

Of note is that many of the radio and TV programmes produced as content during media development projects have become very popular, winning large audiences and local media awards. The BBC Media Action hospital soap opera “Taste of Life” TV programme in Cambodia was set in a nursing college and tried to change attitudes and behaviour around HIV and AIDS. It was broadcast twice a week on the country's most watched station, TV5 and the state broadcaster, TVK. Another TV soap opera, “Jasoos Vijay” set at the same time in India, was also an award-winning thriller series about an HIV-positive detective. The programme communicated key messages about HIV and AIDS and in the last series, it reached more than 70 million people across India.

With C4D or M4D approaches, the media are seen as instruments for changing individual norms and behaviours. The defining features of M4D interventions are that they use mass media, in particular radio, for information provision and are used for cultivating attitudes. This approach has been characterised by a narrow definition of development associated with behaviour change rather than “broader social change involving tackling social structures and the root causes of poverty” (Manyozo, 2012: 110).

Interestingly, it is estimated that USAID spends four times more on C4D-related projects than it does on media development (Cary and D’Amour, 2013).

Origins of the Sector

Despite much focus in the literature relating to media aid being on the post-Cold War period, the origins of international media assistance can be traced back earlier to Europe during the post-World War II years. Media Development, as a concept, first took shape during this period.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the U.S. government joined forces with European agencies in the reconstruction of Europe. Their reconstruction plan included efforts to re-establish a viable news media following the defeat of Nazism (Glossner, 2010; Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008; Kaplan, 2012).

One of the immediate priorities for the Allies after 1945 was to break up the existing Nazi structures. Radio was targeted in particular, because it had been used as a propaganda tool during the Third Reich. The Allies were keen to re-establish radio as independent from the state, to act as a critical voice and to try to prevent extremism ever taking hold again.

Khabyuk and Kops (2010) noted how public service broadcasting was strongly promoted in Germany by the Allies against “undemocratic political influences in the media.. in the democratic Germany that they wanted to install”. The authors suggest that Germans were lucky to be forced to accept a broadcasting concept that, in retrospect has been a central factor in the stability of post-war Germany (Khabyuk and Kops, 2011:128).

The Allies wanted the German public broadcaster to represent the whole of society and reflect a range of views and political opinions. In West Germany, public service broadcasting was based on French, British and American models, notably the BBC. Local journalists were trained in Western news practices, “objective reporting .. its

respect for the truth, and its high journalistic standard” (Nelson, 2012). Independence from the state and political objectivity were of central importance and remain the hallmark of public service broadcasting in Germany (Kaase, 2000).

The idea of political re-education after the period of totalitarian Nazi rule was a core element in the Allied restructuring of Germany, and thus the mass media played a large role in their plans. In his book, *The History of U.S. Information Control in Post-War Germany*, Warkentin (2016) described how the US occupation forces established new media outlets “to attempt the mass re-education of an entire nation” (Warkentin, 2016:xii) .

According to Kaplan, this resulted in a more diverse media:

The machinery of fascist propaganda was dismantled, and new broadcast media were instructed in independent news production. Newspapers were created with mixed editorial boards, free of party control. These efforts were especially effective in Germany, where a vibrant and politically diverse media culture flowered within a decade of the Nazis’ defeat (Kaplan, 2012:12).

Post-war Germany is a notable case in the study of media development and provides a template for future media development and its link to democratic reform. Nelson noted that “within a decade, the West German news media was noted for both quantity and quality, and the United States discovered media development as a tool for democratization” (Nelson, 2012). Independent media was thus understood as integral tool for the promotion of democracy.

Tellingly, media development work was later to be compared to a “Marshall Plan of the Mind”. The European recovery plan funded by the Allies after World War II was

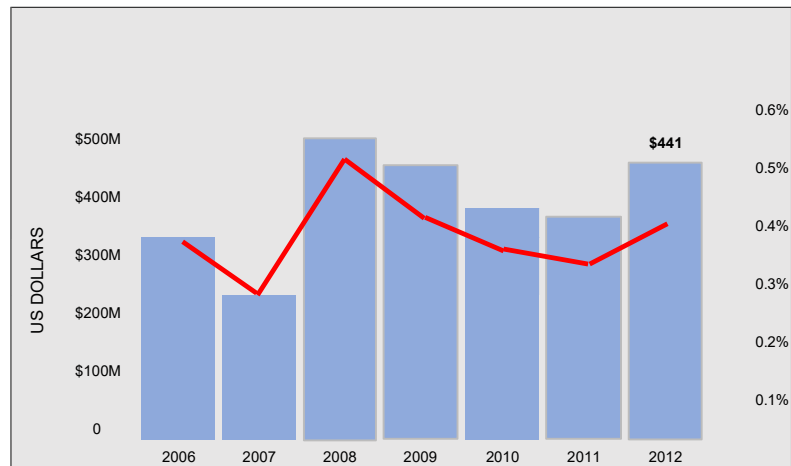
called ‘The Marshall Plan’ after General George Marshall. Whilst its primary aim was to get the economies of Europe back on their feet again, its secondary aim was to protect against the spread of communism (Cox and Kennedy-Pipe, 2005).

In 1992, the BBC World Service established a department to undertake training of journalists in the former Soviet Union and called it ‘BBC Marshall Plan of the Mind Trust’ (MPM) (later called BBC Media Action). In naming the BBC unit after the Marshall plan, there was recognition that media could be another tool for reconstruction toward democracy, the free market, and protection against other regimes (Gerrish, 2014). And it is for this reason that international donors have been funding media assistance activities for decades.

Funding for media development

And so, in the past half century, development donors and agencies and private foundations have engaged in activities designed to influence the form, structure, and practices of media in countries around the world for their development goals. What is the scale of this investment?

Cauhapé-Cazaux and Kalathil (2015) found that Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from OECD countries devoted to media support (averaged over the period from 2006 to 2012) show an annual disbursement of U.S. \$377 million. In 2012, the disbursements were close to U.S. \$441 million, representing 0.40% of total sector allocable ODA. These figures are for total media support; support for media development (mainly independent media) represents a smaller percentage (Kalathil and Cauhape-Cazaux, 2015).



Source: OECD-DAC database: 2012 ODA disbursements in constant prices².

Figure 1: ODA allocated to media support in USD million (2006–2012) and percentage of total sector allocable ODA

Of note is that the biggest providers of development cooperation for media assistance were the United States, Germany, Japan, Sweden, and the EU institutions. In 2015, for instance, the US contributed \$65million for media development activities (Kalathil, 2017).

While supporting media, not all the donors have the same priorities and do not follow the same strategies. A detailed analysis of the type of project supported reveals a difference among the donor priorities. Japan gives media infrastructure priority, while Germany has invested strongly in public diplomacy. In the area of media

² These results are based on the estimation that all ODA allocated under the CRS purpose codes “media and free flow of information” (15153) and “Radio, television and print media” (22030) have to be considered media support.

development support, the United States provides the most aid by far (Kalathil and Cauhape-Cazaux, 2015).

However, these are not the only donors and in some African countries for instance, they are definitely not the dominant ones. The Scandinavian countries, Denmark, and the Netherlands are very much involved in media development and have a different approach to democracy and media assistance. These donors have different media systems in their home countries, with European countries more aligned to the public service broadcasting model than the US.

Myers notes that most of the Western European donors have “well-articulated, rights-based justifications for supporting media development” (Myers, 2009:9).

Certainly though, with reference to dollars contributed, the USA is by far the biggest donor historically and that is why much of the literature on media development and assistance refers to its policies. Kaplan (2012) found that the United States was the largest national source of funding for media development, at 46 percent of the total (Kaplan, 2012) and the model it promotes in its media assistance programmes is the liberal free market model of the press.

Rationale for Media Development

As noted, media development activities, as this thesis understands the term, first appeared in the aftermath of World War II and were enlisted to help improve media systems and standards of journalism as countries moved towards democracy, or away from autocracy. As Kumar alluded to earlier, donors hoped that by fulfilling the role of Fourth Estate and providing a forum for public discussion, independent media and journalism would contribute to democracy.

Media assistance efforts would create media that “when allowed financial and editorial independence”, would hold state authorities accountable and nurture democracy by encouraging an “open but respectful exchange of ideas and opinions” (Kumar, 2006:1).

This is highlighted by the fact that most media development projects have historically been funded under the democracy programmes of the international and bi-lateral donors. Media development is expected to produce better journalists, better media organisations, and better media systems. And these media systems are designed to produce, or at least contribute to, the development of democracy.

Academic and policy research has recognised the role independent media plays in the process of improving democratic governance. For example, after evaluating decades of data on press freedom and political development, Karlekar and Becker (2014) found that a healthy press sector is highly correlated with broader political freedoms. Taking a closer look at countries that experienced sharp increases or decreases in political freedom, the researchers found that press freedom is often a lead indicator for the direction a country’s political system is headed; it usually indicates an acceptance of other individual freedoms also (Karlekar and Becker, 2014).

Evidence as to the potential benefits of media development programmes is varied but media freedom is often seen as central to transparent governing. For instance, Amartya Sen, the Economics Nobel Laureate, said: "There has never been a famine in any country that has been a democracy with a relatively free press. I know of no exception" (Sen, 2011:343). He held that famines can only occur if nobody is allowed to criticise policy decisions, government action, inaction or corrupt practices that lead to crop failures and food shortages.

Stromberg found that better informed citizens are more likely to vote, which in turn encourages politicians to be responsive (Strömberg, 2004). And Besley and Burgess found that having an informed and politically active electorate strengthens incentives for government responsiveness (Besley and Burgess, 2001).

In research by Internews, an American media NGO, it was found that countries with a “free press”³ are less dependent on foreign aid, provide a better environment for businesses and are more likely to be democratic and have much stronger democracies overall, than countries without a free press. The research claims that broad-based economic growth and political stability seem to be strongly connected to the presence of a free and independent press (Susman-Peña, 2012).

Norris’s (2006) well-known study explored the role of the free press in strengthening good governance, democracy and human development. She found that freedom of the press contributes positively towards democratic governance. She argues that the news media is most effective in strengthening the process of democratisation, good governance, and human development where “journalists function as watch-dog over the abuse of power (promoting accountability and transparency), as a civic forum for political debate (facilitating informed electoral choices), and as an agenda-setter for policymakers (strengthening government responsiveness to social problems)” (Norris, 2006:4).

Norris’ study focused in particular on how a free press and independent media can strengthen the public sphere, by mediating between citizens and the state, facilitating

³ A measure on the Press Freedom Index produced annually by Freedom House, an US based NGO that conducts research and advocacy into democracy, political freedoms and human rights.

debate about the major issues of the day, and informing the public about political issues and government actions.

UK academic James Curran (2002) agreed that independent media not only provides a channel of communication between government and governed but that “above all the media provide a forum for debate in which people can identify problems, propose solutions, reach agreement and guide the public direction of society” (Curran, 2002:225).

According to the US Department of State, democracy depends upon a knowledgeable citizenry whose access to information enables it to “participate as fully as possible in the public life of society and to criticise unwise or oppressive government officials or policies” (Cincotta, 2013:6).

Gunther and Mughan (2000) have called mass media the “connective tissue of democracy” and Linz (1975) listed freedoms of association, information, and communication as essential components of democracy (Gunther and Mughan, 2000; Linz, 1975).

Studies such as these highlight how independent media might play an important role in democracy, facilitating debate, improving governance and reducing corruption, in turn increasing economic efficiency and stability.

Consequently, justifications for media development, or media assistance, as part of their aid spending are usually expressed by donors in terms of promoting these goals - accountability, good governance, citizen participation - in developing and transitional countries.

As former World Bank president James Wolfensohn claimed, “to reduce poverty, we must liberate access to information and improve the quality of information. People with more information are empowered to make better choices” (World Bank Institute 2002:14).

In supporting these projects, media assistance donors believe that media will play an important monitoring role in a democracy that enables citizens to hold their governments and elected officials accountable (Juma and Myers, 2018). Figure 2 outlines this Media development Theory of Change as deployed in this thesis.

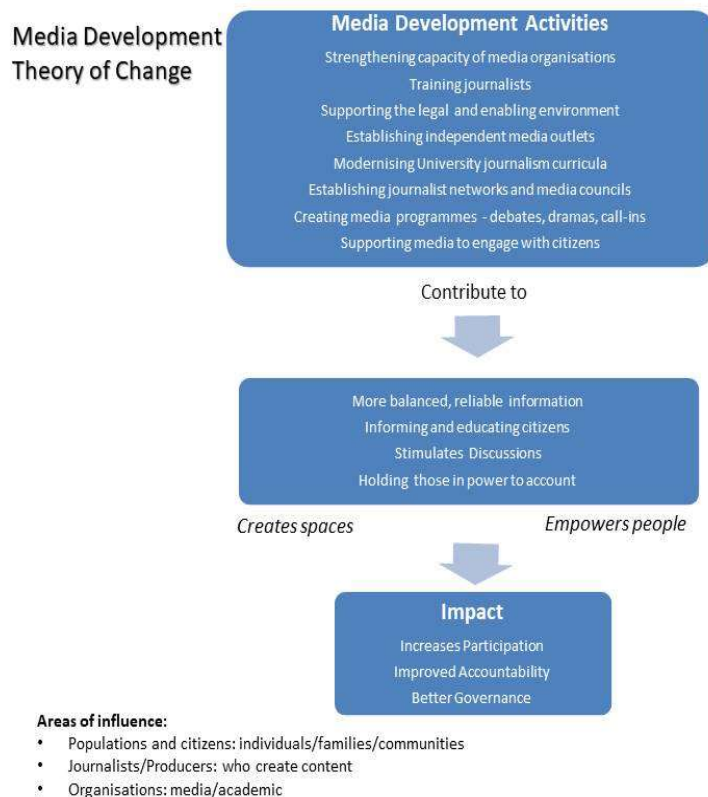


Figure 2. Media Development Theory of Change

The model suggests that media assistance methods and activities, such as those outlined here, will contribute to a stronger media sector, a strengthened fourth estate and an enhanced public sphere. These in turn contribute to more reliable information being available for citizens, further educating them about issues relevant to them and stimulating discussion which can empower citizens to hold those in power to account. This process will in theory result in increased participation in public life, improved accountability and thus better governance.

As noted by Von Kaltenborn-Stachau, “media can play a powerful role in shaping and influencing public debate and opinion. By giving a voice to the otherwise voiceless, media brings marginalized actors into the public sphere and allows them to influence the public debate and to pressure policymakers to act” (Von Kaltenborn-Stachau, 2008:21).

Scavo and Snow argue “where citizens feel that they have the right, the opportunity and the mechanisms to demand action or justification, they are empowered as active participants in the decisions that affect their lives” (Scavo and Snow, 2016:47). A functioning, independent media assists these goals in that it provides information, stimulates discussion and enables people to interact directly with decision-makers.

On balance, there are those who question whether media development projects do in fact result in better journalists and media systems (Coman, 2000; Gross, 2003; Ognianova, 1995). And a number of scholars have criticised the hidden agendas of Western media assistance funders. They argue that the activities of ‘democracy promoting’ organisations are usually strongly tied to the interests of capitalism and/or US geo-strategic ambitions (Gills, 2000; Saltman, 2006; Taylor, 2002 in Barker, 2008).

Barker noted how democracy has become a ‘legitimising force’ for American foreign policy “helping fuel the myth that America is a benign and democratic leader of international affairs”. He argues that American or British foreign policy protects the interests of powerful elites who want to protect the status quo at home and expand their (profitable) interests overseas (Barker, 2008:1).

Furthermore, he contended that ‘countries of greater geostrategic value seemed to need more “democratisation, for example, both Afghanistan and Iraq have roughly the same population but ‘oil rich Iraq received 20 times more American media development assistance per year than war-ravaged Afghanistan, one of the poorest nations on earth” (Barker, 2008:15).

These concerns over media development in the context of democracy promotion will be addressed later with regards to the evaluation of media development interventions and their impact, in particular with regards to the media systems of the post-Soviet States.

Evolution of Media Assistance

Although the template was set during the post-War period, it was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Communist regimes of the Soviet Bloc in the immediate aftermath that was the more significant moment in the history of the sector.

With the huge political changes following the collapse of communism, and the disruption to the flow of financial support from USSR, there was a transformation of media systems in many regions (Kumar, 2006). The trend for many countries was the shift from government control to private ownership. Media change often happened hand in hand with social and political change. In post-communist Eastern Europe, for

example, media freedom was often “the first sign that the old communist system was truly dead and a new, free system had begun” (May and Milton, 2005: 140)

It was in this context that media development gained traction, as western donors saw it as a cornerstone to their liberalisation policies. Their objective was to promote democracy and open up new markets.

Early media development projects tended to be solely training for journalists, for example, in post-communist Europe and Russia. As the sector grew with more funding from international donors, the projects became more multi-faceted and had more elements in addition to training. They might then include the production of news programmes or reviewing the local journalists’ code of practice or updating the curricula of local university journalism faculties.

Working with the regulatory environment within programme countries also became a large part of the media development projects when it became obvious that training journalists would be futile if the media was not permitted to carry out its role properly. So projects started working towards encouraging the right “enabling environment” (Price and Krug, 2002) - that is, media-specific laws, policies and institutional structures which support free and independent media.

As noted, media is frequently discussed in the context of its vital contribution to public debate, the public sphere, and democracy. But the media does not and cannot operate successfully without the other institutions of a democracy functioning properly. In their 2002 study on the ‘enabling environment’, Price and Krug questioned what the political and cultural conditions are that make laws effective and useful in achieving a media structure that serves to bolster democratic institutions.

They looked at considerations such as the separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, and establishment of reliable regulatory bodies. They called these the broader set of enabling factors for the media. Larger societal issues such as the state of the economy, the extent of demand for information, and the extent of ethnic and political pluralism are also contributing factors to whether an environment can support media freedom.

Price and Krug concluded that although free and independent media may organically arise in a mature democracy, artificial steps are necessary in many transition contexts. They argued that shaping a functioning democratic society required many stages and that the formation of media law and institutions is one of the most vital (Price and Krug, 2002).

Price and Krug warned that whilst laws that support independent media are necessary for the development of civil society, they alone do not guarantee how media will function. For free and independent media to work, the community in question must also value the role that the media play. They claimed:

Taking laws off the shelf of another society and plugging them into the processes of transition will certainly, alone, be insufficient. The public acts of drafting and debating media laws can be enacted as a drama, a teaching drama that educates the citizenry in the role that the media can play. The process might encourage a rise in consciousness about the value and functioning of free speech and its operation in the society (Price and Krug, 2006: 97).

The authors concluded: “Reform is most effective, or perhaps only effective, when it includes efforts to develop a public culture that is supportive of the media sector” (Price and Krug, 2006).

This is important here because media development projects often try to establish and support independent media outlets but sometimes this is done in environment that may not be conducive to its long-term survival. Programmes that focus on supporting an independent media sector must take into account the economic and legal realities of the media environment. Regardless of the number of journalistic support programmes, a low functioning economy and a weak advertising market provide little revenue for independent media operators. Thus, media development programmes have increasingly focused on the business side of news media outlets including personnel and financial management as well as marketing and audience research skills in order to strengthen media outlets’ capacity to sustain themselves.

A regulatory structure that is supportive of freedom of speech and independence of media is also desired. Thus, donors also support programmes that focus on the media-enabling infrastructure such as revising existing laws, training lawyers, judges and legislators in media law, assisting advocates for media freedom, and providing training in international laws and standards.

So, although media development projects may have started out as relatively straightforward journalism training programmes, very few projects in the current day focus solely on training media professionals and setting up new media outlets; they now aim to provide support for the wider media environment that includes media law reform, strengthening supporting institutions such as independent media councils and building a strong media infrastructure in a given country.

Another area of support has been for journalism education and curriculum revision in universities. Many journalism faculties in developing countries remain teaching the theory of journalism exclusively, while others teach only 'trade craft' without proper foundation in ethics and other studies (Hume et al., 2007). Often programmes merge the teaching of public relations with journalism, without the journalists' mission as independent watchdogs holding the powerful accountable. Media Assistance to universities aims to improve educational curriculum, improve technical capacities and enhance the expertise of the faculty.

Thus, as a result of increased donations and interest in the sector, media development projects have now morphed into large scale training and communication plans with budgets in the millions.

Furthermore, increasingly the lines are blurred between media development and media for development (M4D) where projects have training and capacity building activities combined with content development and production of programmes for development ends.

Media development projects can take the form of journalism training plans which include creating public broadcasting messages or news reports on important issues. Sometimes they provide life-saving information in emergency situations; say in a famine, or to improve various health issues, such as sexual and reproductive health, child and maternal health and preventing infectious diseases. Many of these projects contain training components, with journalists being trained in production and journalistic values in addition to producing content, very often with development messages.

What this means is that some projects now unconsciously merge ‘media development support’ and ‘media *for* development’ approaches. What has evolved in practice is that projects now often contain both elements. Scott (2014) calls these “media development hybrids”.

As Myers highlighted in a report for the Centre for International Media assistance:

With such a broad set of activities, it is almost impossible not to let the definition of “media development” spill over into the use of “media for development” and thence into the realm of communications for social or behavioral change—or using media for “intended outcomes.”

Take, for instance, a grant for a women journalist’s group, who run their own activities (such as annual general meetings, benevolent fund for members, internal capacity building) and who produce radio programmes aimed at educating market women about elections. This is a project that supports media as a sector in itself, and that supports media as a tool for education and development. These are the sorts of overlaps that make it difficult for donor organizations to categorize and quantify their media efforts (Myers, 2009:8).

Thus, these ‘media development hybrids’ make it difficult to define projects as solely M4D or media development. This is part of the change taking place within the sector as the data from this research will also reveal.

Therefore, although initially this thesis’ specific objective was to critically explore changes to media assistance due to digital technologies, it is more difficult to separate the two – ‘media development’ and ‘media for development’ - particularly in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where there has been more focus on M4D projects for food security, education and health objectives.

Warren Feek (2008) argues the distinction between the two areas is “false and distracting” and should be abandoned altogether. He argues that this adds unnecessary confusion and detracts from the status of the broader field of communication and media for development.

On the other hand, Jo Weir (in Alcorn et al., 2011) has argued that the distinction between the two terms is important and should be preserved stating that: “there is a huge difference between media development and media for development and those two terms are often confused.... It sometimes blurs the lines between journalism and advocacy” (Alcorn et al., 2011:12).

Regardless of this distinction, the model which is being promoted is the based on the western liberal model of journalism, and this itself is not without its own challenges or controversy.

Pressures on the Media Development Model

Traditionally in media assistance, western donors were promoting a media system based on their own media in their home country. For instance, during the 1990s US donors were proposing a liberal, free-market model to the post-Soviet States.

Due to the largely western origins of funding and technical support, numerous media development initiatives build on the western concepts of free press and democracy. As a result, media development activities “emphasise the universalisation and globalization of western experiences and approaches in deliberative democracy” (Manyozo, 2016:3).

This approach has been questioned by media scholar James Miller who noted “unprecedented international efforts to codify and inculcate Western-style news reporting and editing” in places quite different from American newsrooms and classrooms, with “nothing like the journalistic or political-cultural history of North America and Western Europe” (Miller, 2011:39).

Media scholars such as Hallin and Mancini (2004) and Curran and Park (2000) have debated the problem of the universal application of the Western model of journalism to other regions. And whether it is wise to try and transplant one model upon another has been treated with scepticism (LaMay, 2008).

Another reason to question the exportation of this model is that the traditional business model in newspapers and broadcasting in the West no longer seems to be working. In recent years there has been a crisis in the western media model, due to falling advertising revenues, a failing business model and competition from alternative news sources. Many western countries’ news industries have suffered at the hands of harsh economic conditions and technological disruption. Western news agencies that only recently “set the global agenda are now struggling to survive under hostile market conditions” (Nelson, 2013: 32).

U.S. networks have closed many of their foreign bureaus and global broadcasters such as CNN and the BBC are cutting staff and international reporting. International broadcasters, including the Voice of America, the BBC World Service, and Deutsche Welle, are “under increased pressure to defend their services” (Nelson, 2013:32).

In this environment, other governments have been expanding their media outside their borders. For instance, China is making increasingly large contributions to media in Africa in recent years. Central China Television (CCTV) opened its third international

bureau in 2012 in Nairobi, with programming in English, Chinese, and Swahili and oversees dozen bureaus across the region. The Xinhua news agency has 28 bureaus on the African continent as of 2018 and in 2012 launched a China African news service (McKenize, 2012).

Admittedly, both China and the USSR were involved in media development since before the fall of the Berlin Wall. For instance, China has been engaged with media support in some African nations since the 1950s (Wu, 2012) and the USSR gave massive amounts of aid for several decades during the Cold War (some \$26 billion in 1986 alone).

But Russia and China's activities in the international media sector are now growing again and this presents a challenge to the traditional media development model. As noted by Satter:

The push by Russia to influence the media among its near neighbors poses a major challenge to the international media development community, which over the past two decades has spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to help build sustainable and independent media institutions in the former Soviet space (Satter, 2014:5).

The narrative is changing from the dominance of the west, and Western donors insistence on linking development aid with democratic developments (Street et al., 2012).

To give some further context to media development in the current day, it should be noted that there is also a decline in support for western liberal democracy itself. Having been heralded as “the triumph of the West, of the Western idea... evident first

of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism” (Fukuyama, 1989:1) there has been a democratic recession in recent years.

According to the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama, the fall of the Berlin wall signalled the ‘End of History’, as his famous work was titled. He claimed, somewhat optimistically, that western liberal democracy was the end point of humanity's sociocultural evolution and the final form of human government (Fukuyama, 1992).

Fukuyama wasn’t saying that history itself was finished but was referring to the growth of a kind of universal consensus on the justness or the rightness of the principles of liberal democracy. He noted also that liberal principles in economics – the “free market” – seemed to have spread and produced unprecedented levels of material prosperity (Fukuyama, 1992).

Samuel Huntington disagreed with this in his 1993 book *The Third Wave of Democratisation*, which noted the global trend that had seen more than 60 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa undergo some form of democratic transitions since Portugal's "Carnation Revolution" in 1974. He countered that the widespread Western belief in the universality of the West's values and political systems was naïve and that continued insistence on democratisation and such ‘universal’ norms would only antagonise other civilisations.

Huntington warned about the potentially disastrous effects of an arrogant democratic imperialism and insisted that promoting democracy and modernisation abroad ‘means more war, not less’ (Kurtz, 2002).

In reality, despite Fukayama's optimism for liberal democracy, since the fall of the Soviet Union the process of global democratisation has slowed down. Since then, the state of freedom has been situated somewhere between stagnation and decline. In 2019, Freedom in the World, an index of global freedoms, declined for the thirteenth consecutive year (Freedom House, 2019).

As Micheal Abramowitz, President of Freedom House wrote in his essay, *Democracy in Crisis*, 'political rights and civil liberties around the world deteriorated to their lowest point in more than a decade in 2017, extending a period characterized by emboldened autocrats, beleaguered democracies, and the United States' withdrawal from its leadership role in the global struggle for human freedom' (Abramowitz, 2018:1).

He added that even in the developed West, "the world's most powerful democracies are mired in seemingly intractable problems at home, including social and economic disparities, partisan fragmentation, terrorist attacks, and an influx of refugees that has strained alliances and increased fears of the "other" (ibid).

So, in the years since media assistance first emerged as a tool for democracy, democracy promotion has experienced a crisis of purpose. This is noted in the pushback from a number of non-democratic governments that are actively resisting democracy assistance and also in a "growing questioning by people in many parts of the world of the value and legitimacy of the concept of democracy promotion itself" (Carothers, 2008:133).

The efforts by the United States and its partners to impose a democratic transformation of Iraq and Afghanistan created questions over the legitimacy of Western democracy promotion. The status of the United States as a symbol of

democracy and human rights has been further damaged by the election of President Donald Trump.

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace argues that under President Trump, U.S. democracy has reached “its lowest ebb of at least the past forty years”. It laments that if the United States continues its present course, “it will end up stranded on the side-lines, or even on the wrong side, of the global democratic struggle, precisely at a time when that struggle is more acute than at any time in modern history” (Carothers and Brown, 2018)

Thus, democracy no longer enjoys an unchallenged place on the international scene as the only political system viewed as successful and credible. Larry Diamond calls it the “democratic recession” (Diamond, 2015:1).

So, although liberal theorists argue that media liberalisation usually results in democratisation, since the fall of the Soviet Union the process of global democratisation has seemingly slowed down, or in some cases has been reversed.

Freedom House⁴ noted, in its latest available data, that global press freedom fell to its lowest level in over 14 years in 2017 and only 13 percent of the world’s population enjoys a Free press—that is, 'a media environment where coverage of political news is robust, the safety of journalists is guaranteed, state intrusion in media affairs is minimal, and the press is not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures' (Freedom House, 2017:25).

⁴ Freedom House may be wedded to a specific notion of press freedom. For example Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman have criticized the organization for excessively criticizing states opposed to US interests while being unduly sympathetic to regimes supportive of US interests (Chomsky and Herman, 1994).

Paradoxically, this decline in press freedom has occurred against a backdrop of increasingly diverse news sources and platforms. Even though there has been exponential growth in mobile phones and internet connectivity across the world, “the creation of high quality, independent media is still a distant dream for most developing countries” (Nelson, 2014).

So, despite the optimism of the Western donors about what societal changes that their model of media liberalisation might bring for democracy and development, ‘thing haven’t come out as they should’ (Coman, 2000:50).

For instance, in Africa, media liberalisation often resulted in media ownership by a few powerful individuals, most often with political allegiances.

In this environment of increased pressure on the traditional journalism business model and from online news sources, there has been a collapse in trust in journalism itself. The Edelman Trust Barometer in 2017 found that trust in media has fallen ‘precipitously’ and is at an all-time low in 17 countries. The study found also that “trust has been so corroded that we now trust leaked information much more than traditional news sources; and algorithms over human editors” (Edelman, 2017:5). A report on the news business from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, based on data in 40 countries across six continents, found an increasing number of people saying they actively avoided the news – no less than 32% (Hölig and Hasebrink, 2018).

Foley noted, “what is now more apparent is that when we talk of democratic journalism, Western standards or the Anglo-Saxon model it is increasingly the case that no one knows what they mean anymore... The ideal, pushed mainly, but not

exclusively by US agencies, is in trouble itself because it hardly exists” (Foley, 2006: 9).

The trend of increasing “fake news” competing for audience attention should be noted also. Wardle and Derakhshan call this “information disorder” and argue that “contemporary social technology means that we are witnessing something new: information pollution at a global scale” (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017: 4). As McNair notes in his book *Fake News: Falsehood, Fabrication and Fantasy in Journalism*:

The capacity of the digitised, networked information space – what I refer to as the globalised public sphere – to disseminate news and information of all kinds... has coincided with a particular political moment where journalistic objectivity and professionalism are under challenge from state and non-state actors as never before (McNair, 2017: i).

These are some of the challenges that the media development sector has met in recent years in a fast-changing environment. As noted, sceptics question the media assistance model, or whether there is a model at all, and what the legacy of media assistance is (Fog, 2004; LaMay, 2008; Rhodes and Lange, 2007). The question arises again whether promoting this model in the developing world is the right way forward? This thesis questions whether it is still relevant in the current political and technological landscape.

New Technologies and Media Development

The introduction of new technologies to the media production cycle has also impacted the media development sector. Kaufman reports that the traditional focus on journalism training is at least partly being replaced by an increasing focus on ICT provision. Support for ICT grew from virtually 0 per cent to 17 per cent of media development assistance between 2002 and 2008 (Kaufman, 2012). And so, the sector now increasingly overlaps with Information Communication for Development (ICT4D).

Mottaz (2010) reported that “nearly every U.S. media development grant encourages – and often requires – the incorporation of digital components” (Mottaz, 2010: 10). By incorporating digital technology, such projects also implicitly take on digital communication methods such as interactivity and social media communication.

Digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media have been heralded for creating new spaces for public discussion across societies, new platforms for news and journalism, new direct avenues for communication with those in power and new opportunities to hold those in power accountable.

Proponents of using ICTs in development talk of the positive contribution that technology can make to engagement and participation and thus accountability and governance (Heeks 2009; Castells, 2008). Technology has indeed increased citizen participation in crowd-sourcing and government service delivery reporting in some countries with services such as YouGov in the UK and *Ushahidi* in Kenya. ICTs have also contributed positively in humanitarian assistance projects and health development projects for increasing effectiveness and speed of communication processes and programmes.

There is evidence certainly that the technology is being used, to varying degrees, by citizens to contribute to news-making and information exchange in influential ways (Mabweazara 2011; Moyo, L. 2011), as the data will reveal later. This research project investigates whether digital technologies can likewise assist in addressing donor goals such as accountability, transparency, participation and good governance that have traditionally been addressed by media development methods.

If this is the case, as the techno-optimism would suggest, it would question whether established media development methods - such as supporting journalism training, bolstering traditional media outlets for a stronger public sphere and strengthening institutional capacity of media organisations - are outdated. As Puddephatt and Oesterlund note:

What donors did twenty years ago, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and dictatorships throughout the world, is unlikely to be appropriate today. Many of the issues, of course, remain the same – such as how to ensure balanced content from a variety of independent sources - but there are new stakeholders, new technologies, new patterns of access, and new patterns of control.... It follows that the modalities for support to media development and freedom of expression need to be changed and modified (Puddephatt and Oesterlund, 2012: 5).

This thesis will thus critically evaluate the overlap of the field of ICT4D as applied to media development activity. It will investigate the potential of digital technologies for achieving media development goals in the focus countries. Theoretical debates on the contribution that ICTs can arguably make to development and governance will be examined further in the Chapter 3.

This section has given a picture of the tensions and pressures the media assistance sector has experienced in the recent past. It has outlined the global political and technological context in which media assistance now takes place. Much has changed since it first emerged as a tool for democracy promotion. As such, it is a most interesting time in which to investigate the role and relevance of media assistance.

The next section will briefly introduce the research site from where the data is collected and recent trends on the African continent in relation to new digital technologies.

Recent developments in Africa

In recent years the narrative of Africa has changed. According to some ‘Africa is on the rise’, with GDP and social indicators telling a story of improvement in people’s standard of living (Severino and Ray, 2007). In the Western media, articles discuss growing populations, new businesses and Africans taking charge of their development. While the world’s economy was recovering from the global financial crisis, many African countries have been enjoying a boom.

One factor that has been suggested as contributing has been the take-up of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and, in particular, the growth of mobile phone communications. In 2011, Time Magazine wrote how “mobile phones are transforming Africa” calling Kenya “Silicon Savannah”⁵.

What is widely acknowledged is the huge growth in mobile phone adoption and penetration rates that equal the West. The growth has been remarkable: in 2000, there

5 Alex Perry, Time Magazine, Silicon Savannah: Mobile Phones Transform Africa, June 30 2011

were about five million mobile phone subscriptions in Africa. In 2019, there are nearer 950 million (ITU, 2019).

Some authors (Alzouma, 2005; Steinmueller, 2001) suggest African countries are ‘leapfrogging’ economic growth stages through the adoption of cellular and internet technologies, and without the need for landlines and related infrastructure.

Mobile technology has been able to bypass the infrastructural constraints that have hindered the old land-line technology in Africa, thereby leapfrogging theoretical stages of development or modernisation (Akpan-Obong et al., 2010).

Jeffrey Sachs, the leading American development economist based at Columbia University, New York, called mobile phones ‘a gift for development’ and heralded an ‘end to poverty’ (Sachs, 2006) .

The high penetration rates of mobile phones in many African countries means that it is bringing information to those who previously lived in ‘media dark’⁶ areas. Kenyans and Tanzanians, the case study countries for this research, are embracing mobile media enthusiastically and this is illustrated by anecdotes of African consumers literally breaking down doors to lay their hands on a coveted device (Southwood, 2009).

For example, in Kenya, mobile penetration rates are now over 100 per cent (CCK, 2018); and 99 per cent of new internet connections in Kenya are on mobile phones, as opposed to computers. The penetration rate reflects the fact that some individuals now possess more than one phone.

⁶ This is a term used by Media Development agencies to describe areas and communities that have no or very limited access to any media at all such as radio, TV and newspapers..

There are several reasons for the exponential growth rate of the cell phone. The comparatively lower cost of acquisition of the cell phone and stand-alone technology make it more affordable by resource-poor people predominant in Sub-Saharan Africa (Akpan-Obong et al., 2010). In Africa, mobile phones are “almost always the cheapest and quickest way to communicate” (Etzo and Collender, 2010: 659).

Interview participants whom this researcher met in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam predicted that in the next few years in Kenya, almost everyone in the country will have a mobile phone and many of these with an internet connection. That would make universal mobile access, which would change the lives of locals on a huge scale. Ten years ago, outside the urban areas most Kenyans had little means of communicating with each other across large distances. With this widespread change in access to even a phone call people can now get information which was only recently inaccessible.

South African academic Herman Wasserman notes that “although Africa might not yet be as media-saturated as the Global North, one can increasingly say that Africans do not live WITH media, but IN media” (Wasserman, 2011: 11).

The internet is growing as an important, and alternative, platform for political debate and mobilisation around issues in East Africa. There has been sharp growth in blogging and engaging in forums in this new virtual public space. For example, in Tanzania, *Jamiiforums*⁷ has been described as an “amazing cathartic tool where even disgruntled politicians in East Africa go and upload sensitive documents” (*Rhodes, 2015, in interview*).

⁷ Jammiforums is a popular political forum in Tanzania

But the continued existence of the digital divide must be noted. Etzo and Collender believe that instead of being a force only for social good, that “mobile phones are not socially neutral tools, but can entrench or exacerbate unequal gendered or classed power relations” (Etzo and Collender, 2010: 660).

In Africa, there exists a strong correlation between gender and ICT use, partly the result of females’ low access to education in developing countries. In Sub – Saharan Africa, a woman is 23 percent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man – this divide is lower than in the Middle East and South Asia (Murthy, 2011a).

Alzouma warns that technology can “contribute to widening the gap between those who possess everything and those who do not. They can become a tool for excluding poor and illiterate people” (Alzouma, 2005: 352). Meinrath and Zimmerman argue mobile connectivity does not ‘lift all boats’ (Meinrath and Zimmerman, 2012).

The recent data shows that the wider African continent is embracing mobile phones; Africans are connecting in increasing numbers with the internet, and with each other. However, this research discovered that they are not necessarily subscribing to *The New York Times online* nor engaging actively with the political system. The digital divide continues to be an issue even in the so-called utopian world of mobile technology.

Ogan et al. caution that “the introduction of ICTs into the discourse of development has caused some scholars to forget that technology cannot provide a magic multiplier effect to the poorest of the poor” (Ogan et al., 2009: 656).

This research focuses in particular on two neighbouring countries in East Africa – Kenya and Tanzania – and they will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5. What is

of relevance here is the positive narratives in respect of the African continent in the past decade and how many of them are linked to ICT use and the proliferation of digital technologies.

This Research: Media Assistance and Digital Technologies

The potential of technology to address development problems in Africa, and elsewhere, has become a focus for international donors and it has spawned a new area of the Development sector – Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D). New technologies are being merged into traditional development work and new niches are appearing on the back of the growth in mobile phones and internet to achieve objectives around health, poverty reduction, food security. Many development programmes now start with ‘M’ or ‘E’: M-Health, M-Education, E-Government and E-learning.

This sector overlaps with this research thesis also as the fields of Media Development, Media for Development and ICT4D become increasingly merged due to technology. Whereas media development started out with individuals accessing information in print and broadcast, now increasingly target groups for projects are also using ICTs.

Media assistance organisations are exploring whether to use these new technologies to improve on what their traditional media projects used to do for freedom of expression, accountability and governance.

Whereas historically media assistance efforts were directed towards supporting media institutions, journalists and organisations to provide new and plural sources of news, the internet, mobile phones and social media can arguably provide these platforms now.

Donors have for years been supporting projects under democracy promotion programmes that support accountability, good governance, and participation. For them technology looks very appealing – a method that can potentially engage citizens, especially through their mobile phones, in reporting abuses of power in their own locales, or possibly participate more in election processes.

Indeed, studies have found low participation in between elections as a challenge for African democracies. In fact, respondents complain of a wide gap between citizens and their political representatives (Afrobarometer, 2002). The same organisation found that political and civic engagement by African youth is declining and is particularly weak among young women (Lekalake and Gyimah-Boadi, 2016).

As a result, many new technology initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa are springing up, financed by international funders such as the United Nations, the UK Department for International Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation, or other private foundations such as Omidyar Network, and are increasingly focused on citizen engagement and reporting. As corruption and mismanagement of government funds is a key issue for those involved in African development, these organisations hope to use technology to address these societal problems.

Figure 3 outlines these assumed links and compares respective theories of change between media development and ICTs and donor goals.

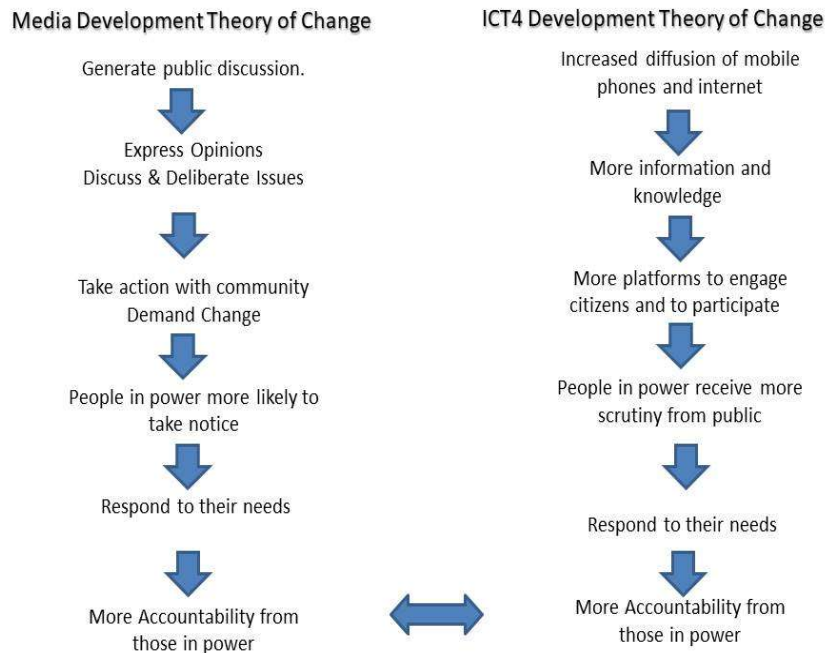


Figure 3. Theories of change Media development, ICTs and donor goals.

It is difficult to ignore the widespread claims that new technologies have the capacity to transform international development. There is much activity in the African region to get more people online and connected. Initiatives such as internet.Org by Facebook – which aims to bring the internet to everyone in Africa – and Google’s *Project Loon*, which wants to beam the internet to the African continent from a network of balloons travelling on the edge of space, create excitement around the ICT4D sector. Internet.Org says “the more we connect, the better it gets”.

There are enthusiastic debates within media studies on the benefits of digitisation and social media on people’s lives, and on democracy. This thesis critically explores such utopian claims of the enormous benefit of digital technology for development. The research will reveal whether more traditional media assistance still remains relevant in

the context of this digitalisation and the noted geo-political changes in the media development landscape.

Outline of the Thesis

The current Chapter 1, Introduction, has surveyed the background to the media development sector and its relationship to democracy and democracy promotion. It has contextualised the research subject historically and portrayed the current environment for media assistance support. It has outlined the stimulus for the research question – the Africa Rising narrative and cyber-optimism in relation to African development.

In **Chapter Two**, the research examines in more depth the academic literature on media development. The chapter provides readers with an introduction to the ideological foundations of the media development industry which is drawn from different strands: theories of media and democracy and the role of media in society; the liberal theory of the press and modernist theories of the media and development. Habermas' concept of the public sphere is explored and critiqued, as it significant in media development work.

Theories of the role of media in development have progressed with time, as demonstrated by Sieberts (1963)' and MacBrides'(1980) theories of media and modernisation. Opposing theories of media imperialism are examined. In Chapter Two, these interrelated theories are discussed and assessed with relation to media development and the model with which most of this work is undertaken. This chapter then looks at historical evaluations of whether media assistance has been successful

with interventions in transitional countries of the post-Soviet Bloc countries and in Africa.

Chapter Three: As noted, Media Development overlaps with Communications for Development and now ICT for Development and the confluence of these is explored further in this chapter. The concept of ‘development’ and theories of development are critically reviewed and evidence as to whether aid efforts in development actually work. This chapter critically evaluates theories and debates in relation to new technology in development and assesses cyber-utopian claims to its effectiveness. The potential of the new virtual space as public sphere will be assessed and the contribution of ICTs to recent development in Africa will be assessed.

In **Chapter Four** the methods used to address the research question are outlined. The central question of this thesis is whether digital technologies can achieve media development goals in Sub-Saharan Africa. Have ICTs rendered traditional media development interventions obsolete? In order to address this, the thesis outlines a series of sub-questions relating to media development practice. The views of practitioners within the industry were garnered as to whether these ICTs are effective at addressing their project goals.

To address the question of the potential of digital technologies in current media development practice in East Africa, the primary research and data collection is organised in two main parts: firstly, in-depth profiles of the two case study countries, Tanzania and Kenya setting out the context for the research sites, and secondly, primary qualitative research in the form of face-to-face interviews which were conducted in the field with stakeholders in the media development sector.

The case studies provide an opportunity to assess the media, political, social and technological environments in which media development currently takes place and examines how citizens of Kenya and Tanzania are using media and digital technology today. Interview data examines the extent to which digital technologies are employed by international media assistance programmes in Kenya and Tanzania to achieve donor objectives. Stakeholders also contribute insights as to their potential for their work.

These methods will thus address the question of what type of media development activity is being carried out in the region and whether digital technologies are being put to use by practitioners as part of their programmes.

In **Chapter Five**, the study presents the first part of the data and introduces the country case studies (Kenya and Tanzania). The chapter starts with a brief look at the history of development and journalism on the African continent. Primary and secondary data sources are used to draw a more detailed profile of these two countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The historical and social context for media development and also the current media landscape in both these countries is outlined. Then a more detailed picture of the current media systems in both countries is presented.

This chapter assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the media systems in Kenya and Tanzania, including the enabling environment, and the changes that have occurred due to the growth of digital technologies in Kenya and Tanzania including present-day journalism practice. The chapter gives context to the research site, the kind of issues addressed by media development interventions and additionally the information needs of citizens and audiences in these countries.

In **Chapter Six**, the findings from the primary research data collection are presented. The face to face interviews that took place in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam in 2014 and 2015 are analysed and synthesised according to important themes that will reveal the findings and address the research question. The data tackles issues of media development donors and their activities in the region, current media development projects being implemented and the extent to which they are employing digital technologies.

Examples of development projects are presented and analysed, which bring to life current media development activity in Kenya and Tanzania and illustrates the extent to which digital technologies are being utilised in projects. This chapter analyses the success or failures of this adoption of digital technologies with regard to attainment of media development objectives.

Chapter Seven synthesises and expands on the themes developed in the findings chapter and further addresses the question of whether digital technologies have impacted on the practice of media assistance in the region.

Successes in the incorporation of ICTs in media development projects are presented and discussed with a detailed analysis of where they have enhanced or positively contributed to projects goals.

The Africa Rising trope is critiqued as is why ICTs are proposed as solutions to media development needs. The thesis also considers the source of this techno-determinism.

Issues which limit the potential of digital technologies are also discussed in particular with reference to engaging citizens and participation using ICTs. The continued popularity of radio is revealed and also the limitations of the new virtual public sphere

are discussed within an East African context and whether the ideal of participation for all through technology is a reality.

One issue that arises from the data is the persistence of the digital divide in the region despite increasing access to newer forms of communication and information. This is due to cost, access, and technical literacy amongst other factors and impacts on the extent of their use in media development projects.

In the concluding **Chapter Eight**, the research questions are reiterated and the evidence is summarised. It is argued that media assistance is not redundant and traditional media development approaches are still needed. The theoretical framework is revisited and tested.

In this final chapter the thesis presents conclusions to the research. The limitations of the research are discussed. The pace of technology growth presents an obvious limitation to the current work. As mobile information and communication technologies become ever more prevalent and connectivity is enhanced, the potential benefits for media development goals need to be continually assessed. The wider implications of unregulated online content in particular for democratic processes is also subject to regulatory change and this is a further factor that needs to be taken into account.

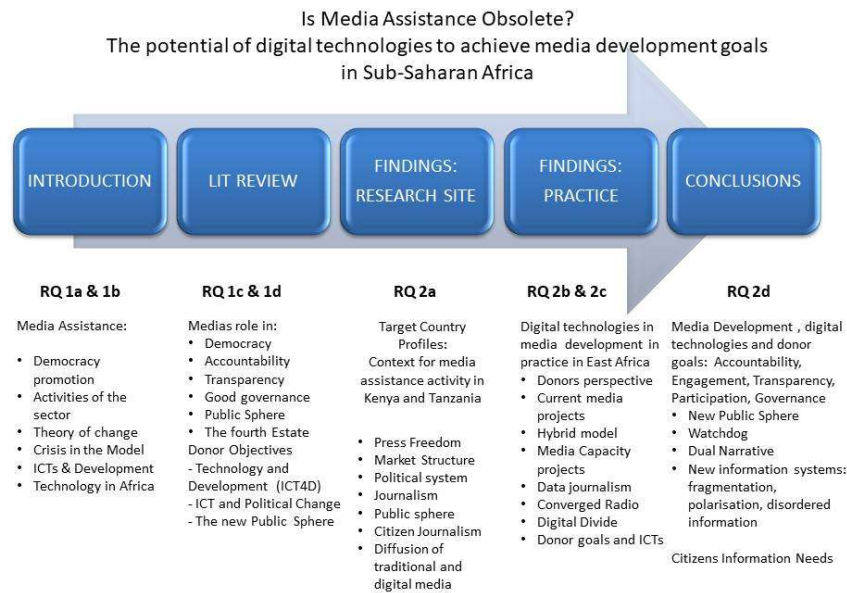


Figure 4. Research Map

Finally, the research discusses the role media development can play in the future.

Media development focuses on getting reliable information to people - many of them in Africa and living in media dark areas – and connecting with those who cannot normally get news and information without the assistance of donors. Working at strengthening media institutions is and is likely to continue to be an important part of this process.

But media development is not solely about reaching these individuals with developmental messages, or to better inform them of their rights for example, but also about engaging citizens, fostering better civic and political engagement, bringing people into the public sphere, to participate in public debate and bring people from differing sides of the political and economic spectrum together. It is helping them to

‘join the conversation’, representing views of the whole of society, reflecting a range of views and political opinions and as such contribute to a healthier democratic sphere.

Even with the traditional journalism training projects, this was ultimately what the objectives were – yes improved content for better accountability, governance and democracy, but you cannot really achieve democracy unless you are connecting with people across all levels of society, and bringing them into the national debate, the public sphere.

Have digital technologies changed this? The central question this research thesis asks is whether digital technologies can achieve donor goals in the same way as traditional media assistance methods, and whether media assistance is still relevant.

This thesis argues that it is not just relevant but possibly more important than ever and there is a continuing need for media assistance as traditionally defined. This is because the internet and digitisation have not necessarily resolved issues such as governance and accountability, nor the information needs of citizens of the countries under review.

As a recent report by the BBC finds, “the internet is not keeping everyone informed, nor will it: it is, in fact, magnifying problems of information inequality, misinformation, polarisation and disengagement” (Parkinson, 2015: 3).

In a post-truth global environment in which it is difficult to differentiate factual news from ‘fake news’ or disinformation, media assistance can contribute to supporting reliable, factual and independent news media.

By examining media development practice in East Africa, it is revealed that established media assistance approaches are indeed still relevant. Furthermore, the thesis underlines the central role that media development can serve in the current geopolitical and technological landscape.

Chapter 2

Literature Review Part 1



A history and overview of media development

The central question this thesis addresses is whether media assistance is obsolete. It investigates the extent to which digital technologies are in use in media development programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa and whether they have the same potential to achieve donor goals as ‘traditional’ media development approaches. In answering this, the thesis will also uncover whether media development has fundamentally changed in its mission and whether its founding principles are still valid.

This chapter critically reviews these founding principles. The Media Development sector is founded on certain assumptions about media’s positive role in society and democracy and the donors contribute to projects based on this relationship. As ‘media development’ is often funded under democracy promotion programmes, the chapter

provides an overview of the literature concerned with media's role in democracy and the ideology motivating this area of international aid.

The literature is drawn from different strands: theories of media and democracy and the role of media in society; public sphere theories; modernist theories of the media and societal development. These theories are discussed and critically assessed with regard to media development and the model with which most of this work is undertaken. The aim of this literature review chapter therefore is to contextualise the practice of 'media development' within an appropriate academic and theoretical context.

This chapter additionally reviews historical evaluations of media development work to better understand whether media development has been successful in its goals. An evaluation is important because if media development projects have been successful to date then it will be of further significance whether digital technologies can do any better to achieve the same goals.

This review chapter, and the next, also examine the body of literature concerning the relationship between media and development and societal transformations (for it is a transformation of some sort that the projects in question are attempting). It will explore the concept of development, particularly in Africa and address what is the potential of new media or Information Communication Technology (ICT) in development.

The body of literature examines what Powers and Arsenault have called the media's "potential use as a tool with which to achieve and facilitate broader economic, social, and political development aims and objectives" (Powers and Arsenault, 2010:6).

These theories will frame the investigation of whether media assistance is still

relevant, and whether newer digital technologies have the same positive relationship as media for democracy and development.

Historical Context

‘Media Development’ emerged as a tool for democracy promotion in the period after World War 2 and continued during the post-war reconstruction phase in Europe and throughout the Cold War. Miller (2009) noted that media development during the Cold War was “unavoidably influenced by the political self-interests of North America and Western Europe, which were then engaged in a ‘war of ideas’ with the USSR” (Miller, 2009:12).

At that point in time democracy may have seemed like the ideal end-game to the citizens of the former Soviet Union. After years of government propaganda and limited freedoms, they had an appetite for freedom of expression and a more open public sphere.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, a key priority in the region for the international community was end state ownership of media and to transform it into an independent media. The “media development” sector mobilised to transform the former state broadcasting outlets and roll out more independent sources of news in the post-Soviet states (Harvey, 2006; Kumar, 2006; Hume, 2004).

In response to the end of Soviet rule, Western countries (particularly the United States in its endeavour to establish liberal democracy in the region) launched media initiatives to upgrade journalistic, technical, and management skills and to foster an environment supportive of a free press (Kumar, 2006).

Journalists in these countries were trained by Western journalists in standards of journalism such as fairness and impartiality, balanced news reporting, accuracy and ethics. The rationale was that an independent and free press would hold new leaders to account, promote transparency and accountability and cement the transition to democracy.

Hume devised the term “media missionaries” for the journalists and media workers who then flocked to the Post-Soviet states. She recounted how:

When the Communist barricades collapsed in 1989, hundreds of Americans rushed to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics to spread the gospel of democracy. Among them were some of America’s most altruistic journalists, who hoped to midwife a newly independent press (Hume, 2004:9).

This group of journalists later earned the unappealing moniker ‘parachute professors’, due to the short-term training they delivered without any local knowledge or context (Ognianova, 1995). As soberly described in her paper:

In general, the schedule of the "parachute professor" has consisted of landing at the capital's airport, giving a talk (in some cases advice not at all relevant to the country's media system) and generous promises soon to be broken, then leaving with no intent to return. This scenario has left bitterness and has undermined the credibility of North American journalism educators among East-Central European journalists (Ognianova, 1995:3).

Nevertheless, numerous aid agencies located to Eastern Europe contributing significant amounts of money to help develop independent media and encourage full

democratic transitions. This was when “media development” started to gain traction, as more funding was made available from international donors such as the USA and UK, hoping to democratise the post-Soviet states. Opportunities were also seen to create a liberal free market for the press and its products.

And so, although the template for media development work can be discerned in the post WWII years, it is really during this period of huge political change, between 1989 and 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, that it became a more well-funded and recognised feature of international development assistance (Harvey, 2006; Hume, 2004).

Kumar noted that “the former Soviet Union and its satellites served as laboratories wherein the international community and its local partners refined different media development strategies and programmes” (Kumar, 2006).

Hume has estimated that at least \$600 million was spent by the US Government in the post-Soviet States in the decade after 1989 (Hume, 2004).

Theoretical Assumptions

The support that international donors gave to the Media Development sector was based on their belief that the media could contribute to their policy objectives. Often, media development projects were undertaken to establish or support democracy in countries in transition, or to encourage an open, uncensored and egalitarian public sphere.

It was understood, and still is, that media can contribute in its ‘watchdog role’ (Curran and Seaton, 2003; Norris and et al, 2010); demanding accountability of leaders,

combating corruption, increasing transparency, as a platform for freedom of expression or opening up the public debate and participation. This section will look at studies and evidence that explore these attributes and the underlying rationale for ‘Media Development’.

The research thesis is focused on the media development sector, and much of the support and funding (but not all) for the sector comes from donors’ democracy promotion and governance objectives. The research question addresses whether digital technologies can achieve these same objectives, asking those who work in media development practice whether they could replace traditional and legacy media in development programmes. Reviewing what the literature says of the relationship between media, democracy and governance will help clarify whether that is a realistic prospect.

Theories of the role of media in society

With all the hype about ICTs – connectivity, citizen journalism, participation and other much lauded characteristics – it is pertinent to ask what has been the role of traditional media in society? This will facilitate understanding of whether ICTs can or should replace ‘old’ media in these development projects. Examining elements of media theory in this section will illustrate the extent to which the role of media in society has been theorised in academic literature.

Prior to the mid-20th century, there had been little scholarly interest in the mass media. Hardt observed

It was not until the 20th century that journalism and the mass media became subjects of scholarship in the US in any significant way..... It was in general agreement

however that if the conditions of freedom were maintained then the consequences of mass communication were relatively automatic - an invisible hand leading the will of individuals to the maximization of social good (Hardt, 1979:11)

The role of the press in a democracy was subject of a debate in the 1920s between Walter Lippman and John Dewey after a massive public relations campaign was used by the government to build support for the United States' participation in the First World War (Dewey, 1927; Lippmann, 1923). Both Lippman and Dewey recognised that the press had a crucial role in democracy, with Lippman seeing the press as a group that should evaluate the policies of government and present well-informed conclusions about these key debates to the public, and Dewey viewing the press as a necessary instrument of democracy that should engage citizens in understanding for themselves the central questions of our times. Its role was both to inform and engage.

Another study, the report of the Hutchins Commission, was formed in the midst of World War II to inquire into the proper function of the media in modern democracies. Written by the Head of the Chicago University, Robert Maynard Hutchins, "A Free and Responsible Press" claimed that "the mass media were the single, most powerful influence in modern society" (Hutchins, 1947:vii). The report argued that the media should serve the public, and in order to do so, should remain free of government interference (ibid). Hutchins stressed the independence of media from government control to fulfil its role.

A later work that built on the Hutchins Theory of Social Responsibility was Siebert et al's *Four Theories of the Press* (1963). An important study and the first well-known attempt to formally clarify the link between mass media and the societal development,

Siebert's Four Theories divided the world into three camps: the free world of liberal democracy, the Soviet totalitarian sphere and authoritarian societies. They suggested that media systems reflect the prevailing political philosophy of the society in which they operate (Siebert et al., 1963).

According to Siebert, Peterson and Schramm the authoritarian state system requires direct governmental control of the mass media. This system is especially easy to recognise in pre-democratic societies, where the government consists of a very limited and small ruling-class. The media in an authoritarian system are not allowed to print or broadcast anything which could undermine the established authority.

Siebert also explains the libertarian theory, which is also called the free press theory. In contrast to the authoritarian theory, the libertarian view proposes that the individual should be free to publish whatever he or she likes. Its history traces back to the 17th century, deriving from the work of thinkers such as Milton, Locke, Mill, and Jefferson who asserted that human beings inevitably choose the best ideas and values. In the libertarian system, attacks on the government's policies are fully accepted and even encouraged. Journalists and media professionals ought to have full autonomy within the media organisation.

The third model, the Soviet theory is closely tied to a specific ideology; that of the communist system Siebert traces the roots of this theory back to the 1917 Russian Revolution. The media organisations in this system were not intended to be privately owned and were to serve the interests of the working class.

The final theory was the social responsibility theory. In this model, the media had certain obligations to society. These obligations were expressed in the words "informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance". Siebert claimed that the

goal of the social responsibility system is that media as a whole is pluralised, reflecting the diversity of society as well as access to various points of view (Skjerdal, 1993).

At the time, Siebert et al.'s four theories were hailed by many mass media researchers as the most appropriate categories to describe how different media systems operate in the world and Their analysis was viewed as a landmark study for the next forty years. Journalists Ralph Lowenstein and John Merrill wrote: "Almost every article and book dealing with philosophical bases for journalism has alluded to this book commented on it, or quoted from it. It has definitely made an impact" (Lowenstein and Merrill, 1990:163).

However, later, scholars criticised the four theories, calling them biased because they omitted the mass media of the so-called Third World (McQuail, 1987). Many nations in the third or developing world do not fit into any of Siebert's four camps. Curran noticed that Siebert had little exposure to media systems in the Third World but this "lack of knowledge about other countries need not get in the way of confident global generalisation" (Curran, 2002:167). Skerdjal argues that Siebert's model was outdated and too simplistic to be useful in contemporary media research (Skjerdal, 1993).

To counter this shortcoming, a model of mass media systems in developing countries appeared in 1980. The 'MacBride report': Many Voices, One World, was named after its chair, the Irish jurist, Sean McBride. Supported by UNESCO, its aim was to analyse communication problems in modern societies, and to suggest a kind of communication order to diminish these problems and to address the media imbalance between north and south. Among the problems the report identified were

concentration of the media, commercialisation of the media, and unequal access to information and communication in first and developing world countries. Although the MacBride report was written almost four decades ago, these are themes that will reappear in this current research as the data is analysed.

The ‘MacBride Report’ called for the creation of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) to improve access to media, development, and technical assistance for poorer countries, with the aim of fulfilling human rights (the right of all people to participate in communication and the duty of the media to expose violations of human rights) (Hamelink, 1997).

While the report had strong international support, it was condemned by the United States and the United Kingdom as an attack on the freedom of the press - by putting an organisation run by governments at the head of controlling global media - and both countries withdrew from UNESCO in protest.

Sean MacBride had anticipated this reaction, acknowledging: “protests against the dominant flow of news from the industrialised countries were often construed as attacks on the free flow of information’ (MacBride, 1980: xxi). But for the first time a study had addressed media systems in developing countries.

Modernisation and Media Imperialism

Other research on how media contributes to society and development included the so-called modernisation theories of 1960s. This approach was based on the idea that that the introduction of modern media and communications systems and practices were essential prerequisites of modernity (e.g. development towards an American or European model) (Curran and Park, 2000).

Implicit in this thinking was the presumption that the goal of development should be to propel traditional or indigenous cultures towards modernity and that traditional practices and institutions that were not modern stood in the way of development.

The theory assumes that, with assistance, "traditional" countries can be brought to a stage of development in the same manner more developed countries have attained. According to Törnquist, modernisation was the application to developing countries of the Industrial Revolution that took place in Europe from the mid-18th to the mid-19th Century (Törnquist, 1999).

Early modernisation theories assumed a simple relationship between the spread of access to modern forms of mass communications, economic development, and the process of democratisation. The basic idea of this theory was that “underdeveloped” societies should aim to replicate the political, economic, social and cultural characteristics of modern, developed, Western societies. And that also included their media and communications systems.

For example, in the 1960s, Daniel Lerner proposed how a modern communication system supposedly contributes to the transition from ‘tradition’ to modernity. He argued that exposure to modern media extends people’s horizons and encourages them to want more out of life. Consequently the ‘connection between mass media and political democracy is especially close” (Lerner, 1963:342).

Modernisation theory talked of ‘the construction of western-style political and social institutions as indicators of progress... Local media were expected to emulate Western patterns of behaviour and contribute to the construction of democracy’ (Miller, 2009:10).

Thus, modernisation theory called for expansion of mass media to poorer countries in order to promote western lifestyles and the market economy. In this book, *Communications and Political Development*, Pye claimed that: ‘the basic processes of political modernization and national development can be advantageously conceived as problems in communication’ (Pye et al., 1963:8).

Critics of modernisation argue however that it promotes a system in which poorer countries are exploited by richer countries as long as they continue to follow “closer integration into the world market” (Scott, 2014:30). They claim also that the expansion of western media and business corporations promoted capitalist and consumerist values and eroded local cultures.

For example, critics of modernisation theory, Paul Baran and Andre Gunder Frank, argued that underdevelopment was in fact a consequence of the expansion of capitalism (in Park, 1998).

Herbert Schiller similarly claimed that far from promoting self-sufficiency, the ‘modernisation’ of a third world country” encouraged their dependency within an “exploitative system of global economic relations” (Schiller, 1998:17). Furthermore, according to Schiller, American aid programmes to developing countries, and the ‘free flow of information’ policies promoted by the American state, assisted the American media industry in its drive to achieve international dominion (Schiller, 1969).

Mattelart and Friere further argued that the Western media companies were the real beneficiaries of media modernisation programmes; their dominance grew while poorer countries often faced intensified inequality and dependency (Mosco, 1996).

Despite criticism of the modernisation paradigm and although it is now considered an outdated way of thinking about media and development, Powers and Arsenault claim that “the roots of this paradigm are still evident in much current thinking about media development” (Powers and Arsenault, 2010:2).

For instance, in a detailed analysis of media development literature between 1960 and 1989, Fair (1989) found that the modernisation paradigm continued to dominate contemporary discussion on media’s contribution to development and media’s ability to influence audiences in target countries (Fair, 1989).

Interestingly, Manyozo (2012) describes media development practice as an “instrument of modernisation” (Manyozo, 2012:149). He argues that the action of consolidating market-friendly models of media systems in the global South “contributes to an overdependence on external aid, reinforces minority power structures within the country and ultimately services transnational/corporate interests” (Manyozo, 2012:149).

The ideas of the modernisation theorists remained dominant throughout the 1960s, but theories of media imperialism then emerged in opposition to the prevailing modernisation agenda of the time.

The media imperialism approach evolved in an attempt to deal with those questions which earlier models had ignored. Boyd-Barrett (1977) described media imperialism as “the process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media are...subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected” (Boyd-Barrett, 1977:117). The media imperialism model views the media as an obstacle to meaningful and well-balanced socio-economic progress.

For instance, Robert McChesney suggested that US and Western corporate control over international media and communications systems were central aspects of neo-colonialism that kept much of the third world “incapable of genuine self-determination” (Foster et al., 1997:11).

McChesney was a leading proponent in the political economy study of media which focuses on the role media play in democratic and capitalist societies where the primary goal is profit, not the public interest. His focus was whether media systems promote or undermine democratic institutions and practices.

McChesney found that the processes of global media mergers had concentrated control in the hands of a few multinational corporations, which were unaccountable to the public, and reducing the diversity of news media outlets (McChesney, 2008).

These mergers and the resulting concentration of media ownership has meant a globalisation of media ownership, with a very small number of giant global corporations owning and controlling media in all parts of the world. McChesney argues that these anti-democratic trends are “eroding the public sphere both at national and global levels” (McChesney, 1999).

While this globalisation has led to foreign investment in developing nations, this investment does not always translate into greater diversity of content and often has the effect of reducing domestic programming in favour of imported programming (Price and Krug, 2002). Thussu argues these massive media conglomerates have taken an active role in promoting privatisation and free market policies that they see as beneficial to their operations (Thussu, 2000).

Mano (2009) argues “neo-liberal media globalisation is like a second more subtle form of colonialism which affects individuals, communities and nations with a more powerful force” (Mano, 2009:294)

Furthermore, Norris and Zinnbauer (2002) found that the globalisation of media sources has not increased the strength of democracies, and Minderhoud found that, in the case of Africa, “the opening up of the radio market to private parties can and has shown to produce undemocratic outcomes in Africa” (Minderhoud, 2009:2).

What this review highlights is the research showing that that the widening of public access to newspapers, radio and television as a result of globalisation, liberalisation and free market policies may be insufficient in itself to result in democracy and development. As Ogan et al (2009) argue in their global review of literature on communication and development “because of the appeal of the modernization paradigm, there is a tendency to forget that it cannot work” (Ogan et al, 2009:14)

These theories of modernisation, globalisation of media and imperialism relate to this research question not only in relation to the impact on developing countries of traditional media, but also with regards to new technologies such as mobile phones and social media platforms.

In the next section, further attributes of the role of media in society shall be examined in terms of their potential link to development.

The Public Sphere

Definitions of media development and media assistance very often include reference to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. One of the most important

determinants in whether a media can establish and maintain its independence is the level of freedom of the press.

Liberal theorists from John Milton to John Stuart Mill have argued centuries ago the existence of a unfettered and independent press is essential in the process of democratisation, by contributing towards the right of freedom of expression, thought and conscience, strengthening the responsiveness and accountability of governments to citizens, and providing a public platform and channel of political expression.

UK academic James Curran argues that ‘the first condition of a decent society is some kind of common discussion, in public, of the realities of that society’ (Curran and Seaton, 2003:386).

The importance of freedom of expression is reflected by its wide recognition in international law at the global and regional level. The right to freedom of expression is protected in all significant international and regional human rights treaties, including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Jurgen Habermas famously described this space where freedom of expression manifests itself in the public domain as the ‘Public Sphere’ - a space for communicating information and sharing points of view. He described it as “a discursive arena that is home to citizen debate, deliberation, agreement and action” (Villa 1992:712).

Habermas’ concept of the public sphere is significant as the media is frequently discussed in the context of its contribution to public debate and democracy and as a result it is central to media development. Its particular relevance for this research

stems from the fact that media development projects frequently try to establish or strengthen democratic spaces that are independent or free of the state.

Habermas

Habermas' concept of the public sphere had its origins in the new civic society that emerged in eighteenth century Europe. Driven by a need for open arenas where issues of common concern could be exchanged and discussed - accompanied by growing rates of literacy and access to literature - a separate domain from ruling authorities started to evolve across Europe.

Habermas depicted a space that emerged to a public who previously had no public arena for free discussion of civil life. The public sphere consisted of organs of information and political debate such as newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion such as political clubs, literary salons, pubs and coffee houses, meeting halls, and other public spaces where socio-political discussion took place (Kellner, 2000). Habermas noted

In its clash with the arcane and bureaucratic practices of the absolutist state, the emergent bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler's power was merely represented before the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people (Habermas, 1962:11)

His 'public sphere' presupposed freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate. The key feature of his public sphere was its separation from the power of both the church and the government.

Habermas's study of the public sphere centred on the idea of political participation as the core of democratic society, a feature reflected in media development projects that attempt to draw wider society into national conversation and discussion, including minority groups and different social classes, to represent the view of whole of society and give them a voice in the public sphere.

It should be noted how Habermas' public sphere evolved as a result of economic developments and increased literacy of the population at the time. Economic developments were vital in the evolution of a public forum for free expression of political thought.

Scholars have noted that probably only a few Western bourgeois societies have developed any public sphere at all in Habermas's sense, and "while it is salutary to construct models of a good society that could help to realise agreed upon democratic and egalitarian values, it is a mistake to overly idealize and universalize any specific public sphere as in Habermas's account" (Kellner, 2000:267).

Habermas's critics (Calhoun, 1992; Fraser, 1990; Schudson, 1994) have challenged his concept of the public sphere and argue that he idealised the earlier bourgeois public sphere by presenting it as a forum of rational discussion and debate when in fact certain groups were excluded and participation was thus limited. For instance, Mary Ryan notes that Habermas neglects women's public spheres (in Calhoun, 1992). This is repeated in the public spaces today where often groups such as women and minorities have no voice.

Nevertheless, Habermas' key work "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" (1962) has been very influential and has provoked discussions of liberal democracy, civil society, public life, and social changes in the twentieth century.

According to Kellner, few books of the second half of the twentieth century have been so seriously discussed in “so many different fields and continues, almost forty years after its initial publication, to generate such productive controversy and insight” (Kellner, 2000:259).

This popularity is explored by Lunt and Livingstone in their 2013 article ‘Media studies fascination with the concept of the Public Sphere’. They talk about the “rise and rise of the concept of public sphere” within media studies and they claim that it is “with ambivalence that media scholars have continued to work with the concept of the public sphere” (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013:1,5). Nonetheless, many adopt the pragmatic view that Habermas’ concept of the public sphere establishes a “good starting point, a framework against which to test one’s ideas and assumptions” (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013:5).

Despite Habermas’ public sphere being labelled an idealised space, it is one which many media development projects attempt to replicate. The public sphere perspective is important in media development therefore because media is supposed to fulfil this idealised role.

Kalathil observed that “the overarching theme, at least as far as the media-development world is concerned is the rise of a pluralized, diverse and multi-mediated public sphere, with individuals, groups, corporations, governments and other entities freely comingling to influence public opinion” (Kalathil, 2008:12).

However, the public sphere can be corrupted due to its environment. Kellner (2000) notes that Habermas's account of the structural transformation of the public sphere, despite its limitations, illustrates the increasingly important functions of the media in politics and everyday life and the ways that corporate and other interests have

“colonised this sphere, using the media and culture to promote their own interests”
(Kellner, 2000:268).

Habermas’ work is an important analysis of what can happen to the media when exposed to the realities of a free market and the difficulties of maintaining independence from corporate or government pressure.

In a similar way, media development works towards objectives of establishing independent media organisations and strengthening the media sector in developing countries, to provide platforms for national discussion and debate. This is usually in the context of a free market for media products. As will be explored more in later chapters, these markets can often be dominated by political, corporate or elite interests and this has implications for journalism and the health of the public sphere.

There are other elements of the potential role media can serve in society which underpin media development work, such as its watchdog role and as a check on government and those in power.

The Fourth Estate

In addition to its role as public sphere for discussion, the media is often referred to as the ‘Fourth Estate’, where the press serves as a complement and balance to the three branches of power: legislative, executive and judicial. The first use of the term was by Edmund Burke in 1787 during a debate in parliament, when he articulated how the media is regarded as one of the classic checks and balances on government and those in power (Schultz, 1998).

The reason it is felt to be central to a functioning democracy is for its potential to hold government to account. In its ‘watchdog’ role, the news media is understood to promote government transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny of decision-makers in power.

Curran confirmed that “the principal democratic role of the media, according to traditional liberal theory, is to act as a check on the state” (Curran, 2002:217).

Brunetti and Weder (2003) found that there is less corruption in nations with a free press. The reason, they argue, is that journalists’ roles as watchdogs promote the transparency of government decision-making process, and thereby expose and hinder misuse of public office, and financial scandals (Brunetti and Weder, 2003).

Independent journalists can act as an important channel for decision-makers, helping to make governments more responsive to the needs of the people. Besley and Burgess (2001) showed that regions with higher levels of newspaper circulation proved more active during an emergency in responding to food shortages. The reason, they offer, is that political leaders learn about local problems more accurately and in a timely fashion when journalists function as an intermediary by reporting living conditions at the grassroots (Besley and Burgess, 2001).

Amartya Sen argued that the accountability mechanisms in democracies are particularly important in averting disasters; in their absence, for example he said major ecological damages can go unchecked. For instance, between 1959-61 China had the world’s worst famine of the 20th century which killed many millions of people and went unreported. “During that terrible calamity the government faced no pressure from newspapers, which were controlled and none from opposition parties, which were absent” (Sen, 1999:143).

In his book *Development as Freedom* (1999) Sen claimed that post-Independence India, with a much lower average availability of food for the poor than China, largely avoided such disasters because Indian democracy, with its free press and vigorous opposition parties, has been politically quicker in averting threats of famines and starvation deaths. He explained:

The working of democracy and other political rights can even help to prevent famines and other economic disasters. Democratic governments have to win elections and face public criticism and have strong incentives to undertake measures to avert famines and other catastrophes. Authoritarian rulers, who are themselves rarely affected by famines tend to lack the incentive to take timely preventative measures (Sen, 1999:16).

These studies show therefore how a free press may be linked to transparency, accountability and furthermore, good governance. Media can help raise public awareness about corruption, its causes and possible remedies.

Guseva et al., (2008) tried to understand the connections between “indicators of environments conducive to media freedom and independence” and indicators of human development, poverty reduction and good governance. They found that press freedom was found to be positively correlated with governance (Guseva et al., 2008:3).

This emphasises how these elements are often interlinked: governance, press freedom and democracy. Zambian academic Francis Kasoma (1995) maintained that it was no accident that the three countries in Africa that have upheld democratic governance - namely Botswana, Senegal and Mauritius - are also the countries that have

consistently maintained a free and independent press (Kasoma, 1995). He noted also that democracy has been slower in coming in countries where a free press has been completely inactive.

It is as a result of this type of evidence that many donor agencies and governments now see efforts to promote freedom of expression and with that assisting governance as a fundamental part of their international development work, along with more established efforts to provide emergency food or material aid⁸.

But media does not operate in isolation. In her 2002 study, Harvard academic Pippa Norris analysed 135 countries to evaluate under what conditions the media positively influenced democratic governance. She found two elements that are required for media systems to positively impact democratic governance: “both independence *and* access are required” (Norris and Zinnbauer, 2002:3). If citizens cannot access the press (as a result of say, cost or literacy issues) or journalists are not free to write what they wish, then the power of the media is restricted.

Norris further maintained that “policies which eradicate limits on the freedom information and communication, whether due to state censorship, intimidation and harassment of journalists, or due to private media oligopolies, have important consequences for those seeking to strengthen transitions from autocracy” (Norris, 2006:75).

8 . Details of a sample of these projects can be found here

NORAD: <https://norad.no/en/front/funding/norhed/projects/building-capacity-for-a-changing-media-environment-in-uganda/>

UNESCO: <https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc/>

UK DFID: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-aid-open-societies-a-vision-for-a-transparent-world>

German BMZ: :

http://www.bmz.de/en/issues/freedom_of_opinion_press/deutsches_engagement/index.html

This suggests that the media does not and cannot operate successfully without the other institutions of a democracy functioning properly. The so-called fourth estate cannot fulfil its role without the complementary support of the other pillars of society, what Price and Krug call the “enabling environment”.

This is important in media development work because no matter how successful a project is in concept, if the environment cannot support independent journalism or media organisations, they will struggle to live up to their potential democratic role. This was found to be the case in media development during democratic transitions in 1990s and continues to be a challenge for media development today.

Evaluating Media Assistance

At this point, having discussed the link between media and democracy and development, and the ideological underpinning of the sector, it is of value to look at whether past media development projects have achieved their stated goals and objectives. Of particular interest will be the outcomes of those projects that were implemented in the aftermath of the Cold War, when media development came to prominence. This will provide a guide as to whether established media development can live up to its promise so to speak. This will further guide assessment of whether digital technologies can fulfil the same role in trying to achieve development goals such as accountability, transparency and strengthening of democracy.

To date, a large proportion of the evaluation of media development has been done through studies of transitional countries, in particular the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. Kumar claims that “the former Soviet Union and its satellites served

as laboratories wherein the international community and its local partners refined different media development strategies and programmes” (Kumar, 2006:5).

There are interesting findings that are worth reviewing here to see what have been the strengths and weaknesses of media development interventions in the past, what have been the outcomes and whether ICTs will be able to perform the role any better.

Democratic transitions in Eastern Europe

As noted, with the collapse of one-party states in the former Soviet Union in 1990s and the wave of democratic elections that followed, new governments and political parties emerged ostensibly committed to more democratic and open government and explicitly to more open media.

There was pressure from donors to liberalise media both as a concerted attempt to invest in good governance and democracy and as part of a trend to open markets.

In many of these media assistance interventions working to transform or strengthen the media sector, the aim was to distance the press from the governing party’s (or the elites) influence and establish a more independent and plural media environment for democratic ends.

Studies emphasise the vital role of the mass media in transitions from autocracy, for instance in Germany, and later in Georgia’s ‘Rose’ revolution (Mitchell, 2009).

McFaul (2005) argues that in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine the presence of the independent media was one of the key components of successful transitions from post-communist states (McFaul, 2005).

The positive relationship between the growth of the free press and the process of democratisation is also thought to be reciprocal. Kulikova (2008) found that greater freedom of press and more independent press systems are indicative of greater overall democratisation. On the other hand, more democratic transitional countries have higher degrees of press freedom and media independence (Kulikova, 2008).

Yet, studies of transitional countries and in particular the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe in the 1990s have shown interesting elements about the nature of media change in these countries. Coman notes how “the feeling that ‘things haven’t come out as they should’ emanates from many studies or essays dedicated to post-communism” (Coman, 2000:50).

De Smaele gives a perspective on events at the time:

When the communist world collapsed, the corresponding media model was declared history as well. At first sight, it was fully replaced by the western model in the same way as the society was reorganized according to western principles. On a closer look, however, western influence seems to be restricted primarily to the market area. The reshaping of the media system into a pluralist and independent Fourth Estate, the transformation of the journalistic community into an autonomous professional group dedicated to a public service ideal and the redefinition of the audience into a group of citizens all failed to occur (De Smaele, 1999:1).

Although there was large investment in media development at that time, Sparks and Reading argue that only politicians benefited from the new post-Communist media (Sparks and Reading, 1994). They claim that, “in terms both of structure and personnel, the media show singularly little transformation and what there has been is

best understood as a mechanism for ensuring social continuity in the face of political change” (Sparks and Reading, 1998:106).

Despite the investment and best intentions of media donors, political elites tried their best to bring the press, radio and television under their control, recognising the potential power of media. Jowitt (1993) claims that “in Eastern Europe one sees a novel evolutionary phenomenon: *survival of the first*, not simply the fittest. Former party cadres are exceptionally well placed to successfully adapt themselves – and their families – to changes in the economic and administrative order” (Jowitt, 1993: 296).

Following liberalisation of the media market, the press became the battlefield of financial groups, linked to different political and governmental clans (De Smaele, 1999). Through the media outlets they owned, controlled or influenced, they helped create a highly partisan and politicised media and journalism in the first decade of post-Communism (ibid).

Colin Sparks observed that while media trainers attempted to create newspapers like the *New York Times* and broadcasters like the BBC in Eastern Europe, what emerged mostly were newspapers that were highly partisan and broadcasters remained more aligned with the state than the people. There was significant continuity in personnel between the old regime and the new, and the shift to a market economy was a “highly political process” (Sparks and Reading, 1998:174). He refers to it as “elite continuity” (Sparks, 2018).

Furthermore, financial obstacles were a hurdle for the development of an independent media sector. In Central and Eastern Europe, independent news media were unable to make capital investments or pay adequate salaries without the support of donors.

They were often burdened by fines or taxes, and could not afford to invest in staff training or development.

Thus, media outlets that had survived in the worst of political and social conditions in Soviet states then had to succeed financially against competition from a variety of other outlets. Craig LaMay called it “the tyranny of the market” (LaMay, 2001:15).

In his book “Exporting Press Freedom”, LaMay claims that “the central dilemma is economic, between the need to find adequate and diverse sources of revenue while also providing a high-quality editorial product” (LaMay, 2008:5). Very often in developing countries maintaining a diverse source of revenue for media outlets is a challenge.

What became apparent in post-Soviet States therefore, was that the free market business model may not be the holy grail of journalism. In fact, Zaller (1999) found “for every set of cases in which I am able to make plausible comparisons, higher levels of market competition are associated with lower levels of news quality” (Zaller, 1999:1).

Fog (2004) argues that free market forces exclude broad social interests from participating in the main media and it leads to concentration of media ownership. While moderate competition may increase diversity, it has been found that ‘excessive competition may lead to decreased diversity’ (Fog, 2004).

Hence, after the early enthusiasm following liberalisation of media in the region, what occurred instead was the “erosion of the public sphere and the transformation of what were a series of government monopolies into a series of private oligopolies” (Deane, 2005:182).

Democratic transitions in Africa

The collapse of communism also had implications for media systems much further away than just the neighbouring Soviet satellites. For instance, in Africa, there was extensive liberalisation of media during the decade following the fall of the Berlin wall. Countries which had been tied in with the Soviet Bloc “made steps towards multi-party democracy” and a free market (Myers, 2014:6).

The press played an important role in forcing autocratic African regimes to press for democracy (Shaw, 2009). Calls for governance reforms from citizens of these countries, and international donors, brought in a new era of competition for political leadership. Between 1989 and 1994, as a consequence of external and internal demand for democratic change, 41 out of 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa underwent significant political reform, and, in many cases, the first competitive elections in a generation (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994).

Many autocratic leaders began to loosen their own grip on their countries’ media. These countries introduced legislation, giving local media “the freedom it lacked in previous decades....after years of muffled expression” (Myers, 2014:4).

For instance, in Benin, military rule was overturned in 1991 and the broadcasting sector was subsequently opened up. Similar patterns of media liberalisation emerged in Uganda and Mali in 1991, Nigeria and Cote D’Ivoire in 1992 and in Tanzania following the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1992. The period has been called Africa’s “democratic rebirth” (Kasoma, 1995:1) and the “springtime of media proliferation in Africa” (Myers, 2014:1).

Myers maintains that “almost every country in sub-Saharan Africa has seen an enormous rise in the numbers and diversity of private and independent newspapers and TV and radio channels” (Myers, 2014).

However, studies suggest that the process has not been smooth. Indeed, Minderhoud (2009) found that

introducing media liberalisation whilst simultaneously introducing multi-party politics, in a country context where identity politics play an all-determining role in defining the social contract between state and society, where poverty, deprivation and international marginalisation persists, and where formal democratic institutions are weak or not yet institutionalised has shown to produce undemocratic outcomes in Africa” (Minderhoud, 2009:2).

According to Linz and Stepan, few African political systems have so far developed into institutionalised, consolidated democracies – where democratic institutions and rules have become ‘the only game in town’ (Linz and Stepan, 1996:2).

On the contrary, Ocitti (1999) asserts that the “appearance and formalisms of procedural democracy” have also masked a more profound pattern of declining press freedom on the continent, as African governments, under the pretext of constitutional rule, “have resorted to the enactment of suppressive laws against an increasingly critical media” (Ocitti, 1999). He found that many of the impediments that the African media faced in the 1960s and 1970s are still alive today and “marks a reversal of the little that has been achieved politically since the beginning of the nineties” (Ocitti, 1999:30).

With regards to media development interventions during this period, the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) – a research program that assessed key media changes and foreign support to the media in seventeen African countries – found “substantial evidence [for]: non-sustainable and short-term approaches to projects; disconnected programs; unnecessary competition amongst donors; and, consequently wasted investment of donor funds” (AMDI, 2006:15).

In the same way that the “media missionaries” plan to export the western model of journalism to the post-Soviet states was not an unmitigated success, it has been suggested for example that problems within African media exist *because* of the western media model, i.e., free speech and private market forces. Authors such as Berger (2002), Nyamnjoh (2005) and Shaw (2009), believe that a reason for many of the problems with African Media are due to the fact that they are expected to act according to a neo-liberal paradigm which is not suited to the continent.

Nyamnjoh (2005) argues that western media programmes, instead of acknowledging local conditions, decreed that ‘aspiring journalists in Africa must, like containers, be dewatered of the mud and dirt of culture as tradition and custom, and filled afresh with the tested sparkles of culture as modernity and civilization’ (Nyamnjoh, 2005:3). He described this model further as:

A journalism of mimicry, bandwagonism and self-debasement, where African creativity and originality are crushed by the giant compressors of the One-Best-Way, as the Euro-centric assumptions and indicators of humanity, creativity and reality are universalised with the insensitive arrogance of ignorance and power (Nyamnjoh, 2005:3).

Thus, while the western liberal model of journalism, which media assistance programmes promote, exports values of objectivity and neutrality, some scholars feel that the African audience is not as keen on these values. Shaw claimed “the middle ground position, or objectivity, that is unique to the Western liberal democracy model, was, and still remains, an unpopular option” (Shaw, 2009:20).

He further argues that “the African model of journalism lays emphasis on the community (civil society), or communities (civil societies), the Western Liberal model emphasises the individual” (Shaw, 2009:20).

Kasoma lamented ‘the tragedy facing African journalism is that the continent’s journalists have closely imitated the professional norms of the North’ (Kasoma, 1996:95).

Thus, many scholars have expressed discontent with Western influence in African journalism. They argue that Western media practices applied in the African context arguably reinforce neo-colonialism (Banda, 2008), suppress people participation (Shaw, 2009) and are generally seen to be at odds with African philosophy (Blake, 2009; Jimada, 1992; Okigbo, 1987 quoted in Skjerdal, 2012:637).

Hence, it’s suitability to Africa is ‘questionable’ (Berger, 2002). Minderhoud argues that

The reality of ‘substantial democratic reversals’ (Puddington 2009:101), both in Africa and elsewhere in the world, frequently challenges media’s assumed positive democratic contribution.....Media’s democratic role – such as expressed by leading development actors – overlook the many, oft interdependent, challenges countries face in processes of democratisation and development (Minderhoud, 2009:7).

The fact that this western model is the one promoted by media assistance training projects, for better or worse, prompts a closer examination of the model.

The Media Development Model

Despite the evidence reviewed in this chapter pointing to the positive contribution that media can make to democracy and development, in the implementation of these media development projects, the process can be complex.

In the evaluation literature, authors frequently touch on an important issue with Western media development projects: the model of journalism. A large part of media development work has focused on providing support to train journalists in the developing world in western standards of journalism and create privately owned, independent media. “Media developers often tried to sell a U.S. “liberal” model of journalism - based on impartiality and facts” (Hume, 2011:22).

Mihai Coman argues, with regards to transitions in post-Soviet states, “that the source of crisis resides in the liberal media system, with its market battles, political struggles, ethical challenges and professional pressures” (Coman, 2000:54).

The rationale of donor organisations has been that having many different private media companies operating in any one country is the best way to build democracy and to provide access and voice to citizens.

But critics argue that these projects are misguided in trying to replicate an Anglo-Saxon model of journalism and Western media systems in their programmes.

Miller contends that

Journalism training in countries donors judge to be in transition to democracy—post-communist, post-colonial, post-autocratic, post-conflict, less developed—is very much

a Western project. Sometimes couched in the language of universal human rights, such as freedom of expression, the export of Western press practices, idealized social roles, and ethical claims raises fundamental questions that donors seem rarely to address (Miller, 2009:13).

Media scholars such as Hallin and Mancini (2004) and Curran and Park (2000) have similarly addressed the problem of the universal application of the Western model of journalism to other regions. In 'Comparing Media Systems', Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that 'the literature on the media is highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country, yet is written in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal' (Hallin and Mancini, 2004:2).

They noted that 'the liberal model has become the dominant model throughout the world: it serves as normative model for practitioners everywhere' (Shaw, 2009:507). In this model, journalists are expected to give neutral, impartial and objective reports and fulfil their social responsibility to the people (Hallin and Mancini, 2005). This liberal model is most aligned to the template being promoted in media development programmes and the authors call for a re-thinking of journalism theory and practice to reflect local conditions from one society to another.

Estonian journalism professor Epp Lauk (2005) argues that the belief that transitioning countries would follow the Anglo-American journalism paradigm has not happened for many reasons. These countries are 'in permanent flux, simultaneously fighting legacies of the past and searching for successful ways of

building up the states based on the rule of law, as well as civil societies’ (Lauk, 2005:208).

In the United States, the laws relating to freedom of the press, developed over 200 years, have for the most part been respected by power elites and the public, notwithstanding the attacks on the media by President Trump and his followers. Development in newly democratic nations has lasted only a few decades at most, and the Western “liberal” model of fact-based, impartial journalism competes with other styles of journalism—both old and new—for the public’s attention (Hume, 2011).

Some suggest that a western-like ideology could not be transplanted to Eastern Europe and other developing countries because of huge cultural and ideological differences (De Smaele, 1999; LaMay, 2001). The idea that Africa needs a journalism standard which differs from that of the rest of the world – and particularly from the West – has gained popularity among media scholars, although some question the viability of a journalism model unique to Africa (Strelitz, 2005; Tomaselli, 2011; in Skjerdal, 2012).

For instance, Kasoma (1996) has argued that African journalists should turn to the continent’s own values instead of imitating the norms of the North, which in his view had only led to media-driven selfishness and divisionism (Kasoma, 1996). Kasoma (1996) proposed ‘Afriethics’ as a basis for African journalism practice, but was criticised by colleagues from all over the continent who claimed that his ideology was based on a ‘romantic reconstruction of the pre-colonial’ (Nyamnjoh, 2005:91).

Merrill (2002) argued the idea that the media elsewhere conform to Western media structures is ‘not only an arrogant and ethnocentric one but also betrays a stultified, intellectual view of reality. Cultures are different; the values that shore up such

cultures are different. Stages of national development are different, Citizens expectations are different' (Merrill, 2002:18).

Furthermore, according to the media development model, to propose that the media in Africa could follow the same change model as the media in post-communist Europe would be simplifying the process of media assistance and reform. 'The maxim "one size does not fit all"' is ideal here (Kumar, 2009:1). Media Assistance takes place in dynamic environments, with different histories, cultures and politics, to suggest the interventions can have the same democratic outcomes would be naive.

At its root, media assistance after the Cold War took place in contrasting political environments and economic contexts. In post-communist Europe there was a ready consumer group, hungry for media products, and a populace that might be able to afford the abundance of media products that the free market brought. In Africa there was also widespread liberalisation, but media assistance took place in an environment where, despite a dynamic media sector, the majority of the consumer populace have extremely limited means to purchase media products and thus support the long term financial viability of media organisations.

Media development projects, when at their best, take place after rigorous country context and needs analysis, and a review of the political economy of the programme countries. Baseline audience research is conducted so that the appropriate media is used to achieve project objectives. In this way, each media development project differs from another, and it would be challenging to transplant one model from country to country.

Marguerite Sullivan from the Centre for International Media assistance (CIMA), which is funded by the US National Endowment for Democracy, agrees that

Establishing independent media in a country where they do not exist, or strengthening them in a country where they are weak, is no simple task. Required is an intricate structure with many interdependent parts... Picture a stool with strong supporting legs—professional journalists, a supportive legal environment, economically sustainable media, and news literate citizens and public officials. Take away a supporting leg, and the stool becomes unstable and is in danger of collapsing (Sullivan, 2008:3).

The literature reviewed here suggests one cannot copy media systems from one country to another and there is no ideal media development model. La May questioned whether ‘exporting press freedom’ was in fact possible at all to differing media ecosystems (1997).

This echoes James Miller’s observation that “the large-scale exportation of mainstream Western journalistic ethics and practices today brings to mind Marshall McLuhan’s famous admonition against driving into the future while looking in the rear-view mirror” (Miller, 2011:3). In addition to weakness in the model, journalistic values in the North are also under attack via social media and accusations of creating ‘fake news’.

Lauk (2008) suggested that in the future, altruistic journalism developers might have to take “very different directions” to accommodate the different cultures of the countries they are trying to help. She suggests “digitisation may provide the unifying influence for journalists that the Anglo-American model failed to be..... not because of global standards about journalism and technology, but because of the internet’s ubiquity and speed” (Lauk, 2008:209).

There have been successful media development interventions of course but the literature highlights that media development projects are incredibly complex and layered and these complexities may not be anticipated at the conceptual stage. Evaluation of long-term impact is also difficult.

Stremlau (2019) argues for greater focus and greater sensitivity to local contexts, and urges media assistance organisations to avoid a “blank slate” approach (Stremlau, 2019).

The evidence presented in this section illustrates the argument for using media in development and to achieve donor development goals. It shall be seen whether using ICTs for the same media development objectives is any less complicated, or whether as Lauk suggested, digitisation will be the solution for global journalism.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the academic literature relating to the media assistance sector and its potential benefits for democracy and development. The literature suggests that the relationship is not simple. This stems from the debate about the ideal role of media in society and the diversity of countries, societies, and cultures that bring different experiences and outcomes to the process of establishing independent or new media systems.

Historical theories of media and modernisation and theories around the concept of the public sphere were examined. It was noted that media development projects have often worked towards the creation of new or improved spaces for debate and dialogue in society.

As shall be discussed further in the following chapter, the term ‘Public Sphere’ has gained renewed importance with the spread of new communication technologies. The internet in particular is considered by some to provide unprecedented opportunities for exchanging information among a large number of people and across borders (Castells, 2008).

The thesis investigates whether digital technologies have the potential to achieve goals such as those discussed in this chapter – accountability, transparency, good governance and democracy. If yes, does this leave media assistance outmoded and irrelevant?

The literature surveyed in this chapter examined the evidence showing traditional media’s usefulness in achieving donor development goals such as those above. The next chapter will look at digital technologies’ potential to address the same issues.

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Part 2

ICTs and Development on the African continent

In chapter 2, the literature on democracy, development and media was reviewed to historically contextualise media assistance. Media Development, the focus for this research, operates within a wider sector of overseas development assistance, so this chapter will examine further the concept of ‘development’ in the broader context of overseas aid.

The emergence of the internet and the huge growth of mobile technologies in the past decade, especially in Africa, has influenced discussions about foreign aid and development. Encouraged by the fast growth in ICTs, and especially mobile phones, grant-making foundations and multilateral agencies have formed task forces and departments devoted to ICTs for international development. Policymakers, academics and development practitioners have hailed the technologies as the vehicle for Africa’s renaissance (Tedre et al., 2009; Yusuf et al., 2009).

The potential of ICTs for dissemination of news and access to information has thus changed the environment in which media development NGOs now implement their projects. This chapter will therefore investigate the growth of ICTs and in particular

mobile phones on the African continent and what this means for development. This chapter will address the following issues which arise in the literature

- What does the concept of “development” mean? And what are the current arguments for and against foreign development aid?
- What is the current landscape for development, and media development, in Africa, in particular with regard to the growth of its most popular ICT – the mobile phone?
- What is the evidence that ICTs can contribute to the objectives of foreign aid and democracy promotion such as accountability, participation and good governance?

Addressing the above questions will contextualise the research question in its African setting and give a deeper picture of where the research is situated. It will advance the investigation into digital technologies, development assistance and media support in Sub-Saharan Africa in the present day.

The chapter will therefore examine the case for using digital technologies for development and media assistance in an increasingly technological environment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Claims relating to ICTs positive contribution to development will be evaluated and the concepts of techno-determinism and cyber-optimism critically investigated. This will help address whether ICTs have potential to contribute to the same objectives as media assistance, thereby assessing its ongoing relevance.

Defining Development

As this research thesis explores the potential of digital technologies to achieve media development objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is pertinent to look further at what the concept of ‘development’ actually means, especially in an African context. For instance, does ‘development’ equate to GDP growth rates or does it involve a visible change in the lives of the population of a country? The reality is that there could still be widespread poverty in grassroots populations even when a country is perceived to have attained good levels of economic growth

The literature acknowledges that what is understood by the term ‘development’ is complex and subjective (Leftwich, 2005). Thomas argues that “alternative meanings of ‘development’ are ‘hotly contested’” (Allen et al., 1992:1).

For donors supporting the projects under discussion, their funds are being used for stated objectives, as outlined in their project strategy documents, and their understanding of what constitutes development presents one perspective. The concept of development as used in this thesis is informed by diverse academic fields – anthropology, sociology, economics and politics – each with emphasis on particular features of development. This contributes to the challenge of getting a conclusive definition of ‘development’.

Furthermore, the concept of international development is a relatively recent one.

Thomas wrote that “poverty is an age-old concern but ‘development’ has only become an important concept.... since the end of the Second World War” (Thomas, 2000:1).

As noted, following World War II there was a need for reconstruction in Europe and elsewhere and the launch of the Marshall Plan was a first step in creating a plan for international development. This plan combined humanitarian goals with political and economic goals.

Economic historian, Walt W Rostow, was one of the most influential scholars in development writing around that time and his book in 1960, *The Stages of Economic Growth* focused on the economic system, showing the factors needed for a country to reach the path to modernisation. Rostow outlined “five stages of growth” which involve a traditional society going through a period of industrialisation which would lead to a ‘take-off’ in mass-consumption, followed by profit generation and finally sustained growth (Rostow, 1960).

As noted with regard to modernisation, the idea that the underdeveloped could be ‘developed’ through the transfer of particular technologies was advanced by Lerner in 1958 and later supported by writings of Schramm (1964) and Rogers (1962). In his book, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Lerner attempted to correlate development with other variables such as literacy, urbanisation and media consumption and political development. Rogers proposed that media could be a ‘magic multiplier’ for development by fostering transmission of messages between the developers and ‘developees’ (Berger, 2005:3-4).

In his book *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) argued that development should be judged by its impact on people, not only by changes in their income but more generally in terms of their choices, capabilities and freedoms. He said that development should be concerned about the distribution of these improvements, not just the simple average for a society (Sen, 1999). Prior to this, many economists had focused on income as the main measure of well-being. Sen’s ‘*capabilities approach*’ focused on an individuals’ capability of achieving the kind of life they have ‘reason to value’ (Sen, 1999).

Thus, development can mean different things in different contexts; it can mean modernisation (as previously noted), economic growth (Rostow, 1960) or expansion of personal freedoms (as with Amartya Sen, 1999).

In more recent decades, the idea of good governance has gained momentum in development debates (Abrahamsen, 2000). According to the 1989 World Bank report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From crisis to sustainable growth*, good governance starts with rejecting past development models (World Bank, 1989) and it seeks to have a greater awareness of the social and cultural values of civil society (ibid).

Owen Barder, Director of the Centre for Global Development in UK, proposes that “development also carries a connotation of lasting change.... development consists of more than improvements in the well-being of citizens, even broadly defined: it also conveys something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for that well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis” (Barder, 2012).

More recently, ‘participation’ has become an important emphasis in the development sector (Leal, 2007). Leal notes that “somewhere in the mid-1980s, participation ascended to the pantheon of development buzzwords, catchphrases and euphemisms” (Leal, 2007:89). Past failures could be explained by its “previous top-down, blueprint mechanics, which were to be replaced by more people-friendly, bottom-up approaches” (Leal, 2007:91).

However, despite a shift in development thinking from a purely economic perspective to a more socially and politically inclusive one, a Western perspective still dominates the field. Ayers (2006) argues that the neo-liberal ideology of the 1990s which is

characterised by economic and trade liberalisation continues to prevail in development discourse (Ayers, 2006).

These theories are significant for the research question because the meta-objective of media assistance is ‘development’. A media project could be centred on strengthening of the media sector or increased citizen participation in any given country, yes, but usually it is in the context of a larger goal or vision of development from the funders. For western donors then this vision has very often been the promotion of democracy and the free market.

Kumar (2004) admitted that USAID’s media assistance was unashamedly a tool of foreign policy: “Independent media building has served U.S. national interests. In many countries, support to independent media created political space that enabled the US to pursue specific foreign policy goals” (Kumar, 2004: xiii).

Craig LaMay (2008) concurs that much of the emphasis in democracy projects is to open up free markets for western corporations: “US Government understand foreign assistance as a way to create markets economies and open markets abroad” (LaMay, 2008:41).

However, when media development projects are undertaken and funded by various international donors, with varying foreign policy goals, it can often be articulated in different ways as to the outcome actually expected.

For instance, China has become a recent donor of note in the African region. Myers (2009) claims that “China has a very different motive for funding a radio station in Africa from, say, The Netherlands. The former is for influence, commercial self-

interest and possibly propaganda. The latter is for the sake of more liberal – some would say “enlightened” –goals” (Myers, 2009:9).

For Myers to refer to China as a “media development donor” is somewhat complicated however, as the media development field traditionally emphasises concepts that are contrary to the Chinese media model system: freedom of the press, journalist and media outlet independence, and the importance of the media in holding governments to account.

However, ranked 10th among contributors to direct media assistance, providing roughly \$18 million in 2008 (Myers, 2009) it is certainly a presence of interest in African media development.

And although USA and United Kingdom have been two of the larger contributors to media assistance overall, in some African countries they are not the dominant ones. According to O’ Malley, France, Germany and the European Union were the largest supporters of Media development in Africa in 2016 (O’ Malley, 2018) and have a different approach to democracy and media assistance.

Regardless of motivation or ideology, it is worthwhile to examine whether efforts in overseas development have been successful and a worthwhile use of donor funds. It is important to examine whether development efforts have been successful historically as this will determine whether a new approach has more potential, for instance possibly using technological solutions for achieving donor objectives.

Having considered historical evaluations of media assistance in Chapter 2, the next section reviews literature evaluating the effectiveness of foreign aid.

Evaluating Foreign aid

The efficacy of development aid and whether it should be undertaken in the first place continues to be a matter of debate for scholars and policy makers. Economists such as Peter Bauer and Milton Friedman argued in the 1960s that aid is ineffective and Bauer called it "an excellent method for transferring money from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries" (Muehlenberg, 2009).

Development interventions have been accused of actively worsening poverty and inequality. Dr Paul Schaffer (2012) states that "process of modernity, in particular industrialisation, urbanisation, and the weakening of communal ties, have led to a massive increase in new forms of poverty that have been worsened by schemes of development such as poverty reduction strategies" (Shaffer, 2012:1772).

Dambisa Moyo (2010) argues that "the problem is that aid is not benign – its malignant. No longer part of the potential solution, its part of the problem – in fact aid is the problem" (Moyo, 2010: 47).

Dr Simon Reid-Henry, a senior fellow at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, argues that the overall effect of modernisation for some societies was "the replacement of traditional poverty by a more modern form of misery" (Reid-Henry, 2012). Andrews (2009) concluded that although billions in official aid still flows from donor governments to recipient governments, foreign aid has failed to erase poverty (Andrews, 2009).

In the past decade, the opposing sides in this debate have come to be embodied by the clash of the two personalities of William Easterly, a well-known American economist specialising in development, and Jeffrey Sachs, economist and director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University. Their debate began in the pages of the *New York*

Review of Books in 2005, when Easterly asked “Can we in the West end poverty elsewhere?”

Sachs, author of *The End of Poverty* (2005) believed the answer is yes, and that the solution is international Aid. He claimed that extreme poverty in rural Africa (and elsewhere) is not attributable to corruption or other aspects of flawed governance, but to a lack of sufficient funds. "The focus on corruption and governance is exaggerated," he wrote in *The End of Poverty*, "Africa's governance is poor because Africa is poor"(Sachs, 2005:312, 198).

Easterly took the opposite view. He claimed that nations cannot be “airlifted into prosperity” by outsiders, “even if their surname is Clinton”, and foreign aid often does more harm than good (Barker, 2013). Easterly argued

To Professor Sachs, African poverty is just a technical problem that “the world’s leading practitioners” can solve if only these experts are given enough money for their “proven strategies.” This reveals a remarkable naiveté about the roots of poverty. Poverty in Africa is the outcome of much deeper factors such as political elites who seek mainly to protect their own position, dysfunctional institutions like corruption and lack of property rights, and a long history of exploitation and meddling from abroadIt takes breath-taking hubris to assert that this mess can be fixed for the tidy sum of \$75 billion (Easterly, 2007).

Recently, Bill Gates has directly addressed this debate. Gates has emerged as a considerable donor in media development in Africa in recent years through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (although much of this is for Communication for Development projects).

In his annual letter in 2014, entitled: “3 Myths that block progress to the poor”, Gates targeted the so-called myth that foreign aid does not work: “What we see over time is people living longer, getting healthier, and escaping poverty, partly because of services that aid helped develop and deliver. I worry about the myth that aid doesn’t work. It gives political leaders an excuse to try to cut back on it—and that would mean fewer lives are saved, and more time before countries can become self-sufficient” (Gates, 2014).

These arguments are pertinent to the media development sector because there are those who also question government funds, and tax dollars, being spent on supporting media projects and systems in faraway countries and whether doing so is a worthwhile target for aid funds.

Current day media development takes place in a setting where the justifications for undertaking aid are frequently challenged. Western donors want to know their money is being well spent and implementers want to learn from past mistakes.

Yet, the media development industry itself struggles to produce real evidence of the impact of its projects. Mosher claims that “the media development field lacks a clear evidence base that illustrates the impact and significance of its activities, training programs, and advocacy work” (Mosher, 2009:7).

Projects that involve Media for Development (M4D) and Communication for Development (or C4D) have more success in producing results and evaluations of their impact because they can measure audience, reach and behaviour change.

But, with ‘media development’ projects - meaning media sector reform, media industry trainings, regulatory change or projects aiming to enhance participation or the

public sphere - it is much more problematic to prove impact and success. Democracy, Governance or improvements in journalism quality - these are long-term variables which are also effected by other changes in the socio-political environment, so often it is challenging to show whether improvements in a measure are due to the media assistance intervention (Noske-Turner, 2017).

Mosher argues “that media matter is not such a hard case to support, but exactly how it matters and what it actually does, in the context of development, whether by contributing to the health of the economy, polity, or society, has been the focus of considerable debate” (Mosher, 2009:7).

Thus, definite conclusions on the impact of media development programmes have been difficult.

The growth of mobile technologies on the African continent

The central tenet of this research thesis asks whether digital technologies can contribute to the same objectives as traditional media in media assistance projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. As noted, the upsurge of mobile phone use in Africa has sparked a rise in interest in these ICTs and how these might be applied to development. The mobile phone has been celebrated for bringing information and news to people of all levels of income at a much faster rate than other developing nations before it (Poushter and Oates, 2015). According to some, no technology has transformed Africa in recent years as much, and as rapidly, as the cellular phone (Alozie, 2007; Bailard, 2009).

This section will therefore examine the impact of the growth in ICTs and in particular mobile phones on Africa, and what potential they offer for development.

The growth in penetration and use of the mobile phone has been described as ‘revolutionary’ and ‘transformational’ for the African continent. According to the International Telecommunication Union, no technology has ever seen such a rapid rate of adoption as mobile phones, and the developing world is leading the way (Tyler, 2010).

Indeed, as at 2003 there was one main telephone line per 100 inhabitants and 2.8 mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in the region, a penetration rate of 2.8%. By the end of 2018, there was a penetration rate of 44% (GSMA Intelligence, 2018). Penetration rates are much higher for some individual countries such as Kenya and Tanzania. For instance in Kenya, there is now a mobile phone penetration rate of over 100 percent (CCK, 2018).

What is unique about the mobile phone and its suitability for the African environment is the combination of the affordability of hardware, the affordability of service, its portability due to its small size and light weight, and its power efficiency. Akpan-Obong found that the comparatively lower cost of acquisition of the cell phone and its stand-alone technology make it more affordable for resource-poor people predominant in Sub-Saharan Africa (Akpan-Obong et al., 2010). De Bruijn claims mobile phones have become part and parcel of the communication landscape in urban and rural areas of Africa (De Bruijn, 2009).

The availability of pre-paid subscriptions (prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa) and services such as *M-Pesa*⁹ make the mobile phone a particularly attractive ICT for Africans. While prepaid tariffs tend to be more expensive (per minute) than billed

⁹ *M-Pesa*, the mobile phone-based money transfer service launched by Kenya’s mobile network operator Safaricom, is perhaps the most successful and profitable digital innovation in Africa so far. The system processed around 6 billion transactions in 2016 (Monks, 2017).

tariffs they are frequently chosen “because they are often the only payment method available to low-income users who might not have a regular income and will thus not qualify for a postpaid” plan. Indeed, about 95% of cell phone users in Africa use pre-paid services (in Akpan-Obong et al, 2010:5).

Payment services via mobile phones such as *M-Pesa* have positioned countries such as Kenya at the forefront of mobile financial services. CNN claimed “in some ways, they're really leaping ahead of us” (Voight, 2011).

This concept of leapfrogging has been used again and again to describe how Africa is not following the usual path of development as conceived by traditional modernisation theories (Akpan-Obong et al., 2010; Fong, 2009; Nkwae, 2003). One of the reasons is that Africa has been able to leap a stage of development by avoiding the costly infrastructure of telephone landlines and going straight to mobile communications.

Southwood (2009) describes how mobile technology has been able to bypass severe infrastructural constraints that have hindered the old land-line technology on the continent. As Southwood noted “Africa was considered a difficult place to do business and an even harder place to make money” (Southwood, 2009: xv). He observed that before mobile phones:

Fixed line phones were provided by a monopoly provider and were not well resourced or energetic about connecting customers. Waiting lists for new subscribers could be ten years. The absence of instant communications provided many excuses for things undone and little incentive for action (Southwood, 2009:xv).

Southwood (2009) refers to this reshaping of life in Africa as ‘less walk and more talk’. In his book of the same name he describes the changes in daily life that the phone has been a catalyst for:

A son wants to talk to his mother in a neighbouring village – it’s a two day walk each way.

A plumber makes house calls all morning only to return to his shop to pick up messages for the afternoon.

A rural farmer wants to know what crop prices are in the market to see when best to sell his crops – he has to take a day out to visit the market only to find out that the prices are too low midweek.

This was Africa before mobile phones arrived: a lot of walking and not much talking. (Southwood, 2009: xiv).

So, it appears the mobile phone has become the ICT of choice for Africans. Mobile service is now relatively cheap to acquire and the technology on basic feature phones is user-friendly enough that one does not require any particular level of sophistication to use it. This is especially relevant for sub-Saharan’s largely illiterate populations¹⁰.

Thus, mobile phones are said to becoming essentials for many Africans. “People might not have shoes, but they have a cellphone” wrote Peskin (Peskin, 2011:20).

Indeed, Africans in the region are making real sacrifices to finance their cell phone. A study by Crandall et al., found that at least 20 per cent of respondents, who were

¹⁰ UNESCO statistics show that the literacy rate for sub-Saharan Africa was 65 % in 2017. In other words, one third of the people aged 15 and above were unable to read and write

living on less than US\$2.50 per day, felt it was necessary to make real sacrifices to recharge their mobile credit. In the majority of cases, that meant buying less food, at least once a week. New clothes, bus fares, utility bills and even soap were sometimes sacrificed to sustain their mobile phone (Crandall et al., 2012). Other research has found that some users are willing to spend up to a quarter of their household income on mobile phone charges (De Carvalho et al., 2011) and to go without food in order to stay informed and entertained (Banerjee and Duflo, 2007).

The reason they are willing to do this is because a mobile phone helps them to improve their lives in the long term through “better access to information and resources..... Access to information has become as vital as water and electricity” (Powell III, 2012:11).

The *New America* think-tank argues that “mobile phones provide those living in poverty with an opportunity to be their own problem solvers, business entrepreneurs and aid workers. Connectivity and creativity have transformed mobile phones from a technology device into a tool of economic empowerment” (Tyler, 2010).

Jeffrey Sachs enthusiastically claimed that mobile phones had been a gift for development. In an article for *The Guardian* newspaper he argued “extreme poverty is almost synonymous with extreme isolation, especially rural isolation. But mobile phones and wireless internet end isolation, and will therefore prove to be the most transformative technology of economic development of our time” (Sachs, 2008).

There are many testimonies of the beneficial day to day uses of mobile technology in Africa. Most people will have by now seen the ubiquitous image of the Masai farmer in traditional costume as he appears to be transacting day to day business on this mobile phone.

For example, in Senegal, information available through mobile phones enabled farmers to double the prices of their crops and herders in Angola to locate their cattle through GPS (global positioning system) technology (in Fong, 2009). Providing market price information in the fisheries or agricultural sectors creates better functioning markets and gets rid of intermediaries (Kuriyan et al., 2008).

Thus, there is great optimism about the potential of mobile connectivity for the African continent as it is seen as having the potential to increase economic productivity. Yonazi claims “the value of a mobile phone is higher in Africa than elsewhere” (Yonazi et al., 2012:13). ICTs directly contribute around 7 per cent of Africa’s GDP, which, is higher than the global average. That’s because, in Africa, mobile phones are also “substitutes for many other types of service, such as financial credit, newspapers, games and entertainment” (Yonazi et al., 2012:28).

The economic impact of mobile telephony in Kenya was assessed by the *Global Mobile Tax Review*¹¹ who claimed the industry contributed about \$3.6 billion to the country’s gross domestic product. It has also made a significant contribution to employment, with an estimated 250,000 people employed by the industry in 2011 (Deloitte LLP, 2011). This is arguably through improved information flows, reducing travel time and costs, and improved business efficiency.

This section has noted the enthusiasm for the mobile phone, which has resulted in development agencies, funders and NGOs looking at these technologies to assist development and aid programmes. The next section will review the evidence, if any, that these new technologies can have a positive effect on development in Africa.

11 An annual report produced by the GSM Association which analyses consumption profiles, prices and taxes

ICT for Development in Africa

In recent years, the fields of ICT for Development (ICT4D) and Mobile For development (M4D) have thus moved centre stage in the development field.

Banda maintained that the introduction of new media technology in Africa in the 1990s “sparked celebratory, almost utopian bliss in its proponents. It was accompanied by the hype about the continent’s possibility of “leapfrogging” some stages of development, as though the whole process of development had been rendered less problematic” (Banda et al., 2009:1).

In their research into the area of ICTs in development, Ogan et al (2009) found that there has been an upsurge in the use of the ICT paradigm within development discussions and its use as a ‘holy grail’. They found more than half of all journal articles addressing the topic of communication and development between 2004 and 2007 focused primarily on ICTs (Ogan et al, 2009).

Heeks (2009) noted that “the digital technologies of the 1990s were new tools in search of a purpose. Development goals were new targets in search of a delivery mechanism. That these two should find each other and fall in love was not unexpected. They had a baby called "ICT4D", born in a flurry of publications, bodies, events, programmes and project funding” (Heeks, 2009:3).

Many authors (Castells, 2000; Mansell, 1994; Mansell & When, 1998; Negroponte, 1996) have compared the development of ICTs to changes brought about by the printing machines or the invention of writing. Bedi (1999) noted ‘proponents attribute a wide and almost impossible array of positive effects to ICTs’ (Bedi, 1999:3). These include economic growth, agricultural and industrial productivity, efficiency of public administration, and participation in democracy.

These studies show the discussions that are taking place in more recent years with regards to development in Africa. The idea behind the techno-optimism is that more and better information and communication helps development.

As noted, in recent years, technology companies have also entered the media assistance space supporting media development projects through their foundations (such as the Gates Foundation and Omidyar Foundation). Their media projects focus on technology solutions for development problems and they increasingly contribute to the discourse on aid.

However, the distinction should be made between the apparent economic benefits that mobile technologies can bring for African nations and the political ones. Whilst this chapter attests to the positive impact that these ICTs are having on the lives of citizens of some countries in Africa, this does not mean that they are having the same impact on the political arena, on participation and on the public sphere.

This difference is important because this research asks whether new digital forms of media can add to or replace older traditional and legacy forms of media in media development projects. And if the goal of these projects is better governance, accountability, transparency and democracy, it is still debatable whether ICTs have the same impact on these objectives.

For instance, Groshek (2009) found that internet diffusion had a positive impact on democratisation across 152 countries, whilst Nisbet et al (2012) examining the relationship between internet penetration, individual internet use, and citizen demand for democracy across 28 countries, found no correlation (Groshek, 2009; Nisbet et al., 2012).

The next section will examine these claims of the potential for ICTs to contribute to governance and democracy on the African continent

Digital technology and Political Change

With the growth of digital technologies in Africa, claims are now being made about the democratising power of new media. ICTs, it is thought, might facilitate direct participation of people in political decision-making, making possible the rise and visibility of public opinion as a way of influencing the political process and thus making leaders more concerned and responsive to public opinion.

Sika et al (2014) note that “ICTs are now widely accepted to be powerful tools with which to combat many of the challenges that African countries face, including governance” (Sika et al., 2014:9).

The use of mobile phones and the internet, for example through Twitter or Facebook, might allow people to follow decision-making processes and discuss issues of common concern (Castells, 2007; Mäkinen and Kuira, 2008).

ICTs are viewed by some as a way to promote democratic governance, and cultural and political resistance against dictatorships. From this perspective, access to ICTs is seen as aiding the democratic process in Africa (Grossman, 1995).

Referring to digital technologies and social media platforms as “liberation technology”, Diamond (2008) has argued that “through expanding economic freedom, civic mobilization, and the development of ‘liberation technology,’ even seemingly entrenched regimes...could well become democracies within a generation” (Diamond, 2008).

Much of the excitement around new technologies extols the potential contribution of digital technologies and social media platforms to the development of civil society and practices of citizenship.

Howard has argued that new communication technologies have become the “infrastructure for sharing and learning about diverse views and for new approaches to political representation and participation” (Howard, 2011:40). Braskov and Obregon (2012) claim that new media provide greater opportunities for engagement and participation of individuals and communities (Braskov and Obregon, 2012).

This cyber-optimism is of relevance because many media development projects have objectives to improve governance, participation and accountability and ICTs are now being proposed as a solution to these goals in Africa, and elsewhere. There are a proliferation of ICT for Accountability initiatives taking place in the region and this is based on a paradigm which assumes increased citizen engagement through ICTs, which could furthermore result in increased accountability (Fung et al., 2010; Sika and Sambuli, 2014; Tettey, 2002)

But, the effectiveness of new media technologies to bring about social change is contested. When it comes to Africa, the contribution of ICTs, of which mobile phones form a part, to development and democracy has been questioned in a number of sources (Hahn and Kibora, 2008). Tettey's research into ICT use in Africa found that even though “a lot more people are getting a lot more information... this does not translate into a significant expansion in the numbers and categories of those who engage in, and hence influence, the direction of politics on the continent” (Tettey, 2001:133). Alozie et al (2011), maintain that in Africa “the effect of ICTs on political development can neither be certified as revolutionary, nor can they be codified as

panacea” and that “ICTs may not be the ‘magic bullet’ for political development in sub-Saharan Africa” (Alozie et al., 2011:1,19). Christensen (2011) is similarly sceptical about the liberating powers of digital technology and has explicitly criticised Diamond’s term ‘liberation technology’ as “excessively techno-utopian.” He is critical of aid donors in the global North and how they have been “quick to declare social media key tools in the battles over freedom of speech rights and democratic change in developing nations ... despite the lack of evidence” (Christensen, 2011:234).

For instance, during the Arab risings in North Africa, leaders of social movements were seen to use ICTs to mobilise public opinion, organise mass protests and publicise concerns and demands locally and globally. This led to it being named Revolution 2.0.

However, years after the so-called Arab Spring, authoritarian control has resurfaced. So, the role of ICTs (often in the form of social media) and their promise to create revolution and regime change is questionable. Buccianti and el-Richani (2015) note that “in the years since the uprisings, it has become clear that the democratising potential of social media for the region may have been overstated” (Buccianti and el-Richani, 2015:5).

Indeed, even where communication technologies contribute to mass protest and the strengthening of social movements, of course there is no guarantee that such protests and movements will necessarily be successful and result in regime change.

Evgeny Morozov noted that in Iran “as the Green Movement lost much of its momentum in the months following the election, it became clear that the Twitter Revolution so many in the West were quick to inaugurate was nothing more than a wild fantasy” (Morozov, 2011:5).

In his book, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (2011) Morozov expresses scepticism about the power of the technology to bring about democratic change. He argues against the notion that the internet is essentially liberating, dubbing this notion “cyber-utopianism”. On the contrary, Morozov refers to the internet’s alternative potential to be used by authoritarian regimes for surveillance, repression, propaganda, and control of the digital media space, claiming that belief in a new public sphere that would undermine oppressive governments was a “delusion” (Morozov, 2011:i).

Many regimes have often responded to the threat of online activism by cracking down on the use of social media. In many cases, those in power or elites own and/or control the infrastructure for such technologies and can disrupt internet and mobile phone services, as occurred in Iran and in Egypt. So, although social media can initially help protest movements, they can also help the regime to crack down on the movement (Aday et al., 2010; Papic and Noonan, 2011).

Malcolm Gladwell has noted that instead of being defined by their causes, activists are now being defined by their tools. The protest in Moldova in 2009 against the Communist government was dubbed the ‘Twitter Revolution’, because of the means through which demonstrators were brought together (Gladwell, 2010a). Coverage of the revolts in Egypt and Tunisia were also labelled the ‘Wiki Revolution and ‘Twitter Revolution’.

But Gladwell insists “the revolution will not be tweeted”. He argues that the platforms of social media are “built around weak ties” and suggests “whereas strong ties are required for high risk (off-line) activism that explicitly confronts socially

entrenched norms and practices, the weak ties sustained by social media produce little more than “clicktivism” (Gladwell, 2010b).

The focus on the role of social media has been critiqued for taking away attention from the actual causes of protests and movements and the role of human agency. These labels attribute to a technology what is in fact the reaction to economic, social and political grievances (Ottaway and Hamzawy, 2011).

These discussions illustrate some of the current debates about the role digital technology can play in political change. These debates are pertinent as many media assistance donors are encouraging the use of ICTs in their programmes without any systematic evidence that they will achieve positive results. According to Aday, “most accounts are based on anecdotes rather than rigorously designed research” (Aday et al., 2010:3).

Along with the growth in these ICTs in Africa and claims of the democratising power of digital platforms, claims are also made about the knock-on effect on the public sphere. Odugbemi maintains “whether these governments like it or not, these technologies are transforming their communication environments, their national public spheres in irreversible ways” (Odugbemi, 2014).

It is asserted that this new space provides citizens with numerous opportunities to engage in political process as well as to take a more active role in the governance process (Benkler, 2006).

This is important in the context of this research because, as noted, legacy media has traditionally been seen as fulfilling this role (see Habermas, 1962; Norris and Tettey,

2010) and media assistance projects often work to strengthen and support the public sphere. Can the internet and digital platforms do this more successfully?

ICTs and the new Public Sphere

The internet and digital media are seen to provide new opportunities for dialogue and participation and this is why they are often referred to as the New Public Sphere or ‘virtual public sphere’. In modern day high-tech societies, there is a redefinition of the public sphere which goes beyond Habermas to include new ‘cyberspaces’ (Kellner, 2000:284). A number of different formulations of this position exist.

Castells, for one, maintains an optimistic view of the internet as a new space of inclusive public sphere, saying that ‘the internet was expected to be an ideal instrument to further democracy – and still is’ (Castells, 2001:155).

Benkler (2006) further asserts that the World Wide Web encourages a more open, participatory approach because it enables users to potentially communicate directly with many other users in a way that is outside the control of the media owners. He claims that it “holds great practical promise; as a dimension of individual freedom; as a platform for better democratic participation” (Benkler, 2006: 2).

Digital platforms have brought down barriers to group action, which has allowed for new ways of gathering together and getting things done. In “The Political Power of Social Media” (2011) technology evangelist, Clay Shirky offers a view of social media as a long-term tool for strengthening civil society and the public sphere. He argues that by democratising media production, now with a handheld device, it “allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting

views” (Shirky, 2011:5). In other words, the internet provides not just great access to information, but greater “access to conversation”.

Digital technologies and social media are seen to expand the realm for democratic participation and debate and create new public spaces for political discussion.

Morrisett (2003) argued that ICTs can be used to provide a modern-day equivalent of the barbershop, connecting citizens across the nation and with their leaders (Morrisett, 2003).

This is especially relevant in countries where radio, television, and the other electronic media of communication are closed to critical voices, both in systems controlled by the state or by private corporations. In these countries, if access is permitted, the internet certainly provides a new public sphere where traditional media cannot, because it is censored by the state or by its ties to big business and advertising.

This is of particular relevance in countries such as those we look at in Sub-Saharan Africa, as there are new spaces being created by digital technologies, and arguably these spaces for information, debate, and participation can invigorate democracy. For instance, Frère and Kiyindou (2009) claim that in francophone Africa the internet has enhanced citizen engagement in the public sphere through public debates, more access to official information and more interaction with civil society, thereby giving African citizens more capacity to participate in local and worldwide public spheres (Frère and Kiyindou, 2009:73).

As will be seen in the country Case Studies, the internet in Kenya and Tanzania has enabled the growth of blogs, forums and social media which provides alternative virtual spaces to the mainstream media, which is the main has been co-opted by politicians or business interests.

However, the idea of the internet as an ideal public sphere has its complications. In *The virtual sphere: The internet as a public sphere*, Papacharissi (2002) maintained that although the internet may hold the promise of reviving the public sphere, features of the technology simultaneously curtail its potential: information access inequalities and new media literacy issues. She claimed:

A new public space is not synonymous with a new public sphere. As public space, the internet provides yet another forum for political deliberation. As public sphere, the internet could facilitate discussion that promotes a democratic exchange of ideas and opinions. A virtual space enhances discussion; a virtual sphere enhances democracy (Papacharissi, 2002:11).

Papacharissi also noted that internet-based technologies, while enabling discussion between people on far sides of the globe, also frequently fragments political discourse. So while these technologies have the potential of bringing people together, they also risk “spinning them in different directions” (Papacharissi, 2002:16).

Comparing new and old media, a study by German scholars Jürgen Gerhards and Mike Schäfer in 2009 tried to establish whether the internet offers a better and broader communication environment compared to newspapers. They investigated whether the online space proved to be a more democratic public sphere, with a wider range of sources and views, but found "only minimal evidence to support the idea that the internet is a better communication space as compared to print media" (Gerhards and Schäfer, 2010:13).

Furthermore, Gerhards & Schäfer found that the internet is not an alternative public sphere because less prominent voices end up being silenced by the search engines'

algorithms. "Search engines might actually silence societal debate by giving more space to established actors and institutions" (Gerhards and Schäfer, 2010:14).

This is noteworthy here because there is often a utopian rhetoric that surrounds discussion on new media technologies and promises of citizen engagement. Proponents of cyberspace claim that online discourse will increase political participation and pave the way for democracy.

However, Fackson Banda (2009) questions whether new media technologies do “*indeed* improve and qualitatively change the African continent’s political structures, systems, and process or only create a quantitative increase in access to information and interaction stemming from the ease and relative cheapness of new ICTs” (Banda et al., 2009:14).

The tech-evangelists believe that the virtual sphere holds promise as a political medium as it encourages political discussion and serves as a forum for it. However, the virtual public sphere is dominated by those with access to computers or mobile internet, much like the bourgeois of Habermas’ public sphere, still available to only a portion of the population. Furthermore, as will be investigated later in the thesis, technologies are not universally accessible and can result in fragmented discussions.

Polat (2005) suggests that although the internet may provide an additional space for political deliberation, its role in extending the public sphere is limited because “of its fragmented nature, inequalities in access and formation of groups around single issues” (Polat, 2005:452).

Research by Davis (2007) on the internet’s role in representative politics found that new media accelerated the decline of the traditional mass-mediated public spheres and

contributed to “exclusionary political ‘elite discourse networks’ despite assumptions to the contrary” (Davis, 2007:55).

Indeed, Foster and McChesney state that ‘the enormous potential of the internet has vaporized in a couple of decades’ (Foster and McChesney, 2011:21). The era of Echo Chambers¹² and Fake News¹³ has also shown the virtual public sphere to be anything but ideal.

Curran, Freedman and Fenton (2012) have challenged the cyber-optimism relating to the internet and its proposed transformational power over society. Fenton describes how social media “reinforces political fragmentation and inhibits solidarity among the disenfranchised”, whilst “providing an illusion of direct control through self-expression” (Curran et al., 2012:170).

Indeed, after examining the ownership structures of new media, Curran et al. find that the internet era is marked by the increasing power of existing large corporations. And whereas democracy is intended to give a voice to everyone, the internet broadly fails to achieve this due to educational, language and economic barriers (Curran et al., 2016).

So, mobile phones may have transformed the “ecology of political communication” and also “facilitated democratic engagement”, but Tetley (2017) notes that despite this positive relationship there was still “no significant alteration

12 In media, an **echo chamber** is a situation in which information, ideas, or beliefs are amplified or reinforced by transmission and repetition inside an "enclosed" system. “The idea that online conversations about politics are typically divided into a variety of sub-groups, and that this division takes place along ideological lines with people only talking to others with which they are already in agreement (Bright, 2017: 1).

13 A reference to fabricated and untrue stories, but used by current US President as a tool to discredit journalism and the press.

in fundamental structures of political power” (Tettey, 2017:1).

In fact, Tettey (2001) argued that “while technologies have expanded the amount and sources of information that are potentially available to citizens, they have not resulted in any significant transformations in the way government is run or how politics are conducted on the [African] continent” (Tettey, 2001:1).

So, while the literature suggests that the internet has the potential to extend the public sphere, at least in terms of the information that is available to citizens, more information does not necessarily lead to greater political activity.

Akpan-Obong (2010) confirms “that ICTs may well have revolutionized the social space of sub-Saharanans is not contested. Yet, one must grapple with the reality that level of mobile phone penetration has far outpaced political development in the sub-Saharan” (Akpan-Obong et al., 2010:18).

These issues make it a most interesting point in time to investigate support for media assistance and independent journalism and the impact of digital technologies on this sector.

The potential of digital technologies with respect to social change will be explored more in later chapters in relation to the two case study countries. The stakeholders provide valuable insights into the true potential of ICTs to influence change on the continent.

The cyber-optimism that is apparent in the literature would suggest that these new technologies will dramatically alter media development work - providing a new open space for political discussion, for participation, for education, for cross-society reconciliation even. What need for traditional media and traditional ‘media

development’ then? Is it still relevant in the new information ecosystem in Africa? These are the central questions which the research addresses in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the debate on development aid, media development and ICTs in an African setting.

It was noted that the concept of development itself is unclear and donors have different priorities and ways of expressing what it means to them in their aid policies. There is little evidence in the literature showing foreign aid as a resounding success, and there are arguments both for and against overseas development interventions. The same argument can be made for media assistance, or ‘media interference’ as it has been referred (Berger, 2002).

Jones and Waisbord maintain “we still know very little about the link between aid interventions and media transformations” (Jones and Waisbord, 2010:1). Noske-Turner noted that “few media assistance evaluations manage to provide sound evidence of impacts on governance and social change” (Noske-Turner, 2014:1).

The fast growth of ICTs and the mobile phone on the African continent has been accompanied by enthusiastic claims about what they can do for the regions’ social, economic and political problems.

This chapter examined the potential for ICTs and digital technology for development goals. No doubt they have impacted on the social and economic sphere in this region of Africa, but the political impact of ICTs may have been exaggerated. This is particularly relevant for media development projects, where ICTs are being viewed

through rose-coloured lenses by donors as a solution to governance, accountability and participation issues. However, the effectiveness of new digital technologies to bring about political change is contested.

Both Chapters 2 and 3 have critically assessed the strengths and weaknesses as outlined in the literature of both traditional media and ICTs with regard to development goals. The primary research aims to ascertain from those working directly in the practice of media development whether these technologies can positively contribute to their programmes to address media development goals. Thus, the research will build on the academic literature reviewed here to address the question of whether media assistance is still relevant in the current political and technological environment.

Chapters 5 and 6 present findings on the current landscape and ‘information ecosystem’ for media development practice in Kenya and Tanzania and subsequently, whether these digital technologies are being utilised to address donor goals. Prior to that, Chapter four will outline the methodology adopted.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods and the research design employed to address the central research question of whether media assistance is obsolete, and more specifically the potential for digital technologies to achieve media development donor goals in Sub-Saharan Africa. Motivated by ongoing changes in the media and journalism spheres brought about by digital technology, the thesis asks how these changes are impacting in practice on the media development sector.¹⁴

The approach adopted in the research design was a mixed method one using a variety of research methods to address the hypothesis. This entailed using secondary data sources to construct case studies of the two focus countries followed by a period of qualitative research comprising face to face interviews to collect primary data. The rationale for using these methods will be discussed in more detail in this chapter.

In answering whether digital technologies can contribute to donor goals in media development practice, the research elicits the views of those working on the ground implementing projects as to whether they are integrating these technologies into their

¹⁴ The distinction is made again between Media Development as in strengthening the media sector and media for development, which uses media as a medium for development messages. These are both covered by the umbrella term ‘media development sector’. The research found that in the case study countries, these two disciplines tended to overlap.

programmes, and if they are being used to what success. If they are not being used, the research investigates why not.

The underlying rationale is that if digital technologies are being used in media development activities to address media development objectives, will this render established methods of media assistance redundant? Thus, the thesis looks at what form current media development practice takes in East Africa, specifically in Kenya and Tanzania. In this chapter then, the methods used to address the central research question will be discussed.

Methods for this research

The choice of which research method to employ depends on the nature of the research question. Morgan and Smircich (1980) argue that the actual suitability of a research method “derives from the nature of the phenomenon to be observed” (Morgan and Smircich, 1980:491).

The first step was to review the literature on media development, democracy promotion and ICTs in development to provide a theoretical underpinning for the research question. To provide deeper insight into the subject matter, the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 gave a background to the field of media development and the media assistance sector, of the ideology that drives it, including the context for media development activity on the African continent today. The literature provides a framework on which to understand the role and function of media assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa in its current setting.

As such, appropriate methods are required in order to:

- a) Compile recent data via desk review of available sources of information on Kenya and Tanzania. This will give a picture of the context and landscape (or the ‘information ecosystem’¹⁵) in which ‘media development’ projects are currently being carried out in these countries
- b) Garner from a range of key informants working within the media development sector in Kenya and Tanzania the degree to which digital technologies and social media are being utilised in their current programmes. This provides the “view from practice” of the thesis title. It was thought especially important to provide a perspective from those working directly in the field of media development, a practical view which could illuminate whether digital technologies can live up to their promise in the context of media assistance. The key stakeholders can also provide a view as to whether the work is still relevant in the current information eco-system.

With regards to (a) above, the research presents an overview of the media landscapes in Kenya and Tanzania and how they may have changed as a result of recent changes in digital media technologies. Any changes in the media environment might influence the medium used or media addressed by media development NGOs in their projects or the format of capacity building programmes. A survey of the media environment might also help identify what media interventions are needed in the region.

For instance, media development projects, if they are going to be effective, need to employ the media that their target groups are using. As example, if a donor is funding

¹⁵ An “information ecosystem” refers to the producers and consumers of various types of media, as well as the social and community structures through which information is accessed, consumed, influenced, trusted, and shared (Bourgault, 2016).

a project with the objective of encouraging urban youth to engage more and participate in political processes, the project might use TV (a more urban based media in many African countries) or youth journals/ magazines to connect with this group. Alternatively, if a project is trying to encourage rural women to use more modern practices in their agricultural work, the project would most likely use radio (which is widely used in rural Africa, both my males and females, literate and non-literate).

With regards to media sector reform projects, if there are training initiatives taking place, to what extent do journalists need capacity building in digital technologies or are they already skilled in these areas? And with media restructuring endeavours, have these projects changed to incorporate the newer technologies? Are ICTs a central part of media sector transformation programmes, if any are being undertaken?

Providing a snapshot of the focus countries' media systems will enable a deeper understanding of the needs of the media sector in the region, what the industry term 'needs analysis'.

Thus, the country case studies give a background context for the media development projects that are taking place, and furthermore, can identify what media assistance interventions are needed, if any. This will help with assessing whether digital technologies have the potential to contribute to these interventions.

The research approach is also informed by Robson and McCartan (2016) who suggest the following guidelines for selecting research methods:

To find out what people do in public: *use observation*

To find out what they do in private, *use interviews or questionnaires*

To find out what they think, feel and/or believe, *use interviews, questionnaires or attitude scales* (Robson and McCartan, 2016:242)

As noted by Woods, “large amounts of relevant information about the experiences of others may be collected by directly questioning or talking to people” (Woods, 2011:2). Therefore, in this instance, it was deemed most appropriate to use qualitative interview methods to learn directly from those organisations implementing the projects, what the shape and form of those projects were, to what extent they use ICTs to enhance their projects and whether these technologies have the same potential to achieve donor goals.

Analysis of the primary interview data will also give a picture of what activities the ‘media development’ sector is currently implementing in their projects in Kenya and Tanzania. The interview data thus gives perspective on whether media assistance is still relevant and also contributes an insight into the future role, if any, for the media development sector.

The justification for these qualitative methods will be now be outlined.

Methodology

As noted, in this research the methodology was two-pronged. Firstly, case studies of the two countries under review, Kenya and Tanzania, were developed. Then, face-to-face interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the media development sector in these two countries. This section will illustrate the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods considered and the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach for capturing primary data in this instance.

Buckley and Chiang (1976) describe research methodology as a strategy or ‘architectural design’ by which the researcher maps out an approach to problem-solving (Buckley et al., 1976). According to Crotty (1998), research methodology is a comprehensive strategy ‘that silhouettes our choice and use of specific methods relating them to the anticipated outcomes’ (in Jamshed, 2014:1). The choice of research methodology is based upon the type and features of the research problem (Noor, 2008).

Silverman discusses the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative methods in this book *Doing Qualitative Research* and says that “outside the social science community there is little doubt that quantitative data rules the roost” (Silverman, 2006:35).

However, the methods used by qualitative researchers show a belief that they can provide a “deeper understanding” of social phenomena than would have been garnered from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2006:56).

Dabbs (1982) claims that “quantitative and qualitative are not distinct” (in Berg et al., 2004:2). Yet in many social sciences the quantitative orientations are often given more respect. This may reflect the tendency of the general public to regard science as relating to numbers and implying precision.

Berg (2004) confirms that “certainly, qualitative methodologies have not predominated in the social sciences. After all, qualitative research takes much longer, requires greater clarity of goals during design stages, and cannot be analysed by computer programmes. Qualitative research methods and analytic strategies are not associated with high-tech society in the ways quantitative techniques may be”.

Nonetheless, Berg adds that “qualitative research has left its mark conceptually and theoretically on the social sciences. The lasting contributions to social understanding

from qualitative research, as well as the sheer number of contributing social thinkers, are significant” (Berg et al., 2004:2).

Creswell suggest that qualitative research methodology is suitable when the researcher or the investigator either investigates new field of study or intends to ascertain and theorise prominent issues (Creswell, 2007). Creswell adds that “researchers bring their own worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs to the research project, and these inform the conduct and writing of the qualitative study” (ibid).

In this instance, direction was taken from Berg who asserts “Qualitative research refers to concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things” (Berg et al., 2004:3). What was desired in this research was further insight and fuller description of media development projects taking place in-country than had been retrieved from project documentation and thus qualitative interview methods were considered most appropriate for gathering this data.

Research Design

The research process consisted of four main phases with each stage of the research used as input for the following part, as illustrated in the figure below:

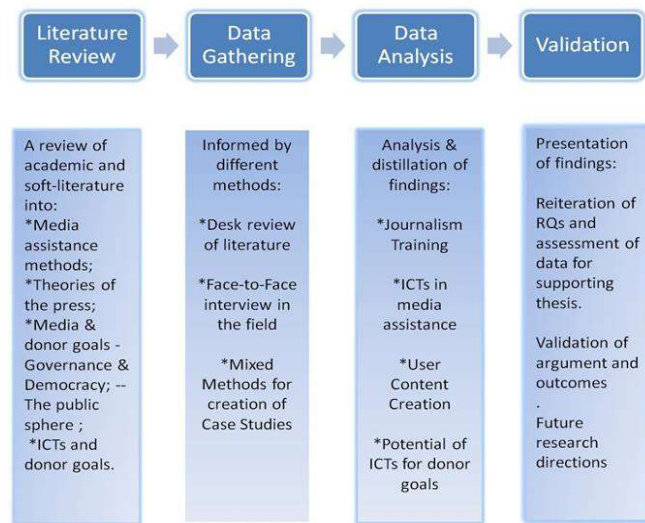


Figure. 5 Research Design.

The first part involved the literature review (reported in Chapters Two and Three), which surveyed the most relevant research themes from the literature and identified the following as particularly significant: the origin and growth of the media development sector; media assistance methods; theories of the press including media's relationships to accountability, transparency, governance and democracy; the public sphere and the new public sphere; Development and Aid; ICTs and development.

To understand the core tenets of the research question, those chapters review the academic literature on the following questions: how is media related to democracy? What is its relationship to the donors objective of democracy promotion? How is media linked to governance and accountability? What is the public sphere?

The literature under consideration is drawn from a wide range of sources. In addition to relevant academic literature on the social and political theory relating to the role of journalism and media in society and scholarly literature of development studies, this

research also draws on the substantial body of ‘grey literature’. This includes policy sources such as reports, working papers, and evaluations from government and institutional donors; research papers of media NGOs who implement projects and think-tanks working in the sector. Online and academic sources relating to the field of Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) and the debates regarding technology and social change are also consulted.

These diverse sources have been used due to the limited academic literature on the subject of media development itself. In reality, there is only a small (but admittedly growing) body of academic work focused on the media development sector. As Geertsema-Sligh (2019) notes “there is not much scholarly or theoretical research in the area (Geertsema-Sligh, 2019: 2440). Historically, there have been few academic courses at third level education devoted solely to media development; often the subject is covered as a module under international development or political departments.

Recent exceptions to this in the UK are Masters programmes at the University of East Anglia, University of Westminster, LSE and SOAS in London. The programmes aim to provide an understanding of the relationships between media and development, and contemporary practices as defined by states, NGOs and other actors. They cover theories and concepts and practical skills around the themes of media and development and communications.

As a result, to get recent and up to date assessments of media development practice and projects, the literature review needed to draw on a combination of academic and so-called grey literature. This includes research emanating from organisations working in the sector. These organisations include UN institutions such as UNESCO and

UNDP, they include government funded research such as Centre for International Media Assistance and DFID, and they included implementing organisations such as BBC Media Action, IREX and Internews. These organisations produce research evaluation of projects and policy documentation relating to the media development industry.

The literature review was followed by the data gathering process. Data gathering was divided into two phases; the creation of Case Studies and two fieldtrips for data collection to the focus region. Research Trip One to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam during May 2014; and Research Trip Two to Nairobi during February 2015. These data gathering phases will be described in more detail below.

Data Gathering: Phase 1 Case Study Country Profiles

Detailed case profiles of the two countries under review were created to give a deeper insight of the ‘ecosystem’ in which media development projects are undertaken and to contribute to a better understanding of why certain media development projects are being carried out.

The Case Study is an approach to research that assists the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the issue to be revealed and understood. Robson describes Case Study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence” (Robson, 1993:146).

De Smaele has argued that “media systems are given shape not only by economic but also by political and cultural factors... behaviour patterns, questions of culture and habits” (De Smaele, 1999:186). The shape of media development projects are also determined by the same factors.

According to Yin, a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2003). Certainly (c) above is significant for this research undertaking - the context is relevant to the research project under study.

Shuttleworth, noted “case studies make more interesting topics than purely statistical surveys.... The general public has little interest in pages of statistical calculations but some well-placed case studies can have a strong impact” (Shuttleworth, 2008:2).

Robson argues that until recently case studies have been considered in methodology texts as “kind of 'soft option', possibly admissible as an exploratory precursor to more 'hard-nosed' experiment or survey, or as a complement to such approaches but of dubious value itself (Robson and McCartan, 2016:151).

In many studies, it can be appropriate to study more than a single case. Yin (1994) suggested that carrying out multiple case studies is more like doing multiple experiments, they may build upon the first experiment, perhaps carrying the investigation into an area suggested by the first study; or they may seek to complement the first study by focusing on an area not originally covered (Yin, 1994).

In this instance, a case study approach was adopted to gain a detailed understanding of the media landscapes in which current media projects are being carried out, and also what media assistance needs there may be. Two case studies are presented as then comparative issues in these countries can be highlighted and analysed which will serve to support the evidence from both and enhance the credibility of the evidence.

The first foundation of the case study is the subject and relevance. For example, statistical analysis has shown that birth-rates in African countries are increasing. A case study on one or two specific countries becomes a good focused tool for determining the social and economic pressures driving this. Similarly, with regards to this research thesis, statistics have shown widespread growth and penetration of new technologies and mobile phones in Africa. This case study will be a tool for determining the reasons driving this and then its effect on media development activities. Context is key.

There are two key approaches that guide case study methodology; one proposed by Robert Stake, (1995) and the second by Robert Yin (2003). They use different terms to describe a variety of case studies. Yin categorises case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. He also differentiates between single, holistic case studies and multiple-case studies.

Stake (1995), by contrast, uses three terms to describe case studies; intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. According to Stake, if you are interested in a unique situation, conduct an intrinsic case study. This means that you have an intrinsic interest in the subject and you are aware that the results have limited transferability. If the intent is to gain insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon, then Stake recommends using an instrumental case study to gain understanding. Stake

uses the term collective case study when more than one case is being examined. In these terms, the case study method in this thesis is both instrumental and collective (Stake, 1995).

A major advantage of a case study as a methodological approach is that it provides much more detailed information than what may be available through other methods, such as surveys. Case studies also allow one to present data collected from multiple methods (i.e., surveys, interviews, document review, *and* observation) to provide the complete story.

For this research, Kenya and Tanzania were chosen as the case study countries. Both countries went through a process of media liberalisation during the last decade of the 20th Century and as a result have seen a proliferation of media outlets and platforms. Not all the outcomes of the liberalisation process have been positive as noted in the literature review, but it provided the countries under review with dynamic and plural media landscapes in which to investigate the media development sector.

As Deane et al explained: “liberalisation, particularly of broadcast media, has often been partial, haphazard and evolutionary rather than revolutionary, but it has nevertheless been transformative” (Deane et al., 2003a:70).

Media Development NGOs have a well-established presence in these two countries and have been carrying out media development activities for decades. For instance, one area of focus has been supporting community radio,– i.e. radio produced by and for the community, independently of state or commercial interests – which has a long tradition throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and is widely considered important as a tool for social change, participatory development and poverty reduction (Skuse 2005; Slater and Tacchi 2004).

Another focus for media development NGOs in the region has been helping the process of converting previously government-controlled state broadcasters into public service broadcasters. However, this process has been difficult and “there are very few examples of former state broadcasting monopolies successfully transforming themselves into genuinely public service broadcasters” (Deane et al., 2003a:74).

Thus, donor-supported media development activities are well established in both of the case study countries, therefore providing ample secondary documentation but also suitable participants for the primary data collection.

Another benefit of case studies as a method is that they typically rely on multiple data sources of information and methods to provide as complete a picture as possible. This is a strategy which also enhances data credibility and reliability (Yin, 2003). Potential data sources may include: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, and participant-observation (Baxter and Jack, 2008). In comparison to other qualitative approaches, with case study research, investigators can integrate quantitative survey data, which facilitates reaching a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This research integrated primary qualitative interview data in the case studies to add further in-depth information.

There are many relevant indicators and data available for the research on Kenya and Tanzania which will make it possible to profile the media and ICT environment, as well as development and economic indicators. These measures will enable the study to give a comprehensive picture of the media and telecommunications landscape in the country.

For example, with regards to the media landscape, there are three primary indices which are used by media development organisations to evaluate their projects as

baseline data and final data. The indices by Freedom House, IREX and Reporters Without Borders form the 'oligopoly' (Burgess, 2010) of media rating systems so this research used them as a starting point.

The indices focus on the social, economic and political environment as they relate to the media sector of a country. They are constructed by assigning quantitative measures to expert qualitative assessments. These numbers therefore are very different from either actual numbers of economic indicators like number of people living in a city, number of cars produced in a year or estimates like Gross Domestic Product, Foreign Direct Investment Inflow as a share of GDP, etc.

Another source for profiling the media environment in Kenya and Tanzania is Intermedia 'Audiencescapes' research¹⁶. AudienceScapes is well-known resource for the international development community for media habits and communication information on developing countries from a bottom-up perspective. It provides information for traditional and new media in terms of access and general use, including radio, television, mobile phones, newsprint and the internet. While not completely up to date (the most recent user data for these countries is 2010/2011) it provides invaluable qualitative research into local audience media and telecoms habits in the countries under question.

Thus, for the case study in this research thesis, data from these multiple sources will be synthesised in the analysis process rather than handled individually. Each data source is one piece of the "puzzle," with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole media landscape. Baxter and Jack suggest this

¹⁶ <http://www.intermedia.org/research-findings/audiencescapes/>

convergence adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

As noted, primary interview data will also be included with secondary data, as stakeholder insights, in the case study profiles, and these will reveal in more detail the media systems, market structure and audience habits in Kenya and Tanzania.

By accessing these data sources for the country case studies, the thesis can build a picture of both the background social and political environments and the media landscape. Cross-referencing the data sets will help spot trends that have happened in these countries over the past years and also provide information such as audience habits of traditional media and in addition to usage patterns for newer technologies such as mobile and internet.

Looking below the surface of the statistics will give a picture of whether the technology revolution is having a tangible impact in these countries. For instance, despite rising access to mobile phones and the steady growth of these countries' economies and populations, gender inequities and income disparities continue to present barriers. As noted by Murthy "in many fast---emerging economies..... the privileged live in a highly connected information society, while those at the bottom of the income pyramid (BOP), and especially BOP women, remain disconnected" (Murthy, 2011a:2).

Shuttleworth proposed that a case study is "an in-depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey. It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic" (Shuttleworth, 2008:1).

In this case, by choosing to add qualitative interview data in the case study, this research is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical survey and understand also social or cultural conditions which might affect media assistance requirements in the region.

Data Gathering: Phase 2 Qualitative Interviews

Berg claimed that “interviewing may be defined simply as a conversation with a purpose. Specifically, the purpose is to gather information” (Berg et al., 2004:67)

In addition to secondary data sources, interviews are important sources of case study information. This type of qualitative research tries to understand and interpret the meaning of situations or events from the perspectives of the people involved and as understood by them.

A choice between research methods rests fundamentally on a set of decisions about the questions a researcher wants to answer and the practicality of gathering the kind of data that will answer those questions. Whereas, it is said that quantitative research seeks to identify the relation among a set of variables, qualitative research aims to gain some understanding of a phenomenon. Collecting these descriptions can be done in several ways, of which face-to-face interviews are the most common.

Kvale defines the purpose of the qualitative research interview as "to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1983:174). This description was deemed most aligned with the research objectives, where semi-structured interviews could garner from interview participants what exactly was being implemented in projects and the advantages and disadvantages of these activities.

In this instance, it was felt that, whilst data could be obtained through policy and programme documents of the donors and NGOs implementing the projects, many documents are not readily available and also were not up to date. Interviewing staff of these organisations would give a much more current view as to what their activities are and it would also be possible to garner the negative or less successful aspects of some of their project work.

The interview was also chosen as a suitable research method because, despite quantitative and statistical data, there are many cultural and local determinants that effect behaviour and adoption of new technologies in different countries. A good example of this was described by Amy O Donnell, project manager for Frontline: SMS radio¹⁷ in interview with the author. When talking about the potential of gathering market research information using mobile phones, she claimed that many local women in Kenya didn't like sharing information about their age, sex and profile over text to 'faceless institutions':

In their communities everyone knows each other and they take pride in the community and being known. It was almost insulting to be asked by text "who are you?!" as it questioned their position in the community¹⁸

This insight into how Kenyan women feel about using ICTs can be best gained by surveying those involved on the ground in implementing the projects. It illustrates the

17 Frontline SMS: Radio is an organisation which is creating a buzz in Africa with their free, downloadable, open source software which allows users to use SMS to communicate with large numbers of people using just a laptop and mobile, and is now being harnessed by many local and community radio stations in Africa.

18 Amy O Donnell in interview with the author London 2012

complexities of personal ICT use in region. There is a practical and local element to every international development project and these are the details that are not immediately apparent from analysis of the secondary data sources.

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. It can be argued that to understand the potential for digital technologies in media development projects it is logical to ask those implementing the projects at first hand.

Interviewing is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research. Most qualitative research interviews are either semi-structured, lightly structured or in-depth (Mason, 1994). When choosing the interview, there are several forms of interviews that are possible: Open-ended, Focused, and Structured or survey. In an open-ended interview, key respondents are asked to comment about certain events. They may propose solutions or provide insight into events.

Unstructured interview resembles a conversation more than an interview and is always thought to be a “controlled conversation,” which is skewed towards the interests of the interviewer (Gray, 2013). Non-directive interviews, a form of unstructured interviews, are aimed to gather in-depth information and usually do not have pre-planned set of questions (Jamshed, 2014).

In contrast, semi-structured interviews are those in-depth interviews where the respondents have to answer pre-set open-ended questions and thus are widely employed by different professionals in their research. These types of interviews are conducted once only, with an individual or with a group and generally cover the duration of 30 min to more than an hour.

In this project, the research schedule contained a series of open-ended questions and the interviews were semi-structured. A key feature of the semi-structured interview is in the partial pre-planning of the questions. Semi-structured interviews allow for replication of the interview with others, but are less controlled. Woods contends that “a great deal of qualitative research (grounded theory, thematic analysis, etc) uses semi-structured interview material” (Woods, 2011:7).

In a semi-structured interview, as conducted in this instance, the researcher provides some structure based on his or her research interests but works flexibly and allows room for the respondent’s more spontaneous descriptions and narratives (Brinkmann, 2014).

The ability to ask some spontaneous questions is sensitive to the participants need to express themselves. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information—people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you as opposed to filling out a survey (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

As the interview was the primary data gathering instrument for the research, a semi-structured interview was chosen where questions were carefully designed to provide adequate coverage for the purpose of the research. Major questions were developed in the form of a general statement which was then followed by a sequence of sub-questions for further probing.

In terms of research instrument design, the author drew up a schedule of interview questions in advance of the first field trip. This schedule (see Appendix A) has 20 questions which were grouped into themes, such as Local Media Environment, Funding of projects, Journalism Practice, Current Media development Activity. The

questions were derived from the primary Research Question, and were sub-themes within the hypothesis.

Conducting the Fieldwork

For this thesis, the author travelled to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam over two research field trips in 2014 and 2015 to meet and interview a sample of stakeholders in the media development sector. Of the interviews conducted most of these were face-to-face on the field trips; some were done via skype and a small number were completed by email.

Most of the fieldwork involved interviewing using semi-structured questions with various categories of respondents from the participating organisations. These took place primarily in the respondents' offices either in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam or London. A number also took place in cafes, though this did affect sound quality of the recordings.

When using the interview as a methodology the author had to decide whether to take notes, tape the interview, rely on memory or write in the answers. In this case, the author decided to use a dictaphone for most of the face-to-face interviews apart from one or two where the tape recorder was not permitted for security reasons (US Embassy, Dar Es Salaam) or the environmental noise was not suitable (Fes Media and Tanzania Media Fund, Dar Es Salaam). In these instances, handwritten notes were taken.

The Role of the Researcher

The role of the Researcher in the study is also a factor that requires consideration.

Hughes (2012) maintained that qualitative research is “not totally objective because the researcher is subjectively involved in the very choice of a problem as worthy of investigation and in the interpretation of the results” (Hughes, 2012:6).

Denzin & Lincoln (2008) claim that in qualitative studies the researcher is an instrument of data collection. Greenbank (2003) argued that consumers of the research need to know about the human instrument. The qualitative researcher needs to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify his or her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank, 2003).

In this study, the author brought her experience of working in the media development industry to the work. Having been a former actor in the sector - having previously worked for BBC Media Action, one of the largest Media Development Organisations (MAOs) - it could be argued that the author was an “insider” and had knowledge of the industry. While not being a full participant in the study the researcher brought previous knowledge, assumptions and even ideology to the study. Attia and Edge (2017) argue that the researcher always has a particular standpoint.

Punch (2008) maintains that the qualitative researcher should explain if their role is emic --an insider, who is a full participant in activity, programme, or phenomenon, or the role is more etic --from an outside view, more of an objective viewer. There could be a great deal of variations in between --a researcher can start as an outsider and then becomes a member of the group. Or the reverse can occur --the researcher starts as a member of a group then becomes a more objective observer (Punch, 2008).

This process of reflection by the researcher, or reflexivity, is a process of self-critique to examine how her own experiences might or might not have influenced the researcher process (Dowling, 2006). Reflexivity acknowledges the role of the researcher as a participant in the process of knowledge construction and not merely an outsider-observer of a phenomenon. So, reflexivity requires researchers to reflect upon and articulate their position and subjectivities (world view, perspectives, biases), so that readers can better understand the filters through which questions were asked, data were gathered and analysed, and findings were reported (Patnaik, 2013).

Relevant researcher's positioning include personal characteristics, such as gender, race, affiliation, age, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances (Bradbury-Jones, 2007).

These positions of the researcher may impact the research several ways. First, they can affect access to the 'field' because respondents may be more willing to share their experiences with a researcher whom they perceive as one of them. In this study, the authors' position as a previous employee in the sector may have resulted in the researcher achieving easier access and greater response from interview participants.

The researcher brought her insider knowledge of the sector, its motivation and its possible flaws, to the interview process. This may have meant that the researcher did not always ask participants to qualify or expand on certain answers during the interviews as the interviewer understood the terminology and context without having to go into as much detail.

However, the author could engage with participants on a professional level within the discussions and understand the jargon and also the practicalities of implementing

projects in-country. This allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) (Hughes, 2012).

The positions of the researcher may also shape the nature of researcher–researched relationship, which, in turn, affects the information that participants are willing to share; for instance, interview participants may feel more comfortable talking about project failures with a colleague from within the sector who can empathise with the challenges of the work, than with an outsider.

Bradbury-Jones (2007) maintains that reflexivity can occur throughout all phases of the research process, including the formulation of a research question, collection and analysis of data, and drawing conclusions (Bradbury-Jones, 2007). Kacen and Chaitin (2006) argued that the worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which she constructs the world, poses questions, and chooses the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and making meaning of it (Kacen and Chaitin, 2006).

Doctoral research demands a high level of critical analysis of the subject matter, but the researcher acknowledges the potential impingement of subjectivity on the analysis. In this instance the researcher reflected on herself as the researcher in an attempt to provide more effective and impartial analysis. The researcher of this study, coming from a predominantly white, Christian, liberal democracy in the West of Europe, might bring that bias to the research and interviews, and the analysis of data. Kvale called it “the asymmetrical power relations of the research interviewer and the interviewed subject” (Steinar Kvale, 2002).

Temple and Young (2004) maintain that positionality can affect research outcomes and interpretations, because “one’s position within the social world influences the way

in which you see it” (Temple and Young, 2004:164). The researcher reflected on whether she had directed some of the participants towards answering the questions in a particular way and concluded that while she had certainly endeavoured not to, objectively this could have occurred. As Wilkie argues “it is a subtle readjustment to your self-awareness that can make a profound difference to what you get out of your research” (Wilkie, 2015).

Furthermore, working as a western researcher in an international context, especially in the global south, gives rise to ethical issues and questions, which will now be addressed.

Research Ethics

Any research that involves human subjects or participants raises unique ethical, social and political issues. Research ethics is interested in the analysis of any ethical issues that arise when people are involved as participants in research. There are several objectives in research ethics. The first and broadest objective is to protect human participants.

Thus, the research should be conducted with integrity and minimises physical, mental, legal or financial risk for the participants. The research was undertaken with ethical principles such as avoiding doing harm, seeking informed and voluntary consent from those taking part, respecting confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

A secondary objective of research ethics is to ensure that research is conducted in a way that serves interests of individuals, groups and/or society as a whole. Another is to examine specific research activities and projects for their ethical soundness, looking

at issues such as the management of risk, protection of confidentiality and the process of informed consent.

Doiron and Asselin (2015) claim that there are several dilemmas for researchers planning to work in Global South countries with “few or different ethical standards for conducting research... from the Global North academic community” (Doiron and Asselin, 2015:1). These dilemmas can include: 1) differing views on what counts as research; 2) differing values and policies on gender, religion, inclusive practices and other social and cultural areas; 3) the insider/outsider phenomenon (white privileged researchers working in non-white communities); and 4) development of culturally sensitive research instruments (Doiron and Asselin, 2015).

Hosted in the School of Media at TU Dublin (then DIT), the project was granted ethical approval and complied with the ethical requirements as set out by TU Dublin’s Research Ethics Committee. Falling within the broad domain of social sciences research, the project was informed by ethical guidelines such as those of the Sociological Association of Ireland and the British Sociological Association.

The project also incorporates the field of development studies to the extent that the primary research question is centred on media and development. This is an ethically complex field of enquiry. Development studies often involves work with research participants at completely different levels of social and economic power to the researcher.

However, there is a notable lack of literature that deals specifically with the ethical dimensions of social science in developing contexts. Whilst work has been undertaken to both comment upon and critique medical research, this is far from true for social science research ethics generally. Brown et al. (2004) claim that

It is fair to say that there is a notable paucity of literature that deals specifically with the ethical dimensions of social science in developing contexts... With a few notable exceptions very little from within quantitative social science has been published on the ethical difficulties presented by the methodological complexities of underdeveloped regions since ... the early 1980s (Brown et al.,2004:5).

Andrew Sumner, from the Institute of Development Studies UK, argues that this field has yet to explore fully many of the ethical dilemmas raised by doing research in developing countries (Sumner, 2007).

In the past, development studies have faced criticism from ‘post-development theory’ and ‘post-colonial theory’. As covered in Chapter 3, some scholars suggest that ‘development’ itself might be a problem because it presents a Western view of development as modernity that is then imposed on the Third World. In the same way, media assistance and development has been criticised for transplanting its own models of democracy and journalism on recipient nations (LaMay, 2007; Barker, 2008).

Thus, there are a number of special considerations for research in developing countries and contexts. In particular, research projects in these contexts can involve some of the world’s least powerful and most vulnerable populations. The relationships between the researcher and the researched in such contexts are likely to be asymmetrical, and this may impact both on the welfare of participants and the veracity of findings.

In this case the researcher was a white, female from a Western European nation. In terms of the profile of the interview participants, some were European employees and managers from donors, NGOs or Media Assistance Organisations. Some were local

staff from Tanzania and Kenya. All of the interviews were conducted in English, and in public spaces such as their workplace, a café or hotel lobby.

The researcher needed to consider whether there was any implicit bias in the form of interviewees seeking to give answers they thought the interviewer might want.

Crawford (1997) refers to this as “courtesy bias” - the tendency for respondents to give answers that they think the interviewer wants to hear, rather than what they really feel. Courtesy bias can be a hurdle to gaining useful and reliable data.

However, Crawford suggests that this can be mitigated or avoided by the creation of a good interview environment and an appropriate relationship between the interviewer and the respondent (Crawford, 1997). In this instance, project documentation relating to the structure of the projects themselves would back up the information relating to the make-up of media projects, which would corroborate the interview data.

Consideration must be given to the idea that the participants were being deferential given the privileged position of the researcher. However, as noted previously, many of the key informants were also white westerners and those participants that were local were often in senior positions within the organisations and so had their own seniority and authority to counter this.

Interview participants were at all times professional, courteous and helpful during the interview process and there was mutual respect for each other’s professional position.

Consideration must also be given to the issue of gender. As Järviluoma et al. (2003) argue “the importance of gender should not be understated, as it is not an inconsequential detail that may be ignored in research situations. On the contrary it is a significant topic of research as such” (Järviluoma et al., 2003:27). It could be

argued that the researcher's gender impacted on the behaviour and responses of the interview participants in the same way as her ethnicity and race, and thus would impact on the data collected.

Interestingly, Huddy et al (1997) propose that less-well educated respondents are more influenced than well-educated by the interviewer's gender. They argue that well educated people are not affected by gender as much because they are more accustomed to inter-gender relations (Huddy et al., 1997). In this case, it could be argued that the informants were well-educated in so far as they had relatively senior roles in the participating organisations and in addition familiar with dealing with different genders in their day to day work in these international organisations.

Conducting fieldwork overseas, particularly in the Global South, can also be a challenge. The researcher may face logistical complications, health and safety issues, cultural differences, language barriers, and more. Lunn argues that "the reality is that each situation is unique and the individual researcher must negotiate their own path through a variety of ethical challenges and dilemmas" (Lunn, 2014: xix).

For this fieldwork conducted in-country in Tanzania and Kenya, the researcher managed any potential complications by making very detailed logistical arrangements in advance. All the participants were asked for their consent in advance by email to interview with the author and participate in the study. Participants were fully briefed on the purposes of the study to support informed consent and were free to withdraw at any time. They were provided with detailed information about the project, its aims, and potential future publication. The researcher made clear the purpose of the research and was in frequent contact with the participants in advance of meetings, by email and mobile phone.

The interviews were conducted in English and in the context of one professional to another, and in public spaces or offices. This is not to say that there were not language barriers, but by using a Dictaphone the researcher could double check the data at a later date to assist comprehension. Not all interviews undertaken provided relevant or pertinent data.

Despite detailed plans and preparations in advance of the fieldwork in this instance, Lunn concludes that, because of the complexity of fieldwork in the 'global south', "there is no one correct way to conduct research 'ethically' ...despite what formalised paperwork from ethics review boards suggests" (Willis, in Lunn, 2014:268).

Interview Participants: Types and Roles

To get a good spread of opinions the participants in the interviews were stakeholders at various levels of the media and media development industry. The individuals who participated in the research were either from international donor organisation who fund media development projects, or staff from Media Development NGOs and other individuals working in the ICT or media sector.

Potential respondents were initially identified by search through company websites and documentation, and by recommendation from other interview respondents, based on their job responsibilities, position and involvement in media development activities. Social Networks and LinkedIn were also a source of potential respondents. Respondents were also selected on the basis of the researchers' individual judgement on the grounds that they could provide the necessary information needed for the research.

All of the individuals were emailed in advance and given details of the research and the objectives for meeting and interviewing. Those who were contacted were very positive in their response to participate in the research. Respondents were asked to and agreed to participate in interviews, either in person, by skype or email.

Participants were notified that the interview would be published in the research thesis or the print media in Ireland. Participants were informed of the availability of confidentiality should it be required. None of the participants in these interviews requested not to be identified or to use a pseudonym, thus their real names have been used.

The participants were primarily speaking on behalf of their organisations. Their role in the organisations was predominantly project staff, implementing the projects in-country. Some of the participants are well-known in the media development community but they still spoke as representatives of their organisation or projects. For example, James Deane is a well-known media development advocate and expert, but he spoke from the position of his role as Policy Director for BBC Media Action. A few individuals were not attached to any organisations such as the local journalists with whom the researcher met, such as Maurice O' Nioango and Elsie Eyakuze.

The interview participants came from different types of organisations as outlined below

- a. **Donors:** these are the organisations that finance media development projects.

Bi-Lateral funders include the UN, the EuropeAid, UNESCO. Government funders include USAID, DFID (UK), Irish Aid, DANIDA (Denmark), German overseas development agency (KFW), NORAD (Norway) amongst other.

According to much of the literature from the funding agencies, they are aware

of the growth in and optimistic of the opportunities presented by ICTs.

However their documents seem unsure as to exactly what impact these are having. The researcher asked respondents whether their positive attitudes to ICTs are directing their policies and whether this is reflected in new funding opportunities for media development. Are the changes that are happening in technology impacting on international donor policy in terms of directing funds? Are the donors prescribing the technological elements of projects or are implementing agencies free to choose which media to use?

- b. **Project Implementers/ Media NGO staff:** These are the individuals at the vanguard of the media development industry. These respondents could tell the researcher the objectives and formats of projects taking place on the ground. Are projects using digital technologies instead of old media? In what way? Are the projects meeting their stated objectives? What success have they had using digital technologies? What are the practical hurdles with using digital technologies in African projects? What are the problems in implementing the projects that do use ICTs? And what is the future role of media assistance?
- c. **Journalists/ Media staff:** journalists were interviewed to contribute to an up-to-date picture of the media landscape in their country, and also what conditions are like working as a journalist in the present day in Kenya and Tanzania. They were also able to give an additional perspective on whether digital technologies are being used by the media industry in their country, and by journalists, in what manner and to what success.

- d. **Research Organisations:** these organisations provided background information on the countries under review, both in terms of economic and social data but also in terms of citizens opinions on matters of public interest. For instance, Afrobarometer is a pan-African, research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and other issues in more than 35 countries in Africa. They state that through their research “ordinary citizens can have a voice in policy-making processes that affect their lives”¹⁹. They produce research on subjects such as corruption, poverty, democracy and attitudes to government.

Of the 40 individuals interviewed over the course of the research, 20% were from donor organisations, 48% were from NGOs implementing media projects in some form, 10% were journalists and 12% were research organisations. The remaining participants were from a news outlet, a journalism network or a local activism organisation which use media.

The list of participants in the interviews is outlined in Table 1.

¹⁹ <https://www.afrobarometer.org/about>

	NAME	ORGANISATION	Type of Org.	Mode	Location
1	Amy O Donnell	Frontline SMS	NGO	Face2Face Interview	London
2	Carol Morgan	BBC Media Action	NGO	Face2Face Interview	London
3	Caroline Ford	BBC Media Action	NGO	Skype Interview	
4	Ernest Sungura	Tanzania Media Fund	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
5	Aran Corrigan	Irish Aid Tanzania	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
6	Daniel Dedeyan	USAID Tanzania	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
7	Mark Montgomery	Department for International Development (UK)	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
8	Rolf Paasch	FES Media Tanzania	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
9	Colin Spurway	BBC Media Action Tanzania	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
10	Kris Kapella	FeminaHip Tanzania	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Dar Es Salaam
11	Anthony Wafula	HIVOS	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
12	Ida Jooste	Internews	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
13	Alex Pitkin	Frontline SMS	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
14	Abel Oyuke	Afrobarometer	Research Org	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
15	Rosemary Okello Orlale	Ford Foundation	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
16	Bart Sullivan	Farm Radio Tanzania	NGO	Email Survey	
17	Kees De Graaf	Twaweza Tanzania	NGO	Skype Interview	
18	Siema Patterson	UNDP	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
19	John Okande	UNESCO ICT	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
20	Jackie Davies	BBC Media Action Kenya	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
21	Chloe Spoerry	HiviSasa	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
22	Eric Chinje	African Media Initiative	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
23	Tom Rhodes	Committee to Protect Journalists East Africa	Non-Profit Journalism	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
24	Angela Okune	ihub Research	Research Org	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
25	Erik Hersman	Ushaihide	Non-Profit Tech	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi

26	Judy Kimamono	Search for Common Ground	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
27	Daudi Were	Making All Voices Count	Donor	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
28	Claudia Lopes	Africa's Voices	NGO	Skype Interview	
29	Vincent O'Neill,	Embassy of Ireland, Kenya.	Embassy	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
30	Robert Munuku	Action for Transparency	NGO	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
31	Sasha Kinney	PAWA	Non-profit activism group	Face2Face Interview	Nairobi
32	Maurice O'nyango	Medeva Journalist	Journalist	Email Survey	
33	Dickens Olewe	The Star Journalist and UGC App Lead	Journalist	Skype Interview	
34	Rob Burnet	Well Told Story	NGO	Skype Interview	
35	Elsie Eyakuze	Mikocheni Report Blog Tanzania	Journalist	Email Survey	
36	Victor Bwire	Media Council Kenya	Research Org	Email Survey	
37	Josh Oguare	Kibera news Network	Journalist	Email Survey	
38	Gerry Power	MC Saatchi World Services	Research Org	Face2Face Interview	London
39	James Deane	BBC Media Action	NGO	Face2Face Interview	London
40	Dmitry Shishkin	BBC World Online	Media	Email Survey	

Table 1. Interview Participants

These interviews helped to uncover not only what the funders' priorities and motivations are in relation to their objectives with media development interventions but also the practical realities of managing projects on the ground. At the early stages of the research, it became apparent that the general attitude of those working for media development organisations was one of scepticism towards the impact that digital technologies might have on the media development industry. They questioned the real role of social media in the so-called Arab Spring for instance, in contrast to the cyber-utopian narratives of the time.

For example, James Deane, from the BBC Media Action spoke about a recent large grant the organisation had received from the Department of International Development (DFID). Deane mentioned that they did not yet know to what extent they would actually use digital or social media. He spoke how their most innovative and creative project at the time called “Shankaboot” – an interactive web-based video series filmed in and around Beirut, Lebanon and the world's first Arabic Web Drama Series, which won the Digital Emmy in 2011. However, this series “did not reach that many people! If the objectives of the projects are civic engagement and reach, well the project was not deemed an unqualified success” (*Deane, 2012, in interview*).

These insights revealed through face-to-face interviews in the research the reality of digital technology use for media development objectives and in particular negative aspects or failures in projects, which may not have been revealed using other research methods. Using face-to-face, semi-structured interviews enabled the author to extract information that may not have been answered in a survey question (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

By conducting interviews with both media assistance donors and practitioners in Africa, the research unearthed the real-world practical experience and data needed to illustrate the landscape for digital technology and journalism in Africa. It is a practitioner focused study with real world informants providing an industry perspective on the issues of media development assistance.

As Esipisu and Kariithi (2007) note, despite the uptake of new technologies in Africa, “the African mass media system faces age-old problems stemming from poor ownership structure, a weak financial base, low quality staff (particularly journalists), lack of access to information, and conflict with authorities” (Esipisu and Kariithi,

2007:22). Using qualitative methods in this research helped uncover to what extent digital technologies are being used by media assistance organisations to address such problems in the media systems.

Key Organisation Profiles

From the analysis of the interview data, it became apparent there were a number of key organisations which could add support to the research argument and act as illustrative examples for key points. The projects that such organisations undertake provided interesting perspectives on media development activity in an East African context. They are relevant for illustrating the different form of media development activity being implemented. In order to elaborate on their role within the research design, the relevant larger organisations are briefly introduced below with further details outlined in subsequent chapters.

1. BBC Media Action

BBC Media Action (formerly the BBC World Service Trust) is the BBC's international development charity. Funded independently by external grants and voluntary contributions, the purpose of the organisation is to promote development through the effective use of the media.

BBC Media Action receives funds from international development agencies to provide journalism, media production and management training to organisations and practitioners around the world, which assist the development of an independent media with fair, accurate and objective news reporting.

It works in partnership with the BBC World Service and other local media and development partners in over 35 developing and transitional countries around the world. They provide mentoring and training for journalists and development professionals.

BBC Media Action has established and managed Schools of Journalism in Belgrade, Sarajevo and in Ekaterinburg (Russia) and these projects provided media courses for national, community, public and independent broadcasting stations. Other training projects include post-conflict broadcasting courses.

Another aspect of their work is to encourage programming on topics not traditionally covered by the local media, and to foster partnership and understanding between media organisations and other sectors such as NGOs, educational establishments and the civil service. They have established and supported independent media organisations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Nepal and several regions of Africa.

The researcher met and interviewed three key informants from the organisation:

Jackie Davis – Project Manager – BBC Media Action Kenya

Colin Spurway – Country Director – BBC Media Action Tanzania

James Deane – Director of Policy and Learning

2. The African Media Initiative

The African Media Initiative (AMI) is a pan-African organisation that seeks to strengthen the continent's private and independent media sector from an owner and operator perspective to promote democratic governance, social development and

economic growth. It does so through a set of activities aimed at transforming the media and communications landscape on the continent.

AMI's overall goal is to promote the development of pluralistic media as a necessary and critical ingredient of democratic governance, as well as economic and human development in Africa. The organisation was established in 2010 and is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

AMI's work focuses on the following five priority areas:

1. Expanding Access to Finance and New Revenue Streams
2. Building a Leadership Cadre in the Media Sector
3. Strengthening the Media Owners and Operators' Community
4. Harnessing the Digital Revolution through Technological Adaptation and Innovation
5. Content Development for African media outlets, by African journalists

The researcher met with the CEO of African Media Initiative, Eric Chinje, based in Nairobi.

3. Internews

Internews is an international non-profit organisation whose mission is “to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard”

Internews trains both media professionals and citizen journalists, increases coverage of vital issues and helps establish policies needed for open access to information.

Internews programmes create platforms for dialogue and enable informed debate, which bring about social and economic progress. Internews has worked with 4,800 radio and television stations and print publications worldwide. Activities include:

- Training. Internews trains 8-10,000 media professionals each year in journalism, production, and management. For more advanced students, Internews offers training in topics such as computer graphics, media law, and investigative journalism.
- Production. To strengthen the independent media sector, Internews works with local media professionals to produce original programming.
- Media infrastructure: Internews provides a broad range of infrastructure support to enable independent media to provide vital news and information, including providing journalists and stations with production equipment, creating production studios, and building radio stations from the ground up.
- Media law and policy. To allow independent media to fulfill their “watchdog” function, Internews has worked for the adoption and implementation of fair media laws and policies in 21 countries.

In Kenya, Internews works with media to develop a response to issues such as HIV/AIDS, child and maternal health and malaria using broadcast and print media. Internews Kenya also supports projects that counter hate speech, promote peaceful solutions and further better understanding of election issues.

The researcher interviewed Internews Kenya Country Director Ida Jooste.

4. UNESCO

UNESCO encourages international peace and universal respect for human rights by promoting collaboration among nations. UNESCO pursues its objectives through five major programmes: education, natural sciences, social/human sciences, culture and communication/information.

Projects sponsored by UNESCO include literacy, technical, and teacher-training programmes, the promotion of independent media and freedom of the press and attempts to bridge the worldwide digital divide. UNESCO's approach to media development includes tailored activities that are context-sensitive, and which also take account of the challenges and opportunities created by the rapidly changing media environment.

UNESCO Media Development Activities include: Journalism education and training; Journalism Curricula; Journalists Safety Indicators; Media Development Indicators.

The special-purpose International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is a unique multilateral forum in the UN system that mobilises the international community to support media in developing countries through a grant-making process.

UNESCO Kenya is involved in many projects to encourage freedom of expression and support independent media. Their project "Empowering Local Radios with ICTs" is funded by the Swedish aid agency, SIDA and aims to bridge the gap between poor people - especially women and girls - and encourage public debate on issues of local public concern.

This is achieved through a series of capacity-building activities in local radio stations, improving the programming quality, providing training on the use of ICTs and helping them to increase their geographical range of news coverage with a network of correspondents. The project, furthermore, focus on gender equality actions and financial sustainability of the radio stations.

The researcher met with UNESCO project Manager John Okande.

5. FARM Radio

Farm Radio is a Canadian charity working with more than 650 radio partners in sub-Saharan countries to fight poverty and food insecurity. They help African radio broadcasters meet the information needs of local small-scale farmers and their families in rural communities.

They provide training services to broadcasters, including direct in-station training, distance education and custom workshops to help them meet a higher standard of farm radio services. All training is directly targeted toward the needs and realities of broadcasters

They aim to provide and exchange practical and timely information for use by their broadcasting partners (community, public and private radio stations, farmers associations, productions houses). They work in three areas: Impact Programming, Broadcaster Resources, and Broadcaster Training.

They have also created, Barza, an online community for African radio broadcasters. This is a space for broadcasters, who all share similar experiences even though they can be thousands of kilometres apart, to interact and share resources with their peers.

Broadcasters can access a library of scripts, Farm Radio Weekly, and on-line training modules. It also offers a way for broadcasters to share scripts and programmes that *they* have created. And it is a place where broadcasters can discuss issues, chat, and follow each other.

The researcher spoke with Bart Sullivan, Radio and ICT Manager with FARM Radio.

6. HIVOS

Hivos (Humanist Institute for Cooperation) is the Dutch organisation for development and it supports social change, digital activism and rural innovations. They support civil society organisations and “infomediaries” (e.g. independent journalists, hacktivists, academics and civic watchdogs) to make information accessible and usable for citizens who wish to hold governments and companies to account.

HIVOS works in areas so these infomediaries also feel safe and independent enough to use the available space for expression, dialogue and debate. They want powerholders to have a more open and responsive attitude towards transparent and accountable governance.

With their Kenya Media Program (KMP), they aim to improve the quality of journalism in Kenya and contribute to a responsive, representative and accountable government through citizen engagement. Its purpose is to strengthen the existing media landscape in Kenya. As a dedicated media facility, the KMP provides a framework of various interventions aimed at improving the professionalisms and effectiveness of the media in Kenya.

KMP focuses particularly on improving the professionalism and effectiveness of public interest and investigative or quality journalism. Financial resources are made available for selected media-related institutions, development organisations, training institutes, policy and research initiatives, media houses and journalists.

Their key funding partners are: the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Canadian Development Agency (CIDA) and the Netherlands Embassy. HIVOS implement the project on their behalf.

The researcher met with Anthony Wafula, Programme Manager for KMP.

7. Tanzania Media Fund (TMF)

The TMF aims to support an independent, quality, diverse and vibrant media in Tanzania by enabling investigative and public interest journalism and facilitating critical reflection and learning.

Through funding and learning activities, they support quality journalism that better informs the public, contributes to debate and thereby increases public demand for greater accountability across Tanzania. TMF's interventions focus on strengthening the media through a combination of training and mentoring, buoyed by grant-giving.

TMF offers five different grants. These have been developed in order to increase the quality, quantity and diversity of investigative and public interest journalism products in the media as well as to strengthen the professional capacity of journalists and media institutions.

TMF provides mentoring to both individual and institutional grantees. Mentorship for individual grantees largely focuses on enabling journalists to increase their skills and thus the quality of their products during the course of their grant.

For example, one grantee, Envirocare received a capacity building grant to engage 20 journalists in reporting on chemical management in the textile and tanning industries in Tanzania. Journalists on the project received investigative journalism training before they went into factory premises to investigate approaches to disposal of wastewater from leather treatment processes after which they wrote exposés on the impact of the pollution.

The researcher met with the Head of TMF, Ernest Sungura in Dar Es Salaam.

8. FeminaHip

Femina Hip is a civil society initiative working with youth, communities and strategic partners across Tanzania. Since 1999, their aim has been to promote healthy lifestyles, sexual health, HIV prevention, gender equality and citizen engagement.

Femina Hip employs a range of communication vehicles, including traditional and social media products, used in a strategic and complementary way to achieve their objectives. They also promote active learning through outreach activities and multimedia products focusing on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and secure livelihoods.

Its media products have grown from one magazine (Femina) to two magazines (Fema and Si Mchezo!), two television products (Fema TV Talk Show and Ruka Juu), an interactive website (Chezasalama) and an interactive SMS platform. All are backed

by community mobilisation and face-to-face interaction through Fema Youth Clubs.

Femina's media products are estimated to reach an audience of about 11 million.

According to Femina, they are the largest local, multimedia civil society organisation working with youth, communities, and partners throughout Tanzania. Edutainment is their main approach, whereby Femina entertains and educates audiences through real-life stories, testimonials and docudrama.

Femina conducts strategic communication through clear messaging and a participatory production process, which gives voice to young people; resulting in a more relevant end product which effectively transmits knowledge, shifts attitudes, and creates behavioural change, triggering social action.

This messaging is brought directly to the audience through magazines, TV, radio, social media, SMS as well as community mobilisation activities which, taken together, reinforce key messages.

What marks out Femina even more is the powerful brand they've created over the past 12 years. They are a very well-liked and hugely trusted brand, associated with young people and use their edutainment approach to 'educate by stealth'.

The researcher met with Kris Kapella, Strategy Development and Evaluation Advisor from Femina Hip.

9. Twaweza

Twaweza is a citizen-centred initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa.

Twaweza means 'we can make it happen' in Swahili. Twaweza works towards

enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

They seek to enhance 'citizen agency,' the ability of men, women and young people to get better information more quickly, cheaply and reliably; monitor and discuss what's going on; speak out; and act to make a difference.

Twaweza supports ordinary citizens in East Africa to:

- Access information – by expanding the means and channels through which people can access information
- Exercise agency – to express views, take initiative to improve lives, and hold government accountable
- Get better services – such as primary and secondary education, primary health care and clean water, and exercise greater control over public money

Twaweza works to provide practical information to everyone, to foster quality independent media and citizen monitoring services. By addressing these issues through its partner organisations, Twaweza works to create what it calls an 'ecosystem of change. They undertake public and policy engagement, through media partnerships and leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership.

Twaweza works through 'five networks,' which already reach millions of citizens across East Africa and are important in their lives – mass media, mobile phones, religion, teachers' unions and fast-moving consumer goods. Twaweza builds partnerships in all these areas to spread ideas, draw in new voices and open up

conversations. It works like a venture fund, initiating ideas and getting new organisations off the ground.

Twaweza is supported by a consortium of donors who provide long-term support towards the overall programme. These are Sida, UK Department for International Development (DFID) Tanzania and Uganda, the Hewlett Foundation, AJWS and Danida.

The researcher spoke with Kees De Graaf, Director of ICT Programmes at Twaweza.

10. Well Told Story (WTS)

Well Told Story is an innovative, socially-oriented media research and production company based in Kenya. Since being established in 2009, Well Told Story has developed and produced a set of media intended to reach and engage young people with important information that can contribute positively to their lives.

Their main project is centred on a character called Shujaaz, an on-going multi-media communications platform encompassing monthly comic books (30m+ free copies distributed to date), daily syndicated radio shows, SMS, online, video, and national TV. This project has reached more than 69% of Kenyans aged 15 -24. The pre-recorded radio shows are syndicated to over 26 FM stations across Kenya six days a week, with the Saturday edition running for a full 20 minutes.

The comic book, written in local dialect, sheng, is set in a fictional world that mirrors the real one, and aims to inspire and motivate Kenyans between the ages of 18 and 35 to get involved in political and social issues that affect their future. It has won two International Emmy Awards.

All their media is free to the audience and is financed by development agencies who wish to use the powerful brand of the Shujaaz character to transform the lives of young people. Recent partners include The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UK's Department for International Development, The World Bank, and others.

The researcher spoke with Rob Burnett, Founder and CEO of Well Told Story.

The 10 organisations introduced above are just some of the participants from the interviews, but their projects provided key relevant data, and are used to illustrate and highlight aspects of using digital technologies in current media development practice in Kenya and Tanzania.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research results in large amounts of detailed data. This data usually comes from interview transcripts and/or observation notes and must be re worked or 'reduced' to represent major themes or categories that describe the phenomenon being studied.

Data reduction facilitates the revealing of findings simply and efficiently. Depending on the type of data being used the analysis will differ. According to Berg "the actual task of analysis will depend on the data-gathering method or methods used in the research process... The overall effort will be to create descriptive accounts based on the information captured by various data-collection technologies" (Berg et al., 2004:183).

With the qualitative interviews, the content was interpreted so it related to the objectives of the project. Wood advised that a useful way to keep the various objectives in mind is to keep in front of you a summary of the main concepts, relationships, and hypotheses that are central to the study (Wood, 2000). The interview schedule in this instance was derived from the thesis research question and sub-questions (see Appendix A).

The data analysis involved sequential steps including transcribing, reduction, categorisation, clustering units of relevant meaning, and determining themes from these. Transcribing the interviews was a slow process, but unavoidable. This process resulted in large amounts of data that had to be reworked or ‘reduced’ to represent major themes or categories that describe the issues being studied. Data reduction can help the revelation of findings quite efficiently.

The researcher must decide how he or she will code the data to enable categorisation – and the themes to emerge. Another decision the researcher must make when analysing data is whether to analyse the interview data obtained from each participant independently or whether to use cross-case analysis. In this instance each respondent’s data was analysed first and then cross-referenced.

Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a way of seeing, as well as a process for coding qualitative information. The researcher must make many decisions about the process of identifying themes, and he or she must inform others why specific categories were chosen. They argue that “thematic analysis is a poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely-used qualitative analytic method” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:2). They describe what should ideally happen during each phase of analysis and this research followed a similar manner of analysis. Table 2

below breaks out the stages of analysis based on phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Phase 1	Becoming familiar with the data	This involves transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas regarding themes.	This researcher spent considerable time listening to and transcribing interviews which were each at least 40 minutes in duration, producing very large amounts of data. From this effort, several themes, perspectives and points of discussion were noted.
Phase 2	Generating initial codes	This stage of the analysis involves the researcher coding or categorising interesting features of the data in a systemic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code or category	From the large amount of data produced during the first phase the researcher started to divide and code the interview data according to certain points or issues, such as opinions on use of technologies in projects or views on donor policies.
Phase 3	Searching for themes	In this phase the researcher collates codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme	From the coded data above the researcher could start to identify and gather certain codes together and group them together. Most interview participants had a view on the benefits or not of ICTs in journalism in their country, and all could speak about recent changes in the media landscape in their country. These could be grouped together to create an argument from various participants.
Phase 4	Reviewing themes	The researcher checks if themes worked in relation to the coded extracts, generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis	The data was reviewed to provide evidence for each argument or theme. Such as discussions regarding problems encountered when using ICTs in media

			development projects. This provided support for each theme.
Phase 5	Refining categories and themes	The researcher defines categories and named themes and undertakes ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme	The researcher confirmed whether there was enough data or evidence for each theme or issue. For instance, it emerged from the data that there was mixed views of whether technology was of benefit for journalism in the region, and the data was refined to support different perspectives on this theme.
Phase 6	Producing the report	The researcher selects “vivid, compelling extract examples”, and undertakes final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the research question and the literature	The overarching themes were extracted from the coded and categorised data. Some themes were more central and some secondary. For instance, the practicalities of using technology in media development projects was an overarching category and journalism training was a secondary one. Extracts and examples relating to these to themes were selected for supporting the conclusions in the Discussion and Closing chapters.

Coding

As noted, a common way to approach qualitative data analysis in this case is the construction of themes. Sometimes these have already been decided when designing the study, or if the data collection is structured around these predefined themes. In other cases, the themes are constructed afterwards.

Coding was an important part of qualitative data analysis and is the process of grouping interviewees’ responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas,

concepts, or themes that have been discovered. The analysis of qualitative data usually involves the selection of quotes to support the presentation of the findings (Grbich, 2012). This was the method used here where quotes will support the findings.

Upon initial reading of the interview data the researcher looked for these patterns or themes among the data. The researcher was able to discover a variety of themes, codes, or even possible categories that provided the beginnings of analysis, and/or ideas for future interviews.

Wood described analysis as an exercise that draws on your background knowledge, your ability to listen with an open mind, and your ability to link particular observations and pieces of information to more general concepts (Wood, 2000).

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) provide common types of coding categories but emphasise that the central questions or hypotheses will shape the coding scheme. This was the case here. The researcher could reduce the data and categorise according to the survey questions. These were grouped and clustered according to larger themes such as Local Media, Project Activities, and Journalism Practice.

The use of software for qualitative data analysis has increased rapidly over the past few years. Researchers are, however, not quite agreed on whether it improves the quality of the analysis (Grbich, 2012). In this instance the author did not use software but undertook the coding, categorisation, reduction and extraction processes manually. It was felt that this approach would lead to greater familiarity with the data and important for deducing what the important themes were.

Once the themes were identified and the data reduced, then the findings started to emerge from the data. In this instance, the subcategories of the questions became

apparent from the findings around themes of: Journalism Practice and New Technologies; Donors views on media development in Kenya and Tanzania; Media Development projects currently in implementation; The use of new technologies in media projects in Kenya and Tanzania; The traditional medium; Problems with integrating ICTs into media projects; Engagement with ICTs; The potential for digital technologies in Media Development.

These findings fed into salient themes for further exploration in the Discussion Chapter which would relate back to our literature review, including the narrative of Africa Rising and ICTs: the digital divide, Radio Convergence with ICTs; and the problems of citizen participation and engagement using digital technologies in these projects.

Conclusion

In this chapter the research methods used to gather and analyse the data to address the hypothesis were reviewed. A mixed methods approach was used and the rationale for this was presented. By applying the case study and qualitative interview methods the thesis gained direct and deeper knowledge of the extent to which digital technologies are being used by the ‘media development’ sector. These methodological approaches were deemed the most appropriate research methods to present a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of current media development activities being undertaken in sub-Saharan Africa.

The research gained insight into how citizens of Kenya and Tanzania are currently interacting and engaging with their media and digital technologies. The data helped to illustrate the consumption of media in these countries. Local media consumption patterns are important to the research because almost all donor-funded media

development projects are now undertaken after baseline research has been carried out into local media patterns and habits. This is so their projects can be tailored to suit not only the objectives of the funders but also the actual media habits in any given country.

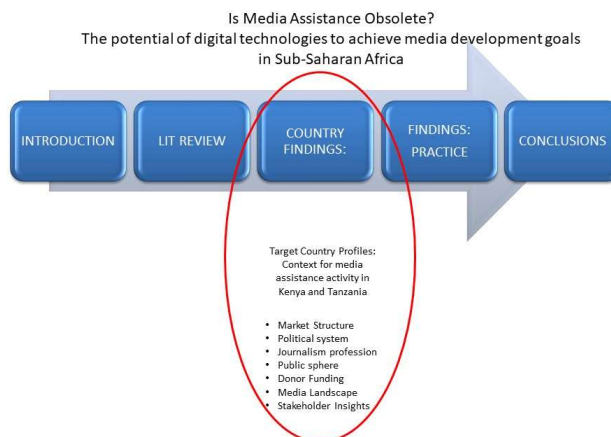
The data also provided insight into the effect of digitisation on the media landscape. In particular the growth of alternative media spaces was noted such as online forums and blogs which break news and where citizens can debate issues.

Using secondary and primary data, it was discovered the extent to which media development organisations have adjusted to take into account the growth of digital technologies in Kenya and Tanzania, if they can contribute to donor objectives and if so to what extent and to what success. This would inform the primary research questions of whether media assistance is still relevant, from practitioners working on the ground.

These findings shall be presented in detail in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5

Country Findings



Introduction

Having contextualised the research question in earlier chapters on the relevance of media assistance in an ever-increasing digital environment and mapped out the research design in the previous chapter, this chapter now presents Case Studies of the two countries on which the study focuses – Kenya and Tanzania. As illustrated in the Research Map above, this chapter addresses the environment for media assistance activity in the case study countries. The research specifically focuses on Kenya and Tanzania. In the following chapter findings regarding current approaches to media assistance in these countries will be presented and discussed.

In order to examine the impact of digital technologies on media assistance in the chosen case study countries, the thesis puts forward the following sub-question relating to the environment in which media assistance takes place, specifically: What are the characteristics of the current media and information environment in the

selected case studies of Kenya and Tanzania? In so doing, this chapter will provide a contextual analysis for the two case study countries which serves as a needs analysis for their media systems.

Also addressed are the media habits of the citizens of Kenya and Tanzania, the extent to which newer technologies and new digital forms of journalism are taking hold, and the health of the public sphere. This will assist in a deeper comprehension of what type of media development interventions might be required in these countries, and whether digital technologies have a useful role to play in addressing these needs.

This chapter draws on sources from relevant documentation, grey literature and sundry media development source material – as well as primary data – to create detailed country profiles for Kenya and Tanzania.

Firstly, a justification for the selection of this region and the two case studies is presented.

Rationale for the Case Studies

In the period since ‘media development’ gained considerable momentum in the 1990s, a lot has changed in the area of media assistance. As noted, media development in the period 1989 to the late 1990s focussed on transitional democracies in post-Communist Eastern Europe. Once free market principles had been established, the so-called “media missionaries” started focusing their attention elsewhere. As discussed in Chapter 2, these media interventions in the post-Soviet states were not deemed an unequivocal success (Džihana, 2011; Lauk, 2008; Rhodes and Lange, 2007).

However, the policy focus of the traditional donors of media development has in any event moved strategically and geographically to other regions.

One explanation for this change of geographic focus could be because a number of countries entered the EU and so could no longer be the recipient of democracy-building funds – by definition they are meant to be democratic. The assumption was and is that there is now a sufficient plurality of information and communication in these former Soviet satellites.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two underscored how media assistance has been employed by donors to promote democratisation (Howard, 2003). Since independent and reliable news media play such a crucial role, especially in free and fair elections, they are regarded as key part of such citizen decision-making, and democracy. After the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, it was considered necessary to establish new independent media outlets in these countries to assist with the process of democratisation and therefore donors focused on that region during the period.

There has also been a growing awareness more recently of the role of media in potentially spreading violence, and this has resulted in more programmes in conflict-affected and fragile states, with a focus on peace-building and countering hate-speech (Kalathil, 2017). This was in evidence in Kenya around the time of the 2007 elections and some radio stations were shown to have contributed to encouraging violence at that time (Allen and Gagliardone, 2011; Marsh, 2014).

Consequently, following the turn of the century, for a variety of reasons, international media donors turned their attention more to the Middle East and to Africa (Kumar, 2006).

The region has drawn attention for additional reasons. Having once earned the title of the ‘the hopeless continent’ by The Economist (Dowden, 2000), Africa has more recently been defined as the world’s fastest growing region (African Development Bank, 2013). A flow of positive economic statistics has made Africa a focus for international investors, and much of this growth and optimism around it has been attributed to ICTs. Kenya in particular has been the centre of much technological investment and international focus, earning it the moniker ‘silicon savannah’²⁰.

As noted in earlier chapters, many African countries have seen an increase in both media and access to information, through liberalisation of traditional media and dissemination of new technologies. However, it should be cautioned that these changes are not necessarily having the positive effects on the broad populace assumed by the techno-determinist view. Research from Afrobarometer showed that after a decade of growth in Africa, ‘lived poverty’ remains pervasive across the continent (Mitullah and Kamau, 2013; Dulani et al., 2013).

This paradox will be explored further in the current chapter, where a detailed picture of the two Case Study countries - Kenya and Tanzania – is presented. The focus of this research thesis is the media and media systems in this region, and whether media assistance interventions using digital technologies can address the needs of these systems and citizens. Thus, it is necessary to present a comprehensive analysis of the ‘information ecosystems’ of both of these countries.

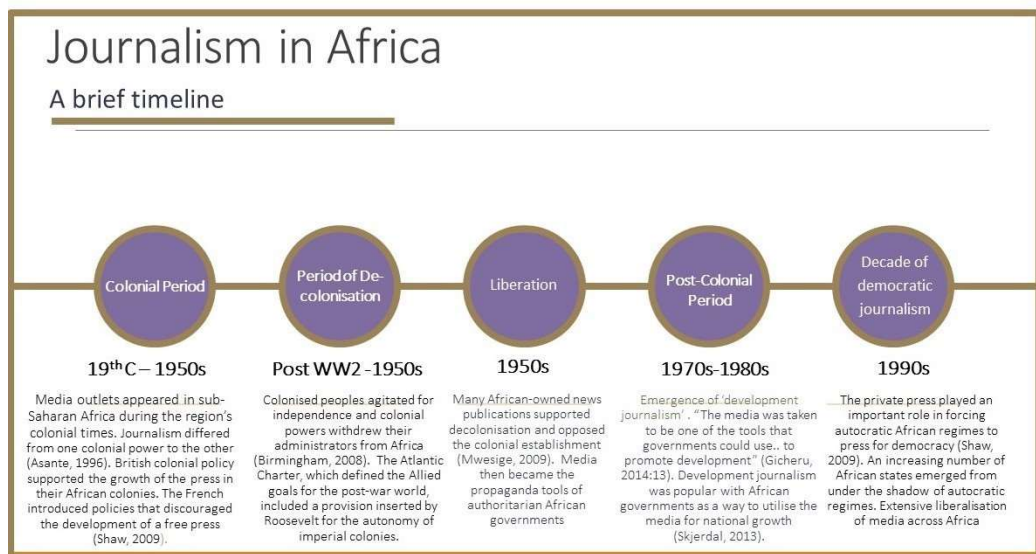
To start, a brief overview of the history of journalism in the region is presented to contextualise the current environment for media assistance activity and the needs of the journalism sector.

20 Mobile Phones Transform Africa, Time Magazine (Perry, 2011)

A brief history of journalism in Sub-Saharan Africa

When looking at media development work in sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to acknowledge Africa's long experience of colonialism and the events that followed (Bourgault, 1995; Gicheru, 2014; Kasoma, 1995; Ronning, 1994). These impact the environment for media freedom and independence just as it has in the democracies of the West, and will impact further the issues that media development projects need to address.

For instance, Mano (2009) argues that difference approaches to journalism training on the continent originate in the “partition of Africa in Berlin, in 1884, which created rigid vertical lines of command with little lateral interaction between African institutions, countries and regions” (Mano, 2009: 281).



Sources: Shaw, 2009; Birmingham, 2008; Mwesige, 2009; Gichero, 2014; Skjerdal, 2013

Figure 6. Journalism in Africa

As noted in the diagram above, during the **Colonial period** [19th century up until the period of independence in the 1950s], the media served the information needs of missionaries and colonial settlers (Shaw, 2009). Prior to this, news was circulated to the people in the form of oral discourse “with communal storytellers (griots), musicians, poets and dancers playing the role of the modern-day journalists” (Shaw, 2009:5).

Kasoma argues that the press was more independent during colonial times than it has been subsequently during military or one party rule (Kasoma, 1995). The press played more or less a critical watchdog role in dealing with the colonial administration according to Shaw (2009). After liberation in the 1950s and 1960s, press freedom violations, unknown during the colonial period, were used by the new African leaders to control their journalists.

Eribo and Jong-Ebot argue that at independence, the media “became ideological tools of the new African leaders, and were brought under state control and made to sing the praises of dictators in the name of national unity and development” (Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997:x).

During the **Post-Colonial Period** (1970s and 1980s), therefore, the role of the press as government watchdog was overshadowed by its role as “public cheerleader for development efforts’ in areas such as health, agriculture and education, and steering clear of politics (Bourgault, 1995). This style of journalism, referred to as ‘development journalism’, emerged out of a compromise between “nation building” and “a free and unfettered press” (Bourgault, 1995:173). However, the practice of this style of development journalism has attracted criticism for promoting political agendas instead of people’s interests (Skjerdal, 2013).

Later, the decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall, was called the **decade of democratic journalism**. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa underwent significant political reform (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1994) and the press played an important role in forcing autocratic African regimes to press for democracy (Shaw, 2009). Calls for governance reforms from citizens of these countries, and international donors, brought in a new era of competition for political leadership. This helped open up governments to criticism from the media and was conducive to a more open and free press (Karikari, 2010; Myers, 2014).

The diversification of the media sector across the sub-Saharan continent was accompanied by better legal and institutional frameworks in support of media freedom and the new constitutions adopted in the region in the last three decades have all enshrined some right to the freedom of expression (Wasserman and Benequista, 2017).

This brief timeline of journalism in the region contextualises the current day environment for media assistance activity and serves as a backdrop for the presentation of findings from the direct research, which now follows.

Country Profiles

This section will now present an in-depth look at the media ecosystems of both countries as background to current media development activity. This chapter directly addresses the sub- question:

- What are the characteristics of the current media and information environment in the selected case studies of Kenya and Tanzania (RQ2a)?

This will help gain greater insight into the context for media assistance practice in these countries, the characteristics of which will then be presented in the following chapter (RQ2b).

This chapter will therefore provide the reader with an understanding of important aspects of media systems in both these countries: market structures, the level of press freedom, and an analysis of the journalism profession in each country. The following analysis draws on Hallin and Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (2004), which outlines a conceptual framework for the analysis of media systems consisting of four dimensions. These are:

- Structure of media markets - newspaper circulation rates, relative importance of newspapers and television as sources of news
- Political parallelism - the “fact that media in some countries have distinct political orientations, while media in other countries do not” Hallin & Mancini, 2004: 27).
- The role of the state
- Professionalisation of journalism sector

These themes will be drawn upon for analysis of the media systems of both Kenya and Tanzania in the following sections. This current chapter will therefore help assess the needs and weaknesses of the media systems in Kenya and Tanzania which could be addressed by the media assistance sector.

Case Study: Kenya

Overview

Table 3. Kenya Overview

Population ²¹	48,397,527 (July 2018 est.) Forty per cent of whom are under 15 years of age 40 ethnic groups
Human Development Index ²²	0.590 - Medium Human development category - positioning it at 142 out of 189 countries and territories
Poverty Levels Population living below income poverty line, PPP \$1.90 a day (%) ²³ (2015)	36.8%
Freedom House Press Freedom Index ²⁴	‘Partly Free’ Rank 48/100
Transparency International Corruption Index 2018 ²⁵	Score: 27/100 Rank: 144/180
Reporters Without Borders 2019 World Press Freedom Index ²⁶	32.44 Rank 100/180
Languages	English (official), Kiswahili (official), Kiswahili numerous indigenous languages
Statutory Code of Ethics	Yes. Media Act 2013

²¹ CIA World Factbook

²² UN Development Index Statistics 2018

²³ UNDP <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/KEN>

²⁴ Freedom House 2018

²⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

²⁶ <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

Background

Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963, but was a *de facto* one-party state under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party until 1992. This was followed by a multi-party political system post-1992 that has helped the liberalisation of the Kenyan economy and the media environment (Abdi and Deane, 2008)

Kenya is a leader in Africa in some key economic sectors— notably in telecommunications. This has been attributed to its growing youthful population, a dynamic private sector, highly skilled workforce, improved infrastructure and its pivotal role in East Africa (The World Bank, 2018). It has become a key centre for technology in the region

The country still faces development challenges, illustrated by its ranking on the Human Development Index, and made more difficult by political and social upheaval in past years, the most well-known of which was the civil unrest and riots that broke out during the disputed presidential election in 2007. Up to 1200 lives were lost and nearly one million people displaced during that time.

Kenya is a top ten recipient of aid (OECD, 2018). Economic liberalisation has been a priority with these donors and aid has thus been conditional on an opening up of the economy.

The political environment for media in Kenya

Mainstream media frequently reflect the environment in which they operate (Abdi and Deane, 2008) and there are some notable events that have occurred in Kenya in recent years that have impacted on the media sector. The most significant of these is the aforementioned unrest during the 2007 elections and the subsequent outburst of

violence. The events of 2007 illustrated the political and ethnic tensions that have been a constant under the surface of the country.

This was highlighted by Irish Ambassador to Kenya, Vincent O'Neill:

There are over 42 ethnic groups living reasonably peacefully together. But, from time to time within the country, you get a lot of sparking points between tribes and across counties, over grazing rights or whatever ... There's a fragility keeping the country together in ways (*O'Neill, 2015, in interview*)²⁷.

Abdi and Deane (2008) argue that politics in Kenya has become more split and factionalised along political and ethnic grounds and as a result the media have been drawn into, and often aligned with these different political interests (Abdi and Deane, 2008). This was highlighted in 2007 when local radio stations were accused of inciting hate speech during the unrest (Marsh, 2014). The Kenyan government and international reports alleged that ethnically-based radio stations in Kenya were partly responsible for inflaming ethnic hatred (Allen and Gagliordone, 2011).

Abdi and Deane have noted how staff at these stations may not have the skills to mediate such on-air discussions:

[During the 2007 elections] These talk shows had become an outlet for a public debate and an expression of voice which had been suppressed for decades. Many of these voices were angry, disaffected and determined on change. In any society, such debate in such a political environment would have required skilful and careful moderation. That is not what generally happened. People hired to broadcast in these stations were rarely trained journalists or commentators, but sometimes entertainers

27 Vincent O'Neill, Irish Embassy in interview with author Feb 2015

and other personalities familiar to their audience. Personnel from these radio stations have acknowledged that they have little or no training in mediating discussions in conflict situations (Abdi and Deane, 2008:4).

Even during peaceful periods, the media in Kenya are influenced by politicians and ethnic allegiances. Harwood et al (2018) argue:

Politicians at every level of government have used ethnic allegiances as a tool to mobilize support. Just as ethnic identity is woven into Kenyan society and politics; it too is woven into Kenyan media. It is reflected in both the decisions about which stories to cover and how to cover them, as well as how audiences perceive ethnic bias in reporting (Harwood et al., 2018:6)

In addition to ethnic tensions from within, another factor is the threat of violence from outside Kenya. Since 2011, the country has faced several terrorist attacks by the Somali group, Al-Shabaab, as retribution for the Kenyan military's involvement in the group's home country of Somalia. For instance, in January 2019, they claimed responsibility for the death for 21 people in a shootout in a hotel complex in Nairobi city centre.

Lohner et al. (2016) stress that “political volatility due to ethnic divisions and the threat of terrorism from Al-Shabaab impact on the current structural conditions of Kenya’s political and media system” (Lohner et al., 2016:48).

A new Constitution was adopted in 2010 in the aftermath of the riots that took place in 2007, and this Constitution was regarded as an instrument that would potentially reform the social landscape and foster harmony (FesMedia, 2012). It has been

praised for expanding freedoms of expression and of the press, specifically by prohibiting the state from interfering with the editorial independence of individual journalists and both state-owned and private media outlets (Freedom House, 2015).

However, Transparency International²⁸ found that Kenya's rank in the Corruption Perceptions' Index (143rd out of 180 countries under review) "calls to question the reforms that have been instituted in various sectors since the adoption of the Constitution of Kenya 2010" (Transparency International Kenya, 2014).

Market Structure

Despite the growth in media outlets since liberalisation of the market, Kenya suffers from concentration in media ownership (Mbeke et al., 2010; Titus and Brombart, 2016). This is most likely because there have been no ownership regulations or restrictions imposed upon corporate or political interests.

The growth of the media sector has been closely tied to Kenya's political history, and this means that there are still strong links between large media players and the political environment. According to Mbeke, almost every media channel can be identified with a political party or personality (Mbeke et al., 2010).

The media is often considered a tool to promote political agendas. Nyabuga claims that "most detrimental to media diversity, pluralism, and independence are the profit motive and the political allegiances of most of the media outlets" (Nyabuga et al., 2013:75).

28 Transparency International is an NGO which aims to combat corruption and publishes the Global Corruption Barometer and the Corruption Perceptions Index

A report by Internews on this subject called “Factually True Legally Untrue – Political Media Ownership in Kenya” found that while media ownership is sometimes obvious, media owners often use their spouse, parents or friends to register their media outlets, making it difficult to obtain clear data on media ownership (Nyanjom, 2012). Maina (2015) maintains:

Concentration of ownership remains a major issue in the Kenyan media landscape, yet the Programming Code proposes to increase the number of licences one person may hold concurrently. No attempt is made to rein in cross-ownership between print and broadcast media” (Maina, 2015).

The author concludes that “ultimately the best safeguard for a vibrant and pluralistic broadcasting sector would be a genuinely independent regulator” (Maina, 2015).

Freedom House noted positively that “Kenya’s leading media outlets, especially in the print sector, are often critical of politicians and government actions. They remain pluralistic, rigorous, and bold in their reporting” – however they also “pander frequently to the interests of major advertisers and influential politicians” (Freedom House 2014).

The market is dominated by four groups: Nation Media Group (Mwananchi Communication Ltd), Standard Media Group, Radio Africa Group, Royal Media Service and MediaMax Communication Group. This environment, in which only a handful of players are shaping the media ownership structure, is reinforcing barriers to market entry in the media sector. Media ownership in Kenya is thus concentrated in the hands of a few very powerful people, leading to unfair representation of voices in their favour.

Therefore, media concentration, political bias and lack of genuinely independent regulator are problems within the media ecosystem in Kenya which prevent the media from performing its role to its full potential. As noted by Price and Krug (2002), media need an ‘enabling environment’ that is supportive of a free and unfettered press.

Professionalism of journalism sector

The professionalism of journalism is exhibited in the observance of standards such as verification of news content, confidentiality of sources, fairness, and public interest (UNESCO).

Academic research into journalism in the region illustrates the challenges of being a journalist. These include: the repression coming from the many authoritarian regimes, the oppressive legal systems kept on from the colonial period, the self-censorship of editors, and the bribing of journalists (Eribo, 1997; M’Bayo et al., 2000; Wasserman and Jacobs, 2012).

It must be qualified that these problems do not exist across the entire continent of Africa but there are similarities with regards to the obstacles and challenges that journalism face in the two countries under review for this research.

Despite the growth of the media sector in Kenya in the past decades, it has been said that there is not necessarily improvement in the quality of news in the media (Nyabuga et al., 2013). What has improved is the diversity and not the quality per se.

Nyanjom (2012) blames the perceived lack of professionalism on the absence of professional training and orientation. He points out that many prominent members of the media sector practice without any paper qualifications (Nyanjom, 2012).

Journalism training in Kenya is available from a variety of institutions, ranging from universities to small colleges, but quality and standards of training are matters of concern (Power, 2006). Lohner (2016) argues that “one of the structural factors indicating the level of professionalisation and development of journalism as a profession in its own right is the condition of professional education and training” (Lohner et al., 2016:69). Ireri found that local journalism and communication colleges are faced by a myriad of problems, chief among them being lack of resources, unqualified lecturers, and proliferation of new low-standard colleges (Irer, 2018)

For instance, in a study called “Criteria and Indicators for Quality Journalism Training institutions and Identifying Potential Centres of Excellence in Journalism Training in Africa,” UNESCO found that of all the near to 30 universities in Kenya offering communication courses, only University of Nairobi was mentioned as a potential centre of excellence (Berger and Matras, 2007).

Most schools and colleges offer courses that are general in nature and experts have claimed a need for a more specialised journalism training in order to mainstream topical issues and concerns (Schmidt and Deselaers, 2015).

International Media Development Organisations also provide training programmes. The largest of these are Internews, HIVOS and BBC Media Action, who have been surveyed for this research and their projects will be outlined in more detail in the following chapter.

Another challenge for the journalism profession in Kenya is that journalists are poorly paid and this leaves them vulnerable to bribery. Media organisations have spoken out against corruption but in practice, bribing journalists is common. It has been called

‘grassroots editing’ - the practice whereby Kenyan journalists receive money to run stories that are biased in favour of the person who has paid the bribe.

The pay levels for both electronic and print media are inadequate and this has promoted corruption (FesMedia, 2012). Even senior editors have been implicated and many of them are suspected of being on a retainer for personalities in positions of power (FesMedia, 2012).

Investigative journalism is also frustrated by political intimidation. The Committee to Protect journalists in Kenya reports that journalists frequently experience harassment, intimidation and even violence for doing their job. In September 2018, *Daily Nation* journalist Barrack Oduor was assaulted and abducted and his source allegedly murdered. Oduor had been working on a story about a woman who alleged she had been impregnated and abandoned by a prominent politician (Rhodes, 2018).

Reporters Without Borders note that “during election campaigns, the media are routinely subjected to physical attacks by the security forces and the public... Their equipment is often confiscated, and their writing is censored. Journalists can pay dearly for covering opposition events or for portraying President Uhuru Kenyatta’s party and its flaws in a negative light” (“World Press Freedom Index 2018 | Kenya”). As a result, self-censorship is a common practice among the Kenyan media, and it affects all levels.

This section has illustrated the myriad problems facing journalists and journalism practice in Kenya. The next section will present the media market for audiences and citizens in Kenya to provide a clearer picture of the limitations of the media, both old and new, in Kenya.

Kenyan Media

Economic liberalisation has helped grow the media in Kenya, allowing an opening up of the media and communication space. At the same time, there has also been a growth in the middle class in Kenya, which provides buying power to support an advertising base, and thus media companies have flourished.

Kenya has over 100 radio stations, including about 30 vernacular broadcasting stations, providing at least one local language radio station for each of Kenya's largest ethnic groups (Schmidt and Deselaers, 2015). There are more than 60 free to view TV stations and an unconfirmed number of print newspapers and magazines. New players in TV and radio have grabbed viewership and listenership from state owned KBC's platforms, reducing it to a small player in a market dominated by private broadcasters.

The variety of media outlets in different formats (print, radio, television and online) gives the Kenyan media scene the appearance of plurality and diversity.

Television

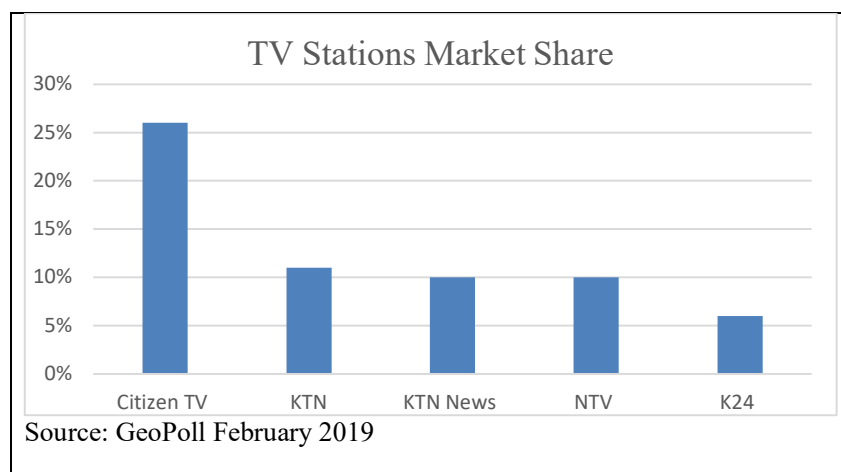


Figure 7. Kenya TV Stations

Television is still a luxury in Kenya but is a trusted medium of news and information (Nyabuga et al., 2013). Research conducted by the Kenya Audience Research Foundation (KARF) in 2016 found 30.6% valued TV (Amadala, 2017).

Television is a regular feature of city life rather than country: The number of Kenyans getting news from television displays the major differences between urban and rural areas, with 57 per cent of urban respondents getting news from this channel every day, while only 20 per cent of the rural people do the same (Mitullah, 2012).

One of the reasons for the popularity of television is because entertainment centres such as restaurants, cafes and bars put up television sets to attract more customers. “At 7pm every day these social venues are packed to the brim as most people flock there to catch the evening’s prime time news bulletin. Clients even know which bar, restaurant or cafe offers the channel of their choice” (FesMedia, 2012:8).

In February 2015, Kenya introduced Digital Migration²⁹ for television, almost 10 years after the process had begun in Europe. The changeover was poorly managed and despite months of notice, when the government switched off the analogue signal, it left most Kenyans without TV for days. Resourceful Nairobians plugged computers into their TV and streamed it for themselves but most Kenyans were left with blank TV sets for a period during the switchover.

²⁹ Digital Broadcasting Migration is a process in which broadcasting services offered on the traditional analog technology are replaced with digital based networks over a specific period. The transition or switch from analog television to digital television is referred to as the Digital Migration.

The biggest effect that digital migration has had on the Kenyan media scene is the increase of TV channels. Since digital migration Kenyans have access to over 337 TV channels, 66 of these are local channels (KARF, 2017).

The introduction of digital TV has seen the emergence of stations that deal with various issues such as education, farming, health, women and children issues among others. So, one positive result is that a segment of the TV industry has embraced the “educative role of mass communication” (Nyabuga, 2016:44).

However, many people have not yet converted to the digital signal as new set-top boxes are too expensive, and several boxes are required to get the same number of channels (*Davies, 2015, in interview*)³⁰.

In contrast to the generally held view that digital television removes control of broadcasting from the state and allows much more extra territorial involvement, Ugangu (2018) argues that the transition to digital television in Kenya has in fact created more leverage for state influence over the media landscape. He claims that the digital migration process maintains state control in more subtle ways over the countries media landscape (Ugangu, 2018).

30 BBC MA, Jackie Davies, Feb 2015 in interview with author.

Print Media

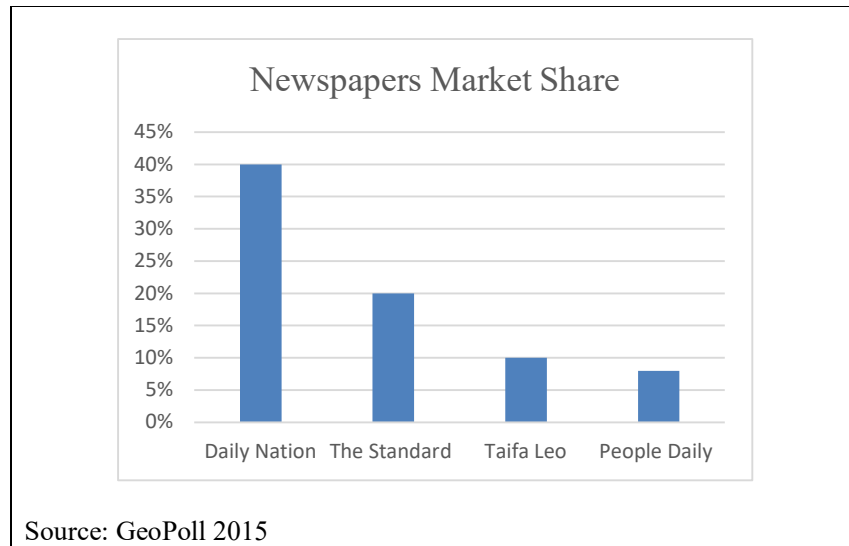


Figure 8. Kenya Print Media

In Kenya, the print media audience is smaller than radio and TV audiences (Bowen, 2010). Ibelema and Bosch argue that there are several barriers to wide circulation of newspapers, including the logistical challenge of distribution to remote rural communities, literacy limitations and high purchase prices forced by limited advertising environments (Ibelema and Bosch, 2009).

Research conducted in 2010 found that 37% of respondents said they had not read a newspaper within the last year; when they were asked why, many cited the cost or inability to read or understand newspapers (Bowen, 2010). About one quarter of non-readers at that time said that they were simply not interested in getting news and information from print media

As the print media is considered expensive, Kenyan vendors rent out daily newspapers for a nominal fee for an hour or two. Once the individual has read the paper it is handed back to the vendor who will place it back on the newsstand (FesMedia, 2012).

The introduction of 47 counties in the country's recent devolution reform has increased the number of new publications. The 2010 constitution created a decentralised system of government and Kenya shifted from centralised control to devolution in which 47 counties were given a free hand to set their development so the leadership, the tax collection, the delivery of services has become decentralised.

With this devolution of power, there is a growing need for local newspapers that cover local issues and local governance. Making local governments and citizens talk to each other is essential to that process of local government, but there is a severe shortage of local news (*Spoerry, 2015, in interview*).

Radio

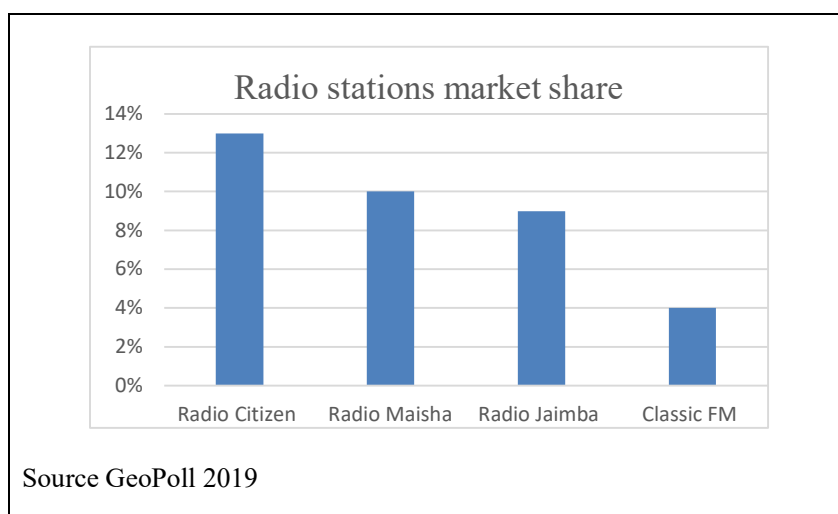


Figure 9. Kenya Radio Stations

Research consistently underlines the prominence of radio in Kenya, which has the highest penetration both in rural and urban areas (Bowen, 2010; Gilberts and Myers, 2012a; Minderhoud, 2009).

Nearly all Kenyans are radio listeners, and nearly all of them use radio as a regular source of news and information (as opposed to listening strictly for entertainment): 89 per cent of Kenyan adults get news and information from the radio on at least a weekly basis (Bowen, 2010).

There has been a large expansion of FM radio outlets in recent years, and this has included local-based and vernacular radio stations across the country. While commercial local-language radio is vibrant, there are few non-commercial community radio stations.

Community broadcasting offers a distinct broadcasting service dealing specifically with community issues that are not normally dealt with by private and public broadcasters (Nyabuga et al., 2013). A community radio station is one that is run for the community and by the community and, most important, it is not run for profit.

Of note is that local radio that is focused on the community, but not commercially driven nor politically owned, has been identified as a potentially positive resource for cross ethnic dialogue and debate in Kenya (Gustafsson, 2016; Mohamed, 2016; Oburu, 2016).

Information and Communication Technologies

Table 5. ICTs Kenya

Mobile Phone Penetration	49.5 million (Q2 2018/19) 106.2%
Digital Television	Changeover: February 2015
Internet Users	43,329,434 (31 Mar 2019) 83% Penetration
Facebook Subscribers	7,000,000 (31 Dec 2017)
internet Gross Domestic Product (iGDPs)	2.9%

Sources:

Kenya Communications Authority <https://ca.go.ke/document/sector-statistics-report-q2-2018-19/>

Internet Users and Facebook Subscribers: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>

iGDP: The measure of the internet's contribution to a country's economy (Manyka et al., 2013)

Kenya has seen a significant growth in mobile phone uptake with figures showing mobile phone penetration in Kenya by 2017 was over 100 percent (CCK, 2017). The penetration level of more than 100 per cent is attributed to multiple SIM-card ownership.

The mobile sector is the predominant provider of data and internet services to Kenyan users, accounting for 99 percent of total internet subscriptions. As such, internet-enabled mobile phones are the primary drivers of the growing internet uptake in Kenya (Freedom House, 2015).

Landline telephone coverage remains largely inaccessible, with fewer than one telephone line per 100 people. Investment in ICT has thus focused instead on bringing mobile and internet access to all parts of the country.

However, whilst internet penetration continues to increase across the country, there is still a large difference in access between rural and urban areas. Internet use in Kenya is mainly concentrated in urban areas; according to a 2013 report by the McKinsey Global Institute, Kenya's urban internet penetration rate stood at 78 percent, compared to a national rate of 39 percent (Manyika et al., 2013).

Additionally, the cost of mobile devices and internet subscriptions remains an struggle for many poor Kenyans to access the internet.

Despite widespread access to mobile phones for basic uses such as voice calls, some of the more innovative uses of mobile phones have been less widely adopted. Abel Okuye from Afrobarometer maintains that “news services are more for the elite. It is not very common with, for example, the rural population (*Okuye, 2014, in interview*)³¹.

Social networking sites are becoming very popular but regular users of the internet are predominantly young, male, relatively wealthy and relatively well educated compared to the population as a whole (Nyabuga et al., 2013).

Smartphones are also gaining in popularity in Kenya. According to the Consumer Barometer survey by Google, the percentage of people who use a smartphone to access the internet in Kenya has increased from 27 per cent in 2014 to 59 per cent in 2018 (The Connected Consumer Survey, 2018).

31 Abel Okuye, Afrobarometer, May 2014 interview with author.

This section presented the media environment in Kenya, how Kenyan citizens access news, their preferences, and adoption of new information and communications technologies. These technologies are impacting on the ways in which citizens in Kenya network, share information, and try to affect change. The next section now discusses this in the wider context for media assistance activity in Kenya.

Discussion

It has been noted that Kenya has become a regional centre for technology and innovation in East Africa. But despite its connectivity, among all media and ICT platforms that Kenyans have at their disposal, radio remains the most widely available, reaching directly into more than 85 percent of Kenyan adults' homes (Muema and Mwaura, 2012). Radio continues to be the mainstay of news consumption in the country. This is largely because radio is affordable and its broadcasts can reach even the remotest parts of the country. Importantly the cost of buying and running radio sets is low.

Research from the Kenya Audience Research Foundation underscores how Kenyans still prefer traditional media. The survey shows 94% of the media consuming population consume TV, Radio and Print while only 33% consume new media (*Media Establishment Survey Kenya 2015*, 2015).

Regardless of widespread mobile penetration, seventy-six per cent of the Kenyan population live in rural areas, and many of these are remote areas, where “last-mile” issues of electrification, infrastructure, and network connectivity still present major challenges to consumption of news media.

Even urban areas including the capital, Nairobi, still do not have universal electricity connection as only 53 per cent of total households have access to electricity (Nyabuga, 2013).

Radio is also by far the media channel mostly used by small-scale farming households in Kenya for receiving agricultural information (Bowen, 2010). And despite large investment in the ICT and Technology sector, agriculture is the mainstay of the Kenyan economy (Kamongo, 2012).

So, while at first glance, Kenya appears to have one of the most connected and plural media sectors in Africa, in terms of accessibility at an individual level, there are socioeconomic and geographic divides: urban and affluent citizens enjoy wide access to media in all forms, especially digital, while rural and poor populations do not.

Consequently, despite growing mobile and internet penetration, there remains a stark rural-urban split in access to and use of most media and newer digital technologies. The busy media scene to be found in urban areas is in contrast to rural areas, where state radio dominates and one or two other stations are likely to be available to residents there (Matende, 2012).

What this means is that the internet as a potential forum for expression and source of news and information has been limited to one part of the population – those in urban areas.

Case Study: Tanzania

Overview

Table 6. Tanzania Overview

Population ³²	55,451,343 (July 2018 est.) Approx. two-thirds of the population is under 25 More than 130 ethnic tribes
Human Development Index ³³	0.538 Low human development category - positioning it at 154 out of 189 countries and territories
Poverty Levels Population living below income poverty line, PPP \$1.90 a day (%) ³⁴ (2018)	49.1%
Press Freedom Index ³⁵	‘Partly Free’ Rank: 45/100
Transparency International Corruption Index ³⁶	Score: 36/100 Rank: 99/180
Reporters Without Borders ³⁷	36.28 Rank: 118/180
Languages ³⁸	Kiswahili or Swahili (official), Kiunguja (name for Swahili in Zanzibar), English (official, primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education), Arabic (widely spoken in Zanzibar),
Statutory Code of Ethics	Yes. The Media Services Act of 2016.

³² CIA World Factbook

³³ UN Development Statistics 2018

³⁴ UNDP <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/TZA>

³⁵ Freedom House 2018

³⁶ <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

³⁷ <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

³⁸ CIA World Factbook

Background

The United Republic of Tanzania, in East Africa, was formed by the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964. Since independence from Great Britain, Tanzania has progressed into a multi-party democracy that assures the separation of powers (Stiftung, 2014).

The current government is headed by the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party and they have maintained the same ideals of socialism for decades. Tanzania has been claimed one of the most politically stable countries in Africa (Bjerk, 2010). The national language of Kiswahili is said to be a significant unifying factor within the country (though English is used as the official language) (CIA, 2017).

Since the 1990s, the country has had strong economic growth and in 2011 was predicted to be one of the fastest-growing countries in the world (Cooksey and Kelsall, 2011).

This growth may not have translated into poverty reduction however (Cooksey, 2012). As the table 6 above illustrates, Tanzania continues to rank among the lowest on the Human Development Index and there is substantial poverty in both urban and rural areas.

Corruption is cited as one of the major constraints for doing business in the country and Tanzania has made slow progress on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). (Transparency International, n.d.).

Transparency International notes that corruption in Tanzania is a significant problem at all levels, from provision of public services and public procurement to the workings of the political system (Lindner and Banoba, 2014).

While the president and others have claimed to be on the forefront of the anti-corruption fight, opponents have said that his efforts are insincere and merely to appease international donors (Kambenga, 2012)

A report for the European Union on their overseas governance promotion noted that “the United Republic of Tanzania turned from “donor’s darling” to problem child with regard to anti-corruption and governance reforms” (Montgomery, 2017:116).

International donors are therefore focused on addressing transparency and governance in Tanzania.

The political environment for media in Tanzania

While the constitution of Tanzania provides a foundation for the protection of freedom of expression in the media, in fact, Tanzania has a series of laws that are often used to punish critics of the CCM government and “the courts and parliament are fundamentally hostile to journalistic freedom” (Matumaini, 2011:1). Kambenga argues that laws dealing with libel, defamation, and anti-terrorism have remained in place as barriers to press freedom (Kambenga, 2012).

The Media Services Act of 2016 was enacted in November 2016 and established a statutory Media Services Council. This has been criticised as not being independent. The East African Court of Justice (EACJ) noted that multiple sections of Tanzania's Media Services Act restrict press freedom and freedom of expression, and has called on the Tanzanian government to repeal the act (Avenue et al., 2019). One issue of concern is the requirement that all journalists must seek accreditation, and that those without such accreditation would not be allowed to practice as journalists (Ishabakaki et al., 2016).

The Cybercrimes Act and the Statistics Act (2015) are also seen by media stakeholders as not having “been made for the purpose of promoting media freedom, but of restricting it” (Titus and Brombart, 2015:16). The Cybercrimes Act grants the police broad powers of search and seizure and criminalises the publication online of information that the state deems “false or misleading” and “to levy heavy penalties against individuals involved in a host of criminalized cyber-activities” (Freedom House 2016).

This limits the scope for digital publication and encourages heightened self-censorship. For instance, the founder of the popular social media blog *JamiiForum*, Maxence Melo, was arrested in December 2016 on multiple charges, including managing a domain not registered in Tanzania, based on the provisions of this bill, and strict bail procedures kept him behind bars (John, 2016).

Journalists in all media face high risks for criticising the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) or the government. Journalists, especially those operating in rural areas, are reported to face regular harassment and beatings, and have been known to receive death threats from government officials if they expressed opinions in opposition. Nicknamed the “Bulldozer,” President Magufuli has tolerated no criticism of himself or his policies since becoming president in 2015 (*Reporters without borders: Tanzania, 2019*).

IREX’s Media Sustainability Index (2012) reported that on many occasions, journalists have been prevented from reporting or taking pictures on stories or events negatively portraying the ruling party or the government (Kambenga, 2012). This has created an environment where journalists fear losing their jobs if they dare to question the government or media owners.

As a result, only a small portion of civil society in general, and journalists, feel free to express themselves. Titus and Brombart (2015) claim that most feel “intimidated by the draconian anti-media laws that exist in Tanzania, as well as by the powerful interests of the owners of the various media houses” (Titus and Brombart, 2015:14).

And with CCM having won every election since the establishment of the multi-party system in 1992, future advances for the media in Tanzania will likely face challenges (FesMedia, 2010).

Market Structure

Like Kenya, the media industry in Tanzania has grown rapidly over the past decades.

The media landscape in Tanzania has become more diverse following the advent of multi-party era in the 1990s (IPSOS, 2012). Fifteen years ago, the media on the mainland consisted of two newspapers and one State owned radio station. Today, Tanzania has many privately-owned newspapers, radio and television stations.

However, the media landscape continues to be dominated by a few large players and media organisations are concentrated in a small number of hands in Tanzania. The government controls two daily newspapers, and the two main political parties own one each. As of September 2018, 175 newspapers and magazines were registered in Tanzania with the majority of them privately owned³⁹.

IREX’s Media Sustainability Index (2012) found that most media owners are politicians who started media outlets to promote themselves and curry political favour.

39 GeoPoll Online and Print Consumption Aug/Sept 2018 <https://tanzania.mom-rsf.org/en/media/print/>

Like in neighbouring Kenya, such political owners tend to heavily influence the editorial slants of their organisations (Kambenga, 2012).

Powell calls this the “phenomenon of news media ownership for political ends”. Newspapers emerge during election periods, and then disappear, thus “electoral politics dominate the media industry,” (Powell, 2017:92). He argues that this “produces a form of media capture dominated by the centralized state, an emerging democracy marked by rent- seeking and corruption, in a wider context of inequality and exclusion enabled by elite-driven privatization processes and global capital” (Powell, 2017:93).

Thus, like in neighbouring Kenya, media in Tanzania is owned and controlled by politicians and elites. There have been attempts to limit cross-media ownership in 2009 - only after media conglomerates had already expanded in a concerning manner - but these were not followed through (*Media Ownership Monitor Tanzania*, 2018).

Professionalism of journalism sector

According to Le Pelley (2010), the journalism profession in Tanzania suffers an apparent lack of capacity, a high degree of sensationalism, corruption, job insecurity, editorial interference by media owners, and poor and risky working conditions (Le Pelley, 2010).

Certainly, like elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, corruption is a problem. Media professionals accept payments or gifts in exchange for certain types of coverage, otherwise known as “brown envelope” journalism. Skjerdal noted “there is legitimate reason to believe that this phenomenon and other types of informal incentives and bribes are common in African media practice” (Skjerdal, 2010:367).

This can be understood if put in context and levels of remuneration; 75-80% of the Tanzanian journalists work as freelancers and these freelancers are poorly paid and often earn below minimum wage (Sungura, 2012). In general, staff journalists have better income than freelancers, but the modest wages still result in some of the most competent and best educated journalists leaving the profession to work in better paid fields such as public relations (ibid).

Powell noted a form of “brain drain” where investigative reporters leaving the field of independent journalism for the “commercially profitable world of government and corporate communications” (in Powell, 2017:91). Of course, this is not unique to Tanzania.

There is also a problem with regard to lack of advertisement power for Tanzanian press. In neighbouring Kenya, a single newspaper like The Nation sells 250,000 copies a day and can depend on strong advertising revenue as well as sales to fund it, whereas quality papers in Tanzania sell a maximum of 25,000 copies (Sungura, 2012). The main advertiser in the press is the Tanzanian government who has, at times, withdrawn advertising as a reaction to unwelcome editorial content.

Advertising therefore plays a very strong role in self-censorship, and editors will avoid antagonising advertisers. It is an issue of survival, especially if a newspaper relies on advertising revenue (FesMedia, 2012).

Powell maintains that there are “multiple constraints facing the media in Tanzania” (Powell, 2017:93) and he calls this “media capture”. As noted, regulation can limit freedom of expression and promotes self-censorship, but reporters are faced with “other forms of censorship such as intimidation, unfavourable economic

circumstances, top-down economic and political development, and self-interested ownership patterns” (Powell, 2017:93).

Thus, although giving an outward impression of press freedom, there is limited space for criticising government in Tanzania and limited transparency (Le Pelley, 2010).

Unsurprisingly then, there is little such criticism in Tanzanian media.

This was noted by Newell who found “a general reticence within Tanzanian culture to publicly question or criticise” (Newell, 2012:2). This culture of not questioning or criticising the state has been found to impact negatively on the motivation of citizens to engage in governance programs. This will be discussed in more details when analysing media development programmes being implemented in Tanzania.

This section examined the challenges to the media sector in Tanzania. In the next section, patterns of media use in Tanzania are explored. This provides essential background to Chapter 6 where methods appropriate in media assistance projects are discussed.

Tanzanian Media

Television

There was no television network operating in mainland Tanzania until 1994. Upon independence in 1961, it was decided by President Nyerere's cabinet that television was too expensive to introduce to the whole population and radio was prioritised as the medium to unify the newly independent state (Katz and Wedell, 1977).

Consequently, television was introduced to the Tanzanian population quite late, but has since become a popular media in the country, in particular for youth.

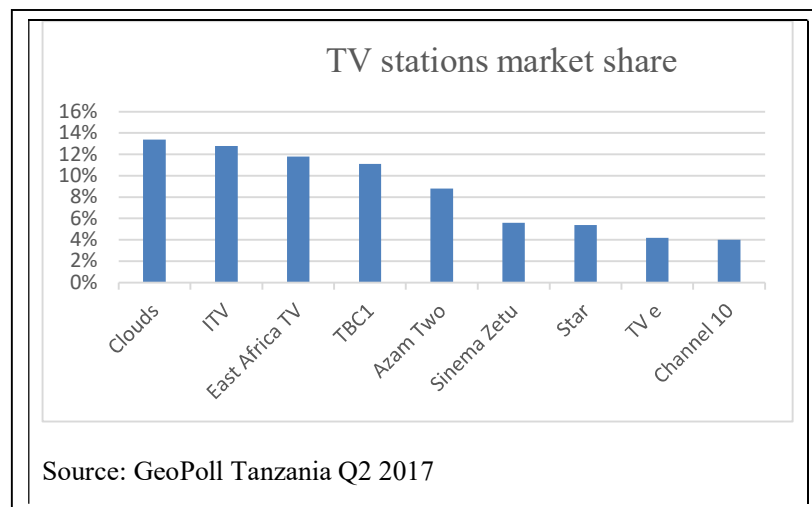


Figure 10. Tanzania TV Stations

There are currently 48 television channels licensed under the Tanzanian Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA)⁴⁰. Only a small percentage of the population has access to television, however, due to high costs. Few people in rural areas own a television set, which means that the TV audience in the country is still largely concentrated in the urban areas. People in rural areas are able to watch television through community viewings in public establishments, like coffee shops and pubs (Murthy, 2011b).

Deregulation has lifted restrictions on broadcasting activities in most sub-Saharan African countries including Tanzania. This liberalisation has opened the market to the wider distribution of satellite TV services, both private and state funded (Mytton et al., 2005). Nwokeafor and Langmia (2010) argue that digital television has “revolutionised the way millions of household viewers receive and interact with their televisions” (Nwokeafor and Langmia, 2010).

In December 2012, Tanzania became the first country in mainland Sub-Saharan Africa to switch off its analogue television signal. However, at the time, this change to the digital signal changed TV viewing habits: there was a shift away from TV in the country, viewership dropped after the digital transition and there was a shift towards radio. The reason for this is that viewers now need a digital antenna and decoder and that is an expense that a lot of lower middle, or lower class Tanzanian cannot afford (Kapella, *in interview*, 2015).

It is interesting to note that these sorts of transitions to newer technology such as with digital migration do not suit the whole population in Tanzania, as in Kenya. Cost is a central issue here. Despite digitalisation, in Tanzania, recent research by satellite

40 <https://tanzania.mom-rsf.org/en/media/tv/>

operator SES found that 52% of homes in Tanzania don't have TV access yet, out of a total of 11.7 million households. Among the 5.6 million homes that do have TV reception, 55% receive their TV channels via satellite, while the rest are still served by terrestrial and cable networks (*Satellite Monitor Study*, 2018).

Print Media

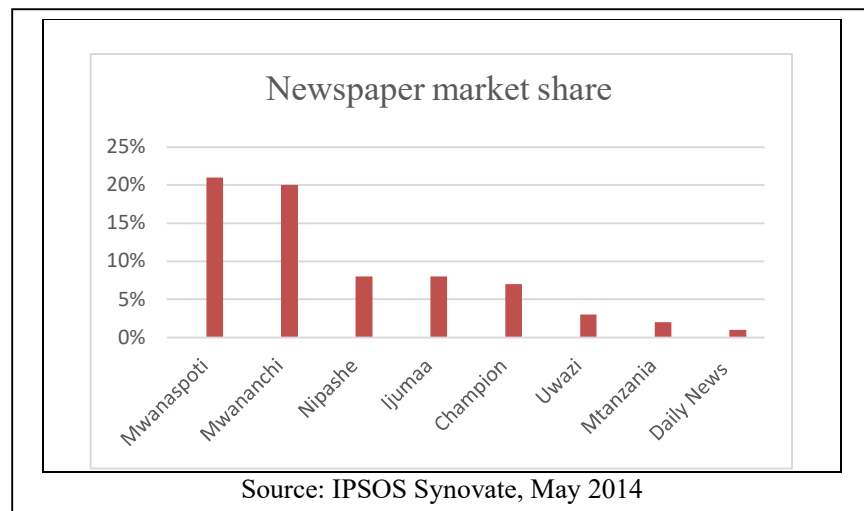


Figure 11. Tanzania Print Media

The private press has grown strongly since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1992 and most of the major newspapers in Tanzania are published in Kiswahili; thus readership is not affected by those who don't read in English. The major hurdle for newspaper readership is circulation, as circulation is mostly limited to the urban areas in the key regions.

Long distances and poor road infrastructure in Tanzania results in the delay of newspapers reaching rural centres on time and there are many outlying areas that the print media never reaches at all. A survey conducted by Murthy found that the largest proportion of non-readers of print media cite non-availability in their area as the prime reason for non-readership (69%) (Murthy, 2011). Consequently, newspaper readership is higher for urban residents. The most widely read newspapers are printed and distributed from Dar es Salaam (Murthy, 2011).

In the same survey, other reasons cited as obstacles to reading newspapers were that it was too expensive (19%), the audience do not have the time (14%), they are not interested (23%) and that they cannot read newspapers (13%) (Murthy, 2011). Otiso claims that despite increased access to media in Tanzanian society, a reading culture still does not have a strong hold in most of the population (Otiso, 2013). Hence, print media is not the most popular media in Tanzania.

Print media has also suffered recent setbacks including operating under a political environment dominated by repressive laws. A government directive in 2018 to re-register all newspapers and magazines took owners by surprise, leaving them with only one choice: to either re-register or close down business (Bazira and Muhanika, 2019).

Radio

The state-owned Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) began broadcasting nationally in 1956, while still under colonial control. Following independence, TBC

was placed under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 1965 and renamed TBC Taifa.

Following liberalisation in 1992, the Tanzanian government allowed the establishment of private radio stations which have flourished. But given the country's large geographic size and low population density, few stations are able to have full national reach.

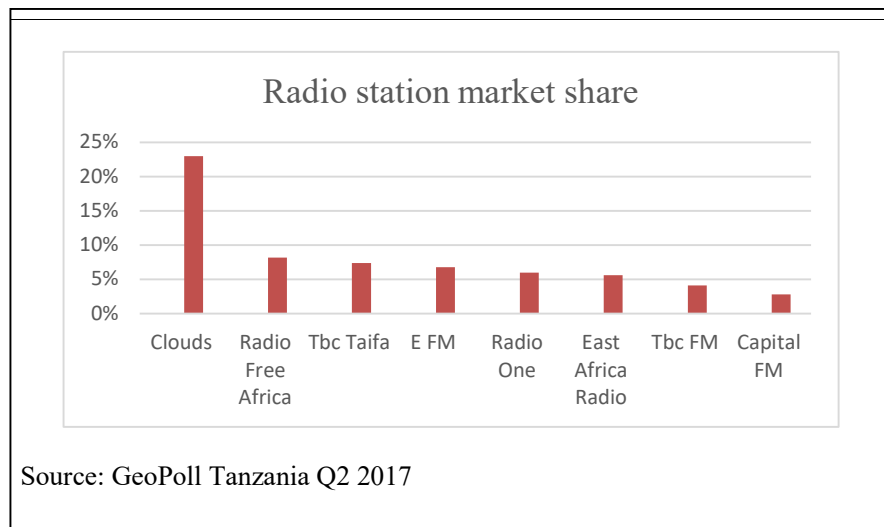


Figure 12. Tanzania Radio Stations

Research by Murthy (2011) found that 83% of Tanzanians said they get news and information from radio. Radio is the top source for every age group and income group tracked, as well as both males and females, and rural and urban dwellers (Murthy, 2011). More recently IPSOS confirmed that radio was the most frequently used media channel (IPSOS, 2014).

Tanzania has close to 120 ethnic groups, each of which has its own language. Local and community radios are therefore of great relevance to the local populations. As noted in Kenya, the costs associated with running community media outlets are very high, thereby discouraging communities' access to media. Again, some community radio stations have been established by politicians to boost their popularity in their constituencies.

The rise in access to mobile phones represents a potential boost for access to broadcast media in Tanzania by people listening to the radio on their cell phones. And as with Kenya, radio in Tanzania is becoming more interactive over time, with increase in use of mobile phones and with more radio call-in shows.

Interestingly, although Tanzanians may listen to these call-in shows, radio is seen more as a medium for passive entertainment than as a forum for voicing one's opinion. One study found that 76 percent of radio listeners listen to radio call-in shows, but only five percent had actually called in to one of these shows in that year (Murthy 2011). This may also be culturally specific to Tanzania where citizens are just starting to be comfortable with expressing their opinions in public. This shall be explored in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

Information and Communication Technologies

Table 7. ICTs Tanzania

Mobile Phone Penetration	80% (as at Dec 2018) 43,497,261
Digital Television	Changeover: Dec 2012
Internet Use	23,000,000 (31 Mar 2019) 38% Penetration
Facebook Accounts	6,100,000
internet Gross Domestic Product (iGDPs)	1.3%

Sources:

Mobile: TRCA Dec 2018

https://www.tcra.go.tz/images/documents/telecommunication/TelCom_Statistics_December_2018.pdf

Internet Users and Facebook Subscribers: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>

iGDP: The measure of the internet's contribution to a country's economy (Manyka et al., 2013)

As noted, Tanzania has experienced a large upsurge in telephone ownership with the introduction of mobile phones. The total number of mobile phone subscriptions rose from close to zero at the turn of the century to some 43 million by Dec 2018 (Tanzanian Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA), 2017) which is a penetration of near 80%.

With the increase in mobile phone penetration there has also been greater access to the internet. The use of internet is becoming more widespread among Tanzanians and especially among younger Tanzanians between 15-30 years (Femina Hip 2013).

Huge discrepancies however remain in the consumption pattern. A survey conducted by *Femina Hip* highlighted that access to the internet is confined to urban areas of Tanzania, as the majority of internet users are based in urban zones (Femina HIP, 2013). Like Kenya there appears an urban-rural split.

Furthermore, as exciting as this new online public space is for Kenyans and Tanzanians it needs to be highlighted that more than 70% of Kenyan and Tanzanian citizens still get their news from radio.

Discussion

To address whether digital technologies have impacted on the relevance of media assistance in the chosen case study countries (RQ2), this chapter examines the characteristics of the media and information environment in the case studies of Kenya and Tanzania (RQ2a).

In Tanzania, mobile phones and the internet are certainly becoming important communication and news gathering tools in Tanzania. However, factors such as infrastructure, high illiteracy rates, access and poverty levels prevent many Tanzanians from accessing new sources of information.

Access to media outlets and the new virtual space is determined by two factors; cost and location. The main challenge that prevents citizens from accessing the media in Tanzania is not lack of availability or lack of information, but rather poverty. Most cannot afford to buy newspapers or radio and television sets.

In terms of print media, lack of distribution networks due to bad roads and inaccessibility make it incredibly difficult for those in rural areas to access newspapers

or print media. What this means is that those living in rural areas, the majority of the population - have difficulty accessing TV and Newspapers.

The lack of a dependable electricity supply is another of the main factors that prevent many rural people from using electronic media, from the internet to television sets and is a serious issue for access to broadcast media in Tanzania. Lack of stable sources of electricity has an impact on the ability to access all media and communication devices and is disproportionately a problem in poorer and more rural provinces (Murthy, 2011).

Those in rural locations have had much lower access to main power grids than those living in more urban locations. Murthy found that close to half of all Tanzanians who say they have never watched television cited “problems with electricity” as one of the reasons for non-use (Murthy, 2011). Only 11% of those living in rural parts of the country (which constitutes 72% of the population) had access to the main power grid in 2014 (African Development Bank, 2015).

As a result, those living in urban areas (and in turn more stable electricity sources) are thus more likely to have access to broadcast media, network coverage and also print media for distribution reasons.

Therefore, like in Kenya, and possibly even more so, there is a sharp distinction between those living in urban and rural areas with regards to access of information. Many media largely remain reserved for urban dwellers, while the broader portion of the population residing in rural areas is left out. As such, it appears that “Tanzania still lacks a diverse broadcasting sector essential to a functioning democracy that can contribute to the public interest” (FesMedia, 2010:5).

The media in Kenya and Tanzania face many challenges to being able to fulfil its democratic potential as watchdog and public sphere. But in both countries, the affordability and accessibility of both old and new media should not be underestimated.

Stakeholder Perspectives

The previous section presented secondary data to illustrate the landscape for media assistance in Kenya and Tanzania. This chapter explores the context for media assistance activity in these countries and in particular the impact of digital technologies on journalism and the media systems in these two countries. This will influence what types of media interventions are now needed and whether traditional media assistance continues to be relevant.

Key stakeholders who participated in the interviews contributed valuable insights in this area and in this section these insights are presented as supporting evidence of the impact of digitisation on the media environment. They also provide perspectives on the techno-optimistic funding environment for media assistance in these case study countries, which may influence the projects being undertaken.

Digital technologies, Social Media platforms and news production

The interview participants, or key stakeholders, contributed important insights regarding the impact that digital technologies have had on news production and consumption and the public sphere in Kenya and Tanzania. Stakeholders noted the emergence and growth of user generated content (UGC) and citizen journalism as one of the most evident changes of the increasing use of digital technologies. Kenyans

and Tanzanians increasingly report eye-witness accounts on their mobile phones, telling stories and reporting local news.

Citizen journalism is seen by some as a remedy to the widening gap in societies where traditional news media are in decline or not fulfilling their watchdog role (Banda, 2010; Riaz and Pasha, 2011). Platforms such as Twitter have certainly changed the landscape for journalism in the region and Moyo (2007) suggests ‘new’ technologies offer alternative platforms of expression in the face of state monopolies of the mass media in Africa (Moyo, 2007). It has been called ‘citizen-driven’, ‘participatory and ‘democratic’ journalism for these reasons.

The stakeholders confirmed that digital technologies and social media platforms have changed the way journalists gather and disseminate news. Journalists in Kenya now file stories, pictures, and audio and visual clips from the field using their laptops and mobile internet connection facilities. The larger media houses have invested in converged newsrooms such as those seen in the headquarters of BBC and CNN. The Standard Group, for example, has a converged newsroom where reporters working for the radio, television, online, and newspaper share stories, pictures, and videos.

Mabweazera (2015) noted that “there is no denying that journalists in Africa, like their counterparts in the rest of the world, are experiencing the disruptive practice of new digital technologies on the way that they gather, produce and distribute news” (Mabweazera, 2015:1).

Stakeholder Dickens Olewe is a Kenyan journalist who has worked at *The Star* in Kenya and is a scholarship recipient in Stanford University in California focusing on using new technology in the news process. He argues that Kenyan media and

journalists have adapted but at different paces. “In terms of journalists, they were really quick in adopting being in social networks” (Olewe, 2015, in interview)⁴¹.

The bombing of Westgate was an important event in motivating Kenyans to sign up to social networks and showed how social media could provide another platform for news “because mainstream media was absolutely inadequate in covering West-gate” (Dickens Olewe, 2015). This event was “very, very important” for getting people in Kenya to start using social media for news.

Olewe notes that “the independent voices on social [media] were amazing [during WestGate] and the Kenyan media, especially the broadcast media were absolutely incompetent, they did not ask any questions. People on twitter got together and put out a list of questions they wanted the media to ask” (Olewe, 2015, in interview).

Stakeholders confirmed that social media platforms such as Twitter have enabled new voices to be heard, providing alternative news sources to mainstream and other media that are be controlled by the government or elites. For instance, in Tanzania people are using Twitter in particular because the official mainstream news tends to be self-censored.

Titus and Brombart (2015) concur that social media has provided a new platform for journalists and members of civil society in Tanzania to express themselves more freely on various issues (Titus and Brombart, 2015).

For instance, stakeholder Kris Kapella from *Femina Hip* noted that:

People don’t think they can get the most accurate and open information from traditional media outlets and so the strength of something like Twitter in Tanzania in

41 In skype interview with author March 2015

particular is that people can get live real time information as it happens, with Twitter people are using it as a substitute for traditional news media (*Kapella, 2014, in interview*).⁴²

Kapella notes how “in the past the government has cracked down on newspapers that have been overly critical of the government so as a result there is self-censorship”.

Elsie Eyakuze, a blogger from Tanzania writes the popular *MikoCheni Report*, notes “the growth of social media has been significant, not necessarily challenging traditional media so much as bringing in a whole new dimension of interaction between producers and consumers of content. It has enhanced the dialogue and democratic space” (*Eyakuze, 2015, in interview*).⁴³

Stakeholders noted that digital technologies have impacted on the way journalists undertake their work in the region and they are very aware of social media and online sources. Josh Ogure, from Kibera News Network, confirms that new technologies and social media “are being used a lot in Africa for news” (*Ogure, 2015, in interview*)⁴⁴. Maurice Oniang’o, an independent journalist from Kenya who has been recipient of the Thompson Foundation ‘Young journalist from a Developing country Award’, claims:

In the past five years the media has experienced dynamic changes which include embracing new media techniques in delivering news. Today almost all media houses have active social media channels through which they deliver news through as well as interact with their audience. All the major TV, Radio and Newspapers in Kenya have

42 Kris Kapella, Femina Hip, interview with author May 2014.

43 Elsie Eyakuze, Blogger, Tanzania, Mar 2015 In email communication

44 Josh Ogure from Kibera News Network in email communication with author Mar 2015

an active Twitter account, Facebook account and websites through which they update their audiences on current issues and stories that they are following (*Oniang'o, 2015, in email communication*).⁴⁵

Oniang'o himself is "always keen on trends on Twitter and it has always updated me on breaking news before I see it on TV or listening to it on radio". For instance, the Westgate mall terror attack⁴⁶ was reported on Twitter "hours before any TV or radio stations picked it up" (ibid).

Nyabuga reports: "today's journalist will hardly depend on the newsroom diary or phone tip offs from sources but will also have their eye on social media platforms to see what has been posted" (Nyabuga, 2016:44). Kaigwa and Wu (2015) refer to Twitter as Kenya's virtual "town square" (Kaigwa and Wu, 2015:154). Kaigwa argues that journalists now consider it to be a "part of their beat, staying tuned to trending blogs and other updates. It has become common to see news broken on Twitter by a blogger... legitimizing it .. and publishing it in the Kenyan news media" (Kaigwa, 2017:193).

In addition to integration of digital technologies into journalism practice, other websites and blogs have sprung up, encouraging citizen engagement and interaction

45 Maurice Oniang'o, Freelance Journalist Kenya). In email communication Mar 2015

46 On 21 September 2013, unidentified gunmen attacked the upmarket Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya. The attack, which lasted until 24 September, resulted in at least 67 deaths, including four attackers. More than 175 people were reportedly wounded in the mass shooting, with all of the gunmen reported killed.

and eye-witness reporting. Kenya boasts a vibrant blogging community, some of whom have become quite famous (such as Robert Alai and Patrick Gathara).⁴⁷

Eric Chinje from African Media Initiative confirmed “there are three or four bloggers in Kenya who contribute to influencing the agenda, no doubt about it” (*Chinje, 2015, in interview*)⁴⁸.

For example, Robert Alai is a high-profile blogger in Kenya who has become so well known that whistle-blowers willingly go to him to introduce sensitive documents to break the story on the internet. “You will see the mainstream media following up to try and make a story out of that, and I think that tells you where the trend is going.....Bloggers are breaking the stories” (*Dickens Olewe, 2015, in interview*).

Josh Ogure from the Kibera News Network argues that citizen journalists are the new watchdogs:

In the last five years Kenyan media was somehow ranked as the most trusted institution, but that’s not the case anymore, they have changed, Kenyan media have got into bed with the government, they would rather cover up the government than serve the public with the truth. Social media and citizen journalism has become a great alternative (*Ogure, 2015, in interview*)⁴⁹.

47 Robert Alai, is a Kenyan blogger, internet entrepreneur and cyber-activist. Alai has been sued and briefly incarcerated for his highly opinionated political and sometimes personal attacks on politicians, government officials and business leaders.. Patrick Gathara is a Kenyan journalist, blogger, and writer. He is a regularly published commentator on regional and international affairs. His work has appeared in multiple publications, including *The Washington Post*, Al Jazeera,

48 Eric Chinje, African Media Initiative, in interview Feb 2015

49 Joshua Ogure, Kibera News Network, email communication Feb 2015

Olewe agrees that citizen journalists are carrying out the real watchdog role: “They are taking over from mainstream media. For example, with a platform like HiviSasa⁵⁰ we democratise journalism where everyone can report their stories” (*Olewe, 2015*).

Chloe Spoerry is the founder of ‘*HiviSasa*’, an online county-level newspaper, and she argues that due to a centrally owned media, two out of three Kenyans receive written news that is not locally relevant, poorly distributed, slow, biased, easily censored and costly. She refers to the severe lack of local news in Kenya and Tanzania, and that new citizen journalism tools such as *HiviSaSa* address that gap: “stories will never be killed any more” (*Spoerry, 2015, in interview*).

Online news has filled gaps in information and news requirements of local audiences who are neglected in Kenya due to either accessibility, ownership or infrastructural issues. Spoerry claims “Hivisasa is a real tool for democracy, it creates more dialogue between local governments and citizens.... I’m talking about accountability and transparency” (*Spoerry, 2015, in interview*)⁵¹.

Tom Rhodes, from the Committee to Protect Journalists in East Africa, agrees that digital storytelling is “certainly playing a major role [in news]. The stories that you're not seeing on the press, you're seeing on social media. People are talking about it there”. He cites the example of *Jamiiforums* in Tanzania, an online news forum and discussion website. “*Jamiiforums* is this amazing cathartic tool where disgruntled

50 The ‘HiviSasa’ platform is an online, local, county-level Kenyan newspaper tailored for the mobile web. It sources all its news stories from local citizen reporters (i.e. anyone who wants to report the news) who are paid via mobile-money for each article they publish. Professional journalists/editors curate the incoming articles and choose the best ones for publishing.

51 Chloe Spoerry, HiviSasa, Feb 2015 in interview with author

politicians will go and upload very sensitive documents” (*Rhodes, 2015, in interview*).⁵²

The increasing popularity of these social networking sites like Twitter and *Jamii Forums* show a potential for online and citizen journalism. *Jamii Forums* is Tanzania’s number one most visited website and the most popular destination for Kiswahili speakers. “*JamiiForums* is unique in Africa in terms of the openness of the platform, and the site has a moderator to try to keep by validating claims” (Titus and Brombart, 2015:41).

Another informant suggests that mainstream journalism in Kenya could learn from social media and some of the bloggers, such as Robert Alai, Ory Okolloh and Gathara who “give context as well as reporting, which you don’t get that in the mainstream media”. Robert Munuku, from the organisation ‘Action for Transparency’, claims that as a result of blogging and citizen journalism “mainstream media have stepped up their game, they’ve stepped up the quality of their news, they’ve stepped up the quality of their research, and the veracity of the content” (*Munuku, 2015, in interview*). Munuku adds “when you look at political issues, on-line conversations and on-line behaviour is slowly affecting political issues in the country”.

What the stakeholder insights in this section reveal is how the internet and citizen journalism is seen as an important new platform for dissemination of news. They underscore how citizen journalism, blogging and social media platforms are affecting, possibly challenging, how the mainstream media is working in Kenya and Tanzania.

52 Tom Rhodes, Committee to Protect Journalists East Africa in interview with author Feb 2015

Robert Munuku claims these online media are “they are keeping them on their toes” (*Munuku, 2015, in interview*).

This is supported by academic literature. Mabweazara et al (2014) claim that online and digital journalism are “thriving on the continent” (Mabweazara et al., 2014:1) and Mudhai (2011) argues that mainstream media in Kenya show signs of struggling to catch up with an active blogosphere and to remain relevant, as events are increasingly debated via social media as they occur (Mudhai, 2011).

Abdi and Deane noted that Kenya has a lively blog culture and that they “provide a key form of public debate and a source of investigation at a time when investigative journalism is under threat in the country. As such, blogs provide a growing form of democratic expression and accountability, and fresh opportunities for dialogue and debate across cultures and communities (Abdi and Deane, 2008:11).

It will later be determined whether the changes brought by digitisation is impacting on the projects being undertaken by media assistance organisations and its relevance in an increasingly technological environment.

Funding environment for Media Assistance in Kenya and Tanzania

The stakeholders who participated in the interviews also had noteworthy insights into the environment for funding of media assistance projects and technology in the region. One aspect of the relevance of traditional media assistance approaches in the region is the extent to which they continue to be supported financially.

As discussed in earlier chapters, there is great enthusiasm amongst donors about the potential for ICTs, and the mobile phone in particular, in the development sector.

Traditional donors and new donors are recommending ICTs to address issues such as

governance and transparency to citizen participation to health programmes. Some of these are also traditionally media assistance goals.

ICT now forms a significant part of many donor funded projects and with the entry of the technology foundations - such as Gates Foundation and Omidyar Network - into the media assistance space, their media projects encourage technology solutions for development problems. Nelson says these foundations take a strong interest in digital media projects (Nelson, 2009:17). Sara Chamberlain from BBC Media Action noted how these “tech companies, particularly foreign tech companies, they're very focused on high-end technology, the cutting-edge, the latest end user interface design.... essentially touch screens and Apps” (Brown-Martin, 2014).

Over the recent past, Kenya's capital, Nairobi, has grown into a global technology hub and a regional role model for innovation. Nairobi is home to the first tech incubator in Africa, the iHub, which has supported a movement of young tech-savvy Africans to develop a community. There are also technology hubs springing up across Tanzania: Kinu, Buni Hub and DTBi are local innovation hubs along the lines of iHub. This proliferation of tech communities and clubs, and “Tech-Hubs” has led to the term “Silicon Savannah”.

The energy coming from Kenyas buzzy technology centre has gained the attention of governments and donors who are keen to support it. Social Tech companies, not-for-profit organisations, for-profit technology initiatives are increasingly establishing themselves in these centres on the back of donor funding.

In their recent strategy report “*Doing Development in a Digital World*” the UK's Department of International Development proclaimed optimistically that “digital technologies offer an unprecedented opportunity to revolutionise the global

development system, change lives, transform entire economies, stimulate growth and, ultimately, end reliance on aid” (*DFID Digital Strategy 2018 to 2020*, 2018). The organisation admits however to “falling prey to fads, buzzwords, and endless jargon” (Orton-Vipond, and Powell, 2018).

This illustrates how donors are promoting use of ICTs in development projects aimed, for example, at promoting accountability, transparency or at guaranteeing peaceful elections, and there is certain optimism around these technologies.

Many of the stakeholders interviewed for this research confirmed that the funders of media and development projects were encouraging the use of new technology in their programmes.

Stakeholder Alex Pitkin from Frontline SMS⁵³ confirms that “there are lots of projects that get funding because they are doing something innovative.... It’s more likely to get funding if they have good ideas on technology” (*Pitkin, 2015, in interview*)⁵⁴.

Bart Sullivan from the Canadian NGO FARM Radio, which undertakes projects in both Tanzania and Kenya, revealed “there is a lot of excitement around this. Almost all the projects we are funded to work on combine radio and mobile and online technologies... And ICTs in general” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*).⁵⁵

53 Frontline SMS is a NGO which teams SMS with Radio for interactive discussions. It is a free, open-source software used by a variety of organisations to distribute and collect information via text messages (SMS). Their radio product - Frontline SMS: Radio - helps radio stations increase listener engagement, build interactive programming and manage data in real-time, all using SMS

54 Alex Pitkin, Frontline SMS, in interview with author May 2014

55 Bart Sullivan, FARM Radio, Email communication with Author, March 2015

Daniel Dedeyan from USAID in Tanzania attests that “there is an excitement about new technologies to transform lives and bring about social and political change” and agreed that at USAID “we’ve had that excitement” (*Dedayan, 2014, in interview*)⁵⁶.

He revealed that they “are definitely getting a push from Washington to be innovative” in their projects (*Dedayan, 2014, in interview*). USAID are one of the larger funders of media development work in the region and this would have an impact on the direction of the media development sector.

Dedayan noted that, historically, a major obstacle to some of USAID’s development goals, such as accountability and transparency, has been information flows in Tanzania. Now ICTs are viewed with optimism as a possible solution to these problems (*Dedayan, 2015, in interview*).

Sasha Kinney who works with *PAWA254*, a community-based activism organisation in Nairobi, also spoke of “the big technology bias” that has appeared in the aid sector over the past five years. Kinney claims the message that the NGO community is getting from donors is: “Tech is new, we have to use tech. Tech will revolutionise everything on its own”. But she maintains that “people forget to give training in the fundamentals...It's kind of backwards” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*).

Kinney warns “this idea of advanced technology, it’s funder-driven and it’s popular, and there's very little regard as to what is really appropriate to reach a certain audience or engage them” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*)⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Daniel Dedeyan, USAID Tanzania, interview with author May 2014
⁵⁷ Sasha Kinney, PAWA, in interview with author Nairobi Feb 2015

This is of note because it tells of the push for use of new or digital technology regardless of whether they are the appropriate intervention or tool or whether their use is evidence-based. Kinney confirms “no-one ever asks about adoption or usage, no, because they also don’t want to see failure... They're not really thinking through really what's needed” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*).

Colin Spurway from BBC Media Action Tanzania concurs:

With the pressure on donors to show innovation there is very often a pressure to be doing things with smart phones and Apps. It is an extremely bad idea because the people you’re actually trying to reach, let say this woman, she doesn’t have a smart phone for Apps and even if she does have such a phone, it is probably one of those crappy little Nokia with a broken black and white screen and she can’t even read it (*Spurway, 2014, in interview*).

From the interview data and from observation during the two field trips to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 2014/2015, it is apparent that donors are excited about technology for development and for media development. Consequently, aid organisations based in Kenya and Tanzania are designing media programmes in an environment where funds are becoming more easily accessible for technology-focused solutions. Whether direct or indirect, there may be subtle pressure to use these technologies. The researcher heard from informants that sometimes a technology element is added on to grant applications for potential projects just to secure funding. This illustrates the mind-set emanating from the capital at the time.

The media assistance interventions that are being implemented in Kenya and Tanzania on the back of this donor funding shall be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

What this section illustrates is an environment in Kenya and Tanzania where donors are certainly enthusiastic for digital technologies in their programmes and view them as possible solutions for their development objectives. Will this impact on the relevance of traditional media assistance methods? This will be addressed in the next chapter which analyses the uptake, and effectiveness, of these technologies for media assistance objectives.

Key comparative issues in Media Assistance in Kenya & Tanzania

As can be garnered from the case studies presented here, neighbouring countries, Tanzania and Kenya are different not only in their history, politics and economy but also in terms of their current day openness to press freedom, technology and innovation. Kenya is much more technologically advanced than Tanzania, especially in urban places such as Nairobi. Kenya appears to enjoy more freedom of media than Tanzania although they are both ranked “Partly Free” by Freedom House. There are political and cultural reasons for these differences, and with its background as a socialist country for several decades, Tanzania does not have the same culture of entrepreneurship that can be witnessed in Kenya.

It has been shown that there has been a sharp increase in use of digital technologies in both Kenya and Tanzania in recent years, predominantly use of mobile phones, and also an increase in internet use.

New digital technologies have helped to advance the economy in both these countries and arguably, its public sphere as more people are brought into the new public space. Mobile phones and social media have widened the public sphere and this has given citizens of these countries’ new platforms for discussion. Citizen journalism and

blogging is a growing practice and the internet as a medium has provided citizens of Kenya and Tanzania with an alternative view to the mainstream media. This has provided an outlet for dissenting and critical views of the government, in particular in Kenya.

Digitisation of Television and satellite TV has meant that more channels and platforms, not regulated by local governments, are available to those who do own or access a television.

Open Government initiatives have resulted in more information made available to the public and journalists. For instance, Kenya was the first sub-Saharan country to put its data online. The Kenyan government launched the “Kenya Open Data Initiative” in 2011, making key government data freely available to the public through a single online portal.

But while government information is now technically free and available to the public, access to it is limited because only a small percentage of Kenyan citizens have the internet capability to access the information, or the educational level needed to absorb it (Foster, 2012).

Indeed, this is being addressed in Kenya, and elsewhere, by a relatively new field of journalism called ‘data journalism’ or ‘data driven journalism’ (Gray et al., 2012; Howard, 2014) where journalists are trained in statistical analysis so they can interpret this data for the wider population and present it in a more comprehensive way for audiences. This is one area that media development organisations in the region are addressing with training and capacity building.

However, both Kenya and Tanzania's media and media systems face many structural, legal, access and ownership issues. Although freedom of information is guaranteed on a constitutional basis, regulations have limited meaningful press freedom and both countries are ranked as 'Partly Free' by media freedom indices. These rankings have dropped in past years with recent media laws endeavouring to restrict online expression in both countries, under the guise of national security.

For instance, in Kenya, a 2014 Security Bill was fast tracked through government saying that it needed more powers to fight militant Islamists. The bill contained provisions that carry the potential to restrict freedom of the Kenyan press when covering terrorist acts and issues related to national security, with harsh penalties for individuals convicted of infractions.

While the legislation is supposedly targeted at print and broadcast media houses and the journalists they employ, citizen journalists, bloggers or those who are active online fear the loosely defined terminology hides an attempt to bring the unregulated online space into 'prosecutable reach' (Verjee, 2014). Tom Rhodes of the Committee to Protect Journalists claims that these laws "force journalists and news outlets to self-censor to survive. They are a severe blow to investigative reporting in Kenya" (CPJ, 2013).

This chapter examined the challenges to the media sector in Kenya and Tanzania to fulfil its potential democratic role as watchdog, as informant and as public sphere. Impartial and independent journalism continues to be hampered by those issues common elsewhere in the region – finances, concentration of ownership, harassment of journalists and censorship (Nelson and Susman-Peña, 2012).

The factors limiting access to or participation in the public sphere by Kenyan and Tanzanian citizens are many and have been documented in this chapter, in particular the sharp differences between media access between urban and rural areas. The stark urban-rural divide is what emerges most notably from the analysis of these media systems.

Digital technologies may not yet be fully relevant when reaching the broader populations of Kenya and Tanzania with news and information, providing a public sphere accessible by all or facilitating national discourse.

Furthermore, interview participants noted that the growth of digital technologies and social media have not necessarily improved the quality of news journalism. Key informant, Elsie Eyakuze, noted that with digital technologies “there is a lot more feedback, interaction and it means that news from all over the country gets disseminated faster. Not better, but faster” (*Eyakuze, 2015, in interview*). Nyabuga argues “it is not clear whether these have had any significant effect on the quality of information and news. Digital technologies have had both positive and negative consequences for journalism” (Nyabuga, 2013).

These issues are not limited to this region of Africa or even the continent. Problems of credibility and trust with online information are being experienced both in these countries and globally with the growth in social media and citizen journalism. The veracity of online news and the growth of “disordered information” is a global and growing problem (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). Concepts such as the echo chamber⁵⁸, fake news and filter bubbles have risen to prominence both globally and in

⁵⁸ the idea that online conversations about politics are typically divided into a variety of sub-groups, and that this division takes place along ideological lines with people only talking to others with which they are already in agreement (Bright, 2017: 1).

this region in recent years. There are many recently established initiatives to understand the phenomena and mechanics of ‘fake news’⁵⁹.

This chapter reflects some of the issues with regards to the growth in newer digital technologies and social media in Kenya and Tanzania and the impact on reliable, impartial and trustworthy information. It suggests there is still a space for traditional media that is impartial, independent and is accessible for the broader populace. This would suggest that there is still a gap which traditional media assistance can address.

Conclusion

This thesis asks whether digital technologies have impacted on the relevance of media assistance in the chosen case study countries. In order to address this, this thesis put forward questions relating to the environment in which media assistance takes place. This chapter addresses the question: What are the characteristics of the current media and information environment in the selected case studies of Kenya and Tanzania (RQ2a)?

This chapter therefore presented a profile of the media systems and media environment of Kenya and Tanzania. Secondary data and interview data from key stakeholders illustrated the impact that digital technologies have had on both the media ecosystem and the practice of journalism in Kenya and Tanzania.

In doing so, this chapter has provided a scene-setting and context analysis for the two case study countries which serves as a needs analysis for their media systems. It

59 DIT Fake News Project Provenance <https://fujomedia.eu/provenance/>
BBC Beyond Fake News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06r9vxf>

offers an overview of the media and communications environment in which Media Development NGOs and donors implement projects in the focus countries.

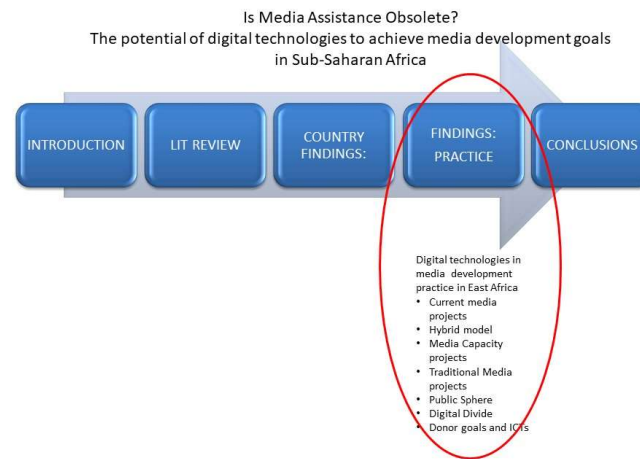
Understanding the setting for media assistance will help in understanding the real potential of digital technologies to achieve donor goals in media assistance programmes.

For instance, dominant political issues in Kenya are ethnic divisions, the threat of terrorism from Al Shabaab and corruption, and these issues impact on the media sphere as well as elsewhere. They will also influence media assistance donors' objectives.

The next chapter will present the primary data on media development projects in Kenya and Tanzania. Analysing the project data will illustrate whether digital technologies can fully address donor objectives and whether traditional media assistance methods are still relevant.

Chapter 6

Project Findings: Media Development Practice in East Africa



Introduction

In Chapter 5, the research showed, from a range of both primary and secondary sources, the characteristics of the media systems in Kenya and Tanzania. Most pertinent to the research question, it illustrated the extent to which the media landscapes in these case study countries have changed as a result of digital technologies. That chapter also outlined stakeholders' insights into the changes digital technologies have made on the practice of journalism in the region and revealed donors enthusiasm for using such technologies.

Chapter 6 now proceeds to address the type of projects that are being implemented on donors' behalf and to what extent these use digital technologies.

As exhibited in the research map above, this chapter takes up the research question with regards to media assistance practice in East Africa. It presents data on media assistance projects being implemented on the ground in Kenya and Tanzania. The research investigated, through face to face interview with stakeholders, whether media development agencies have changed the form and make-up of projects they implement in these countries as a result of the evolving “information ecosystems” in which they operate. This chapter thus directly addresses the sub-questions of:

- What are the characteristics of current media development practice in a modern East African context? (RQ 2b)
- Have ICTs impacted on the practice of media assistance in the chosen case studies? (RQ 2c)

In so doing, this chapter examines the nature of media development activity taking place in Kenya and Tanzania and whether digital technologies are being used to address project goals. This will help address the question of what the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies are compared to traditional media development approaches for achieving donor goals. This will ultimately help explain the rationale for a continuing emphasis on traditional media methods.

Schema for Presentation of Data

This chapter presents the data from fieldwork and comprises interview data focused on a sample of eleven relevant organisations whose casework is representative of media interventions in the region. To address the research question, the researcher needed to ascertain precisely what kind of media development projects were currently

being implemented in the case study countries, and what the objectives and activities of these projects were. Then, it could be extrapolated to what extent digital technologies are part of these projects and furthermore, whether these technologies can address donor objectives in a more effective manner than traditional forms of media.

For each project the data shows:

- The type of interventions being undertaken
- To what extent the media development organisations are using digital technologies in their projects.
- If these organisations are using digital technologies in their media interventions, have they experienced success, and to what extent?
- If these organisations are not using new digital technologies in current projects to achieve their objectives, what is the rationale for this?

Thus, the data addresses the question of whether digital technologies, if they are being integrated into media development programmes, are having the desired impact. The chapter also examines reasons for not integrating them into projects, on the basis that they did not serve to address donor goals.

Obstacles encountered in the use of ICTs for donor objectives will then be analysed further in the following chapter. This will help understand the limitations of using these ICTs for achieving media development goals.

Analysing the data will therefore address whether the cyber-optimism that is apparent in the literature and donor policy documentation reviewed in Chapter 3, and expressed by the stakeholders in interview, is feeding down into project activities on the ground.

In addition, this chapter discusses an important finding that emerged from the data: how media development projects in this region rarely solely address media sector reform or support, but are often combined with elements of media *for* development. The introduction chapter outlined the difference between what is understood as a ‘media development’ project and a ‘media for development’ project. The data in this research revealed how media assistance projects in these countries often takes the form of a ‘media development hybrid’ as referred to by Scott (2014). This will be discussed briefly below as it is a noteworthy aspect of media assistance in this region.

The Media Development Hybrid

As was noted in the literature review, media assistance was associated historically with establishing and strengthening democracy in the transitioning countries of Eastern Europe (and elsewhere) and for those objectives the sectors’ activities were especially focused on the professionalisation of the media sector and transformation of the media systems.

More recently, with the field of media development expanding to other geographic areas and widening its remit in terms of goals such as food security and humanitarian assistance, there has been a corresponding increase in funding for media *for* development activities. For instance, it is estimated that USAID spends four times more on C4D-related projects now than it does on media development (Cary and D’Amour, 2013).

Donors who support media development projects do so for a variety of objectives. These vary from trying to improve accountability, transparency and governance problems within a country, or increasing access to information, to encouraging

behavioural change within target groups (such as promoting use of condoms or breast-feeding). The type of media development project, whether Media Development or Media *for* Development, also depends on the project objectives and the target group.

The data from this research reflects that in an East African context, media development practice is often a combination of the two strands.

Within the sample of NGOs who participated in this research, very few were focused solely on media sector support or reform. Within the sample, there were several projects which had media *for* development activities but which also contained elements of capacity building or training as captured in the notion of the ‘media development hybrid’ (Scott, 2014).

For example, a BBC Media Action project called *Niambie* (Tell Me) is an youth radio show in Tanzania, using media to help young people understand their rights and responsibilities. The BBC project *Haba na Haba* (Little by Little) is a radio show aiming to bridge the gap between leaders and ordinary Tanzanians. Both projects provide a platform for public discussion, helping to bring people’s voices into the open but with additional journalism training, the projects provide support and capacity building to local and national media.

This is an important aspect of this research. Whereas the research focus initially was on digital technologies and media sector support, the primary data from this research showed much donor support in this region is in the form of this media development hybrid. That is – media-strengthening or capacity building activities hand-in-hand with ‘media for development’ or ‘communication for development’ activities. This is in contrast to early media development interventions in the former Soviet region which predominantly focused on media sector reform and capacity building.

Thus, the data illustrates that projects in the region are very often not only focused on media sector support but also using the media as a tool for change. *Media for* development projects are projects which use radio, TV or print media to convey messages about specific development issues. These tend to focus on food security, health issues, environmental or humanitarian information for instance.

In these ‘media for development’ projects, the emphasis is on content: “the strategic employment of media and communications as facilities for informing, educating and sensitising people about development and pertinent social issues” (Manyozo, 2012:54).

With ‘media development’, the emphasis is on structure. Manyozo describes this as “initiatives that are strategically designed to build media infrastructures, policies and capacities ... as a way of consolidating good governance, free speech, political citizenship and sustainable development” (Manyozo, 2012:112).

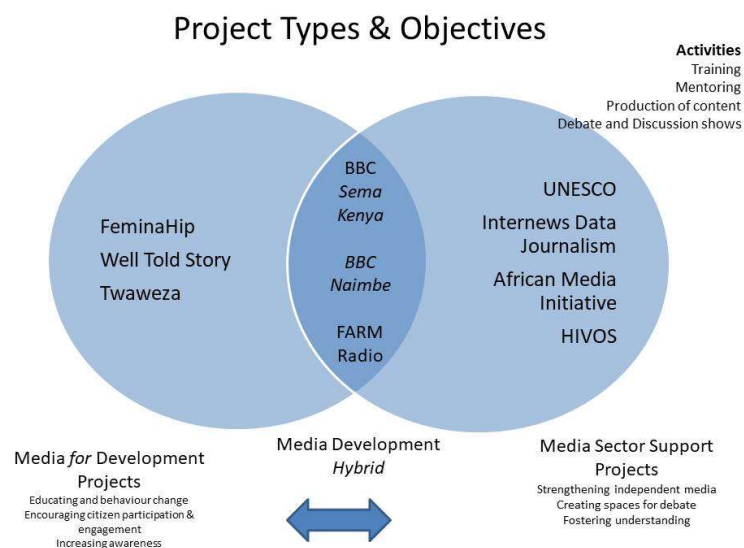


Figure 13. The Media Development Hybrid

Furthermore, although these types of hybrid projects are focused on both content (production of radio programmes) and structure (training and mentoring) they often simultaneously created new platforms for national debate, a place for voices to be heard, for discussion to take place and working towards a stronger public sphere. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

Therefore, although these projects can be recognised for their ‘media for development’ characteristics, in fact they also fulfil additional structural and democratic objectives of media assistance – strengthening the public sphere, contributing to a healthier democracy.

However, as Warren Feek (2008) suggested, perhaps the distinction between the two areas is “false and distracting” (Feek, 2008). The data from these sample projects is presented in the next section.

Project Data: Media development activity in Kenya and Tanzania

Interviews with representatives from a sample of organisations undertaking media assistance in Kenya and Tanzania provide the main source of data for this analysis and is presented below. The data is presented for a sample of eleven organisations that participated in the interviews and reflect media assistance activity in these two countries at the time of the fieldwork. These organisations spearhead media assistance in the region and the projects vary in size and the extent of their focus on ICTs in their media development activities.

The data is organised around four categories of projects, defined by their activity and goals, as outlined in the table:

Table 8. Categories of projects

Project Type	1. Capacity Building using digital technologies	2. Traditional Media Development approaches	3. The Media Development Hybrid	4. Strengthening the Public Sphere and platforms for dialogue
Project Name	UNESCO	TANZANIAN MEDIA FUND	BBC MEDIA ACTION KENYA	FEMINA HIP
	INTERNEWS	HIVOS	BBC MEDIA ACTION TANZANIA	WELL TOLD STORY
	ACTION FOR TRANSPARENCY	AFRICAN MEDIA INITIATIVE	FARM RADIO	TWaweza

A. Capacity Building projects using ICTs

UNESCO - Empowering Local Radio through ICTs

A capacity building project in Africa which aims to address the lack of quality programming for local radios and coordinated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) provides the first example. The project is called ‘Empowering Local Radio through ICTs’ and focuses on local radio stations, based in the community.

Table 9. UNESCO

Organisation Name	UNESCO
Who was interviewed	John Okande Project Manager Kenya
Project Title	<i>Empowering Local Radio through ICTs</i>
Problem Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local radios lack of quality programming.• The scarcity of reporting on development issues.• Limited debate platforms for the poor• A need to upscale local radio stations with a focus on sustainability.• Assist active participation of the poor in public debates.
Methods	Offered local stations a range of training and capacity building options: editorial programming; producing radio programmes; use of internet for research; management of daily contacts; training in use of ICTs; use of internet to report; role of correspondents to feed local news and collect testimonies; news desks’ work with correspondents for interviewing and reporting; and income generation
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ ICTs were introduced in radio programming and production.✓ ICTs selected on the basis of improving editorial work, radio programming, broadcasting, engaging audiences & financial management.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Helped to diversify news coverage greatly.✓ Established correspondent’s networks.✓ From a very limited availability of news a few years ago, now they have many stories coming from all over the region.

Summary:

The UNESCO radio project in Kenya was part of a wider project across 10 African countries over a 6-year period from 2012-2018. The objectives of the project were to expand the news coverage and diversity in news that was broadcast by the participating radio stations, usually based in the community. The project aimed to improve the quality and quantity of local content for the radio station. John Okande, the UNESCO Project Manager in Kenya, claimed that “previously, some of them would play music for the whole day” (*Okande, 2015, in interview*).

Local radio is an important source for information for those living in rural areas, due to language and accessibility issues. Few independent private local stations operate in local areas, as most local radio stations are affiliated to big media houses, such as Royal Media Services or Capital Group.

Okande noted “local radio stations in Kenya face many challenges such as human and technical capacity building – including training on local content production, sustainability strategies, reach, ethical issues guiding the management and editorial policies, and continued independence from political influences” (*Okande, 2015, in interview*).

The project focused on local radio and on integrating ICTs to modernise the radio stations’ operations, “such as how they use basic ICTs to produce quality radio programmes for broadcast” (*Okande, 2015, in interview*)⁶⁰. Trainers chose the most appropriate software, taking into account the radio station’s technical infrastructure

60 John Okande, UNESCO. In interview with author Feb 2015

and ICT literacy (based on previous assessment and surveys). Training also focused on use of phones for interviewing and reporting of news.

While in some radio stations the goal was to introduce basic internet skills, other radio stations were able to implement more complex ICTs like SMS polling or automated call-ins. Radio stations embraced some new media elements such as WhatsApp with their audiences. Examples of ICTs introduced by the project activities include Frontline SMS, Freedom Fone and Crowdmap.

According to Okande there was considerable change in how things were run at the participating radio stations, and how to use the available technologies in their day to day running of the radio station (*Okande, 2015, in interview*). Use of ICTs in radio stations resulted in improvements in sources for radio journalists and the quality of the stories they produced.

The project has now established several correspondents' networks, composed of trained community members. These networks have "helped largely to diversify the news coverage from the usual norm where they used to play the same thing throughout the day". Okande claims they now have "lots of content to use in their programmes... There's more news, diversified news. There's no repetition, the way it used to be" (*Okande, 2015, in interview*).

Okande states that the project improved the quality of programmes, the interaction with listeners, mostly poor people in rural areas, and extended the geographical coverage of news through the creation of networks of local correspondents.

This project illustrates a successful case of how integrating digital technology into the training at the local radio stations increased diversity of content (and perhaps quality)

of radio output as well as being a useful research and organising tool for the stations and upskilling staff.

It illustrates how ICTs can contribute to media assistance objectives in terms of improved quality of programming whilst also providing a platform for local audiences.

INTERNEWS – Data Journalism project

Internews is an international non-profit organisation whose purpose is “to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect and the means to make their voices heard” (“About Internews,” n.d.).

Internews trains both media professionals and citizen journalists in Kenya and increases coverage of important issues. Internews in Kenya supports projects that counter hate speech, promote peaceful solutions and better understanding of election issues. They also promote journalism around specific health issues in Kenya.

As noted in Chapter 5, a new field of journalism has emerged called ‘data journalism’ or ‘data driven journalism’ (Gray et al., 2012; Howard, 2014). Data Journalism is a media product gaining in popularity in many parts of the world, as a result of the Open Government partnerships of which Kenya and Tanzania have signed up, and governments have committed to making more data available to the public.

As more countries open up their data to the general public under Open Government initiatives, there is a need for journalists to interpret this information and present it in ways that is understandable to the general public. Data journalism can help a journalist tell a complex story by using infographics for example. Journalists can now

use this newly available data to uncover stories, better explain or provide context for a news story. Internews is a media development NGO providing training in this field.

Table 10. Internews

Organisation Name	INTERNEWS
Who was interviewed	Ida Jooste: Country Director Kenya
Project Title	<i>Health Media Project</i>
Problem Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Media Project works to develop a media response to public health issues in Kenya. • The project focuses on revealing corruption and inequality and promoting accountability.
Methods	<p>Working with media managers, owners and government stakeholders to promote sustained coverage of health issues.</p> <p>Includes workshops and mentoring for aspiring data journalists, teaching how to develop a narrative around data findings to ensure the public understands the human impact of the data and how government can solve the problem.</p> <p>Training in use and analysis of data, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *How to identify public interest story angles in data *Examining data sets for evidence of mismanagement and marginalisation of public funds
Use of ICTs	Use of visualisation tools including maps, charts and infographics to present the data in a way that helps audiences can understand how complex issues relate to their own lives.
Outcome	<p>The Data journalism training uses data to give depth and integrity to mainstream reporting.</p> <p>Internews in Kenya “have done very, very well in terms of introducing new technologies” into media development projects according to Internews Kenya Country Director Ida Jooste.</p>

Summary:

Internews Kenya had identified how local journalists were not making use of data that had been recently made available by the Kenyan government. At the same time, traditional journalists were finding it difficult to differentiate themselves from citizen journalists. Director of Internews in Kenya, Ida Jooste, explained the rationale for data journalism training:

Journalism has to offer something deeper, something different, something more comprehensive, but the story has to be different for me as a traditional news consumer to be interested in it.... If you just have lots of statistics and graphs and so on, nobody would be drawn into the story, so you mustn't forget the human element. We are helping to produce a combination of evidence but also kind of how real human beings are affected by government inattention or corruption or whatever the case might be (*Jooste, 2014, in interview*).

Internews trained journalists in skills for high-impact data journalism - how to interpret and integrate data into their stories. They provided capacity building for these journalists through activities such as developing new tools to help journalists report on health topics. They created a project website, called the “Data Dredger”, which includes datasets to explore, tutorials on data journalism tools, free visualisations for the trainee to investigate and publish at their own outlet and inspiring examples of data journalism from across the world.

Using this newly available data to its full potential, journalists can create “stories via investigative reporting and powerful interactive graphics that explain the reasons behind and explore the solutions to some of Kenya's greatest societal, economic and governance challenges” (“Internews Data Dredger,” n.d.) .

Internews focused also on data literacy and digital training in the program. “We thought that that this would be a way for journalism to give something different and that for us as media developments players would be one of the ways we would remain relevant. The media gets to produce and offer its audience something that citizens don’t produce” (*Jooste, 2014, in interview*).

Data Journalism is a notable example of how digital tools and ICTs are being fused with journalism in a successful manner in the region. Country Director Jooste claims that “Internews was really pivotal in terms of helping journalists with this data” (*Jooste, 2014, in interview*).

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL - Action for Transparency

Another project which was raised in the interviews is ‘Action for Transparency’ (A4T), a project funded by the Swedish authority for development cooperation (SIDA) and managed by Transparency International in Kenya. The overall objective of this project is to contribute to strengthened democratic accountability and transparency in Kenya through citizen monitoring of government expenditure.

The project aims to fight corruption and mismanagement of government funds in Kenya and focuses on funds disbursed by the Government for the provision of Free Primary Education (FPE). The aim is to uncover suspected corruption and mismanagement of these public funds. Kenyans want to know “whether local government funding is getting to the target” stressed Robert Munuku, Project Manager in Kenya (*Munuku, in interview, 2015*)⁶¹.

61 Robert Munuku, Action for Transparency, in interview with author, Feb 2015 Nairobi

The Action for Transparency project uses a combination of ICTs and traditional media and comprises three phases of interventions designed to “catalyse a culture of accountability and transparency through a ripple out effect” (*Munuku, in interview, 2014*).

Table 11. Transparency International

Organisation Name	TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
Who was interviewed	Robert Munuku Project Manager Kenya
Project Title	<i>Action for Transparency (A4T)</i>
Problem Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Corruption • Mismanagement of Funds
Methods	<p>Citizens report inconsistencies they notice in government spending directly to a project website via an App.</p> <p>Training for up to 4,000 journalists, civil society representatives and public sector employees on how to access, analyse and communicate information on government spending.</p> <p>A public awareness campaign to raise awareness of the new ICT tools.</p>
Use of ICTs	Development of ICT tools, including the online application (app) which enables users to compare the amount of government money pledged to specific schools and health clinics against their own observations of what appears to have been spent.
Outcome	<p>“Reported cases arising from the increase in awareness and reporting have been forwarded to the relevant authorities for appropriate action. Cases from both the education and health sectors have been discussed with the County leadership with a commitment given for follow-up and redress” (Transparency International, 2018). Project Manager Munuku claims “the App, the Facebook site and the websites connected to it are providing a digital space for debates about corruption and misuse of tax payers' money”.</p>

Summary

The Action for Transparency project seeks to tackle Government corruption and mismanagement of Funds by giving people in Kenya and Tanzania the training and tools to identify and report any potential misallocations of government spending, using an App as its central focus.

End users report any suspected corruption directly into their mobile phone with the bespoke App. The report is published immediately on the Action for Transparency (A4T) website and on Facebook. If they don't have access to the internet, it is also possible to report using SMS or calling a hotline number.

Project Manager Munuku describes the process: “You may find that the amount pledged for your school does not match with reality. For instance, there may only one teacher even though the Government says it is funding five teachers? Are there no schoolbooks even though the government has budgeted for one book for each pupil?” (*Munuku, 2015, in interview*). They have produced a tool so that citizens can report this mismanagement.

The concept is that by exposing which institutions and individuals are involved in corruption and providing the data to journalists and activist groups it intends to make corruption less attractive.

One learning outcome for the team was that they could not solely rely on the technical aspect of the programme. A critical element of the project was getting people involved in the reporting process and a central part of the initial plan was an App. Munuku says “it worked in Zambia, it worked in Tanzania. So, we asked ‘Can

this app work here [in Kenya]? However, after doing a lot of research and understanding the local dynamics, we realised “we don't just launch an app and expect people to just report” (*Munuku, in interview, 2015*).

As a result, they had to make training and outreach a much larger part of the project than in the other countries where they rolled out the same project. “We didn't want it to be is an app-centred project. The app is just one element of the project” (*Munuku, 2015, in interview*). The A4T team concluded that an integral part of the project in Kenya should be offline community-based elements and training for journalists. The training focused on empowering journalists with skills to investigate reported cases of suspected corruption or mismanagement of public funds and to analyse financial/budgetary information to reveal gaps affecting the health and education sectors.

Action for Transparency is a noteworthy example of a project using technology combined with training journalists for transparency and accountability goals.

These three projects – UNESCO, A4T and Internews - illustrate the use of ICTs integrated into media training work. Despite the use of newer and digital technologies by the projects profiled above, they are often combined with traditional media, such as radio or newspapers, in the mix.

While the projects above do employ new technologies to some extent, there is still a number of organisations in the sample for this research who remain committed to traditional media assistance methods in their projects. The next section focuses on

these organisations who remain committed to traditional media in the context of media development projects.

B. Traditional capacity building projects

TANZANIAN MEDIA FUND

The Tanzania Media Fund (TMF) is a media sector support initiative funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Irish Aid and The Royal Danish Embassy. The Tanzania Media Fund was launched in 2008 to contribute to greater domestic accountability in Tanzania through a programme of grants and capacity building to the media.

Table 12. Tanzania Media Fund

Organisation Name	TANZANIA MEDIA FUND
Who was interviewed	Ernest Sungura, Director
Project Title	<i>Grant Making Organisation</i>
Problem(s) Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater accountability needed in Tanzania• Media should be upskilled to better inform citizens and to raise awareness about the responsibilities of local government and the role that communities can play in holding their government accountable.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support public interest and investigative stories linked to domestic accountability, with special attention for rural stories• Traditional journalism training• Ongoing grants and capacity building to the media.
Use of ICTs	➤ Very limited
Outcome	“TMF has made impressive achievements in terms of number of individual journalists and media institutions it has reached out to, and in the evident improvements in public interest and investigative journalism it has sponsored and mentored” (Adams, 2014) ⁶² .

62 External Review of TMF by Gordon Adam of iMedia Associates Limited, November 2014

Summary

According to project donor DFID, journalism standards in Tanzania has been made worse by the deregulation of the media, the move to digital, and the growing popularity of social media, “all of which amounts to a revolution in the media landscape. Inevitably this rapid expansion has resulted in inexperienced staff with little or no journalism training often being hired” (“DFID Project Completion Review: Tanzanian Media Fund,” 2015).

As a result, there is a need for skilled, sustainable, professional media in Tanzania better equipped to hold powerful people to account. TMF provides grants for training and investigative reporting.

As an example of one successful project which received support from TMF is Mbeya Highlands FM, a regional radio station. In this case, the radio station had noticed that many of the concerns of their listeners related to a lack of access to safe water and sanitation. With a grant from Tanzania Media Fund, a team of young journalists travelled around three districts in the region “to see the challenges for themselves and investigate the causes” (*Sungura, 2014, in interview*).

The journalists broadcast live shows featuring debates between community members and local authorities, sharing information from their investigations on local water plans and budgets. Sungura claims “these debates were very popular and led to greater demand from citizens and greater response from local authorities. Water pumps were fixed, pipes were replaced, new wells were built and new governing boards for water were installed” (*Sungura, 2014, in interview*).

Sungura believes that it is this type of media support that is needed in this region, not innovation. Similar grants have led to more relevant issues being raised in the local communities. Sungura confirms their media sector support work is “very traditional” (*Sungura, 2014, in interview*)⁶³.

With regards to digital technologies in their work, in 2012 the TMF initiated the New Media grant for individual journalists. TMF quickly came to realise that finding quality candidates and suitable mentors for this grant was challenging. Sungura admits that “no-one applied”. The challenges were that “some [applicants] never met quality criteria, and some had problems with technology”. He adds “we want to use technology going forward but we are struggling also” (*Sungura, 2014, in interview*).

TMF also note that experienced digital media organisations, such as *Jamii Forums* in Tanzania, require help with marketing, management and governance issues rather than the online outputs. These organisations are already skilled in the technology elements.

TMF illustrate the continued need for capacity building and support for investigative journalism skills in Tanzania. Director Sungura attests to limited success with new technologies but the donors view is that media should become more interactive in future. An evaluation report from the largest donor DFID noted that future support should focus on “supporting dialogic formats and interactivity through social media and mobile telephony” (“DFID Project Completion Review: Tanzanian Media Fund,” 2015)

However, Sungura argues “the TMF are not seeing more accountability with new technology” (*Sungura, 2014, in interview*).

63 Ernest Sunguru, Tanzania Media Fund, in interview with author, May 2015

HIVOS

HIVOS (Humanist Institute for Cooperation) is another organisation based in Kenya which focuses on capacity building and strengthening the existing media landscape.

HIVOS is a Dutch NGO and implements a project called the Kenya Media Programme (KMP). This is a media support project that issues grants to both individuals and institutions. It gives funding for investigative journalism and media capacity support for strengthening media.

Table 13. Hivos

Organisation Name	HIVOS
Who was interviewed	Antony Wafula, Program Manager
Project Title	<i>Kenya Media Program</i>
Problem(s) Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve the quality of journalism in Kenya• Contribute to a responsive, representative and accountable government through citizen engagement.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of local content• Media accountability• Institutional development for media organisations• Safety and Protection of journalists• Media policy and legislation• Grants for journalism focusing on high impact stories• Institutional and individual grants to develop local content
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Very Limited.➤ Some projects such as Kenya Community Radio Network include training for journalists relating to engagement with social media platforms.
Outcome	An evaluation of the project acknowledged: “As few media houses are willing to finance a journalist to carry out the simplest of stories in Kenya, KMP is greatly beneficial as it gives the much-needed funds to do the stories” (Mogambi and Oyugi, 2015).

Summary

KMP make financial resources available for selected media-related institutions, development organisations, training institutes, policy and research initiatives, media houses and journalists. They invest in relatively traditional structural support for the media sector because they discovered that Kenyan media houses are “so weak”.

In the Kenyan media, “the public interest is not represented so to speak... There is a question about the depth and analysis of reporting we are offering the public”

*(Programme Director, Wafula, in interview, 2014)*⁶⁴.

As noted in Chapter 5, with the recent government devolution, Kenya now has 47 county governments. There is a need to build the capacity of journalists at county levels to tell stories that would help citizens hold their leaders to account.

An obstacle for producing investigative stories is the capacity and funds to produce the stories. KMP have focused therefore on financial support for investigative stories that will contribute to accountability and transparency. KMP also run a mentorship programme. The need for mentors became apparent when KMP realised that most of the individual grantees required editorial support to help improve on their story ideas.

Programme Director Anthony Wafula at HIVOS says their limited use of ICTs is because they believe “focusing on new media technologies is hype.....We try as much as possible to speak of e-government but the take-up is extremely slow”. Wafula argues that for the wider population “mobile phone use is debatable in terms of better access to information. We have people for whom even sending a text message is a problem” *(Wafula, 2014, in interview)*.

64 Anthony Wafula, HIVOS, in interview with author May 2014

AFRICAN MEDIA INITIATIVE

Another organisation which focuses particularly on capacity building in the region is the African Media Initiative (AMI), a pan-African organisation based in Kenya. The objectives of the AMI are to “strengthen the continent’s private and independent media sector to promote democratic governance, social development and economic growth”.⁶⁵

Table 14. African Media Initiative

Organisation Name	African Media Initiative
Who was interviewed	Eric Chinje CEO
Project Title	<i>Ongoing capacity building</i>
Problem(s) Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Expanding access to finance and new revenue streams for media orgs✓ Building a leadership cadre in the media sector with a commitment to improved ethics and management.✓ Content development for African media outlets, by African journalists.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Focus on journalism specialisation within industries; to develop journalism networks around important sectors of the economy, such as finance and agriculture and networks of skilled reporters capable of writing substantively on these issues.❖ AMI develops training packages for journalists and brings together needed expertise from the mentioned sectors.❖ Created with the input of relevant partners in various industries including Agriculture, Health, Education, Energy, Maritime Economy, Telecommunications, and Governance.
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Uses mainly traditional media development methods including capacity building workshops for journalists
Outcome	AMI has established networks for journalists on the African continent.

⁶⁵ www.Africanmediainitiative.org

Summary

The African Media Initiative promotes the development of pluralistic media as a necessary ingredient of democratic governance, as well as economic and human development in Africa. They note that “lack of ethics and leadership has curtailed the development of a free and independent African media landscape”.

CEO Eric Chinje says their objective is “improved media performance across the continent, that would contribute to an improved social dialogue and political dialogue and economic dialogue on the continent” (*Chinje, 2015, in interview*)⁶⁶.

The AMI works with strategic partners in each sector of the regional economy to build a ‘critical mass’ of media specialists on the issues that drive economic growth in Africa. Chinje hopes “if you have a few journalists doing good stories in the sector and that begins to drive advertisements, you’ll see a natural movement of media content into that sector” (*Chinje, 2015, in interview*).

Research by AMI found important knowledge and skills gap among media houses when it comes to understanding the business and financial worlds. To address this, AMI developed a series of workshops on ‘Financial Proficiency for Media Executives’ (funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB)).

An additional example of a successful project was called ‘Encouraging the Media in Kenya to Adopt a Pro Health Agenda: The Treatment and Coverage of Tobacco Related Stories’. This project provided specialised training for the media community to improve tobacco control coverage in the media in Kenya. The project built the awareness and reporting skills of journalists on the issue of tobacco control and

⁶⁶ Eric Chinje, African Media Initiative, in interview with author Feb 2015

engaged media leaders and editors in chief to treat tobacco control stories as newsworthy.

AMI media programmes do not necessarily put new or digital media at its centre.

Director Eric Chinje confirmed “we are training journalists but not necessarily from new media”.

Discussion

The above three organisations – TMF, AMI, HIVOS - focus on supporting independent media and training journalists and working with partner organisations for capacity building within the media sector. They confirmed limited use of digital technologies or ICTs in their work. This suggests that these newer technologies have little role to play in established media assistance methods, such as journalism training and editorial training, to strengthen the media sector in the region.

One possible reason is that the identified weaknesses in the media systems of these countries are in areas not obviously related to digital innovation. As noted in the Country Findings chapter, the problems in the media systems of Kenya and Tanzania are particularly related to corruption, political control and concentration of media ownership, lack of professionalism and resources, and safety of journalists.

Despite the development sectors enthusiasm for technology and innovation, recommendations for media sustainability on the continent are told to focus on areas of corruption, culture and business management in the media sector, not areas necessarily related to technology (Susman-Peña, 2012).

As remarked by Ernest Sungura from the Tanzania Media Fund, the innovative and popular website *Jammii Forums* in Tanzania does not need training in technical skills but skills in management and financial planning.

Another reason to acknowledge is that radio has the highest penetration in Africa: 77 per cent report listening to radio news at least a few times a month or more (Mitullah and Kamau, 2013). It is the dominant mass-medium in Africa because of its relatively low operational cost, its accessibility to illiterate populations and the continuity of the prevalent oral tradition of most African countries (Mwesige, 2004; Myers, 2008).

So, when trying to reach or connect with audiences' right across these countries, it makes sense to focus on journalists working with this medium.

C. Hybrid projects: Capacity Building with Content Creation

BBC MEDIA ACTION

As noted, the data revealed that there is a category of media assistance intervention captured by the notion of 'media development hybrid' and these shall be presented here.

BBC Media Action is one of the largest and best-known of the media development NGOs that implement projects on behalf of international donors. Funded independently, it works in partnership with local media and development partners in over 35 developing and countries around the world. Country Director, Colin Spurway, discussed their principal project in Tanzania and Project Director Jackie Davis in Kenya discussed her principal project

Table 15. BBC Media Action Tanzania.

Organisation Name	BBC Media Action Tanzania
Who was interviewed	Colin Spurway Country Director
Project Title	<i>1. Haba na Haba</i> (Little by Little): A national radio magazine programme
Problem(s) Identified	<p>The donor, DFID UK, stated objectives in Tanzania were to improve Tanzanians' knowledge of key governance issues, "including their rights and responsibilities, and the country's political processes".</p> <p>Additional objectives were "to create a national conversation which results in Tanzanians feeling confident to freely express their views about issues that matter to them and confident that these views are being heard and responded to by their leaders" (Bangapi et al., 2017:10).</p>
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Content Production and Capacity building: ✓ Providing capacity strengthening to participating stations ✓ Supporting local partner radio stations to produce their own local governance programmes ✓ This training aimed to equip station managers with the skills to help their stations become more financially sustainable. ✓ Assisting those stations in delivering outreach activities, such as community debates and Open Days ✓ Mentors spent time in local radio stations to help them produce programmes around governance.
Use of ICTs	<p>Limited use of digital technologies.</p> <p>A Facebook page was established for the project and the radio show also had a Facebook page. These were "add-ons" rather than central to the project (<i>Spurway, in interview, 2014</i>).</p>
Outcome	<p>According to the BBC, <i>Haba na Haba</i>, reached 7.2m listeners across Tanzania, tackling a wide range of topics - from corruption in the judiciary to the circulation of fake anti-malarial drugs.</p> <p>Since 2013, over 300 journalists have been trained.</p>

Summary

The goal of the *Haba Na Haba* project was to “build Tanzanians’ knowledge of governance issues and confidence in their ability to hold leaders to account, to encourage dialogue on national and local issues, and encourage greater political participation” (Bangapi et al., 2017:6).

The radio programme aimed to explain government structure, systems and services, to provide a platform for discussion and help people get involved in how the country is run.

BBC Media Action worked on the capacity of local radio station partners and journalists to produce programmes about local governance issues. The *Haba na Haba* radio show takes a ‘topic of the week’, like obesity or access to clean drinking water, or a range of current affairs issues, and then puts them together in a radio magazine format “to interrogate and look into and ask government what their role is and what they’re doing about something” (*Spurway, in interview, 2015*).

Outreach activities included Radio Open Days and Community Debates. The open days took place once a year at BBC Media Action’s partner radio stations and aimed to bring local radio and local government closer together in order to build better relationships, and improve the flow of information between leaders, citizens and local media and to progress government accountability.

The community debates took the format of town hall meetings, bringing citizens and government officials together to discuss important issues in local communities.

Spurway claims “it has been great in terms of leading to changes in local communities” (*Spurway, 2014, in interview*).

The BBC Media Action projects in Tanzania use mostly traditional media assistance methods, for the objectives of informing and educating Tanzanian citizens about governance issues. They are not necessarily using ICTs or newer digital technologies; instead they are undertaking radio programming hand in hand with traditional capacity training.

Country Director Colin Spurway explained the reason why they continue to use these methods. In Tanzania, mobile phones use is now near full penetration, but Spurway argues how “they are very simple mobiles, people with very limited knowledge, limited literacy, and a huge range of challenges of how you use it” (*Spurway, 2015, in interview*).

Spurway says that many of their audience cannot find an address book in their phone, or “the vast majority have never sent or received a text”. And so, “it is about understanding their limitations” (*Spurway, 2015, in interview*). Thus, working out the right platform is vital.

With regards to achieving donor objectives he reasons “we have to start off by defining what the change is that is needed in the project? Then who the audience is? Then, how do you reach that particular group of people?”. That is how to determine the particular approach or intervention.

Spurway reasoned “there’s certainly a tendency when working with young people and when there is pressure to innovate to say, well in that case, let’s use Facebook. But you’ve got to know who accesses it and in what way. If you want to reach urban

males, yes, Facebook is a great idea but not if you're talking about adolescent girls in villages and farms" (*Spurway, in interview*).

In these projects BBC Media Action has specific objectives, in that often they are trying to reach the rural poor in this region, or bring them into a wider national discussion, or support media relevant to them in their locale.

With these issues in mind, Spurway argues that using digital technologies in media development projects can be "technically massively complicated and potentially extremely expensive". In contrast, with radio you can "reach three million people by radio by just beaming it out". Therefore, BBC MA still favours traditional media to connect with these target groups.

BBC Media Action also undertakes projects in Kenya, outlined below.

Table. 16. BBC Media Action Kenya

Organisation Name	BBC Media Action Kenya
Who was interviewed	Jackie Davies
Project Title	<i>Sema Kenya</i>
Problem(s) Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for greater public understanding of constitutional and electoral reform and devolution, • Addressing persistent challenges to corruption and impunity • Build trust in Kenya's democratic processes by giving people trustworthy information and improving their knowledge of governance related issues • Provide a platform for people in Kenya to ask their leaders about issues that affect them.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project produced a weekly TV and radio national discussion programme, a low-tech, 'Question Time'-style debate show. • Brought Kenyan citizens face to face with their leaders, some of them whom they had never even seen before. In this environment, they could ask questions and demand accountability. • Featured a moderated discussion between a live panel of officials and an audience of Kenyans. • Themes included: youth participation in political processes, corruption, ethnicity, young women in leadership & youth violence.
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited use of digital technologies. • There was a Facebook page for the show through which there was some feedback and interaction with audiences.
Outcome	People who regularly watched or listened to <i>Sema Kenya</i> reported greater knowledge of key governance issues than those who did not watch or listen to the programme (<i>Sema Kenya: Can a debate programme increase people's knowledge of democratic processes?</i> 2015).

Summary

The primary BBC Media Action project in Kenya was the radio debate show called *Sema Kenya*. The objective was to contribute to a “genuine, credible election in 2013 and to mitigating against a repeat of the electoral violence seen in 2007” (Buckell and Baskett, 2017:10).

The project activities were centred around the donors (DFID) goals at country level which were: “to contribute to rebuilding trust in the democratic process in Kenya by creating a national and inclusive conversation and debate and to encourage dialogue as a means of settling conflicts within and among communities” (Buckell and Baskett, 2017).

The show was designed to enable individuals, communities and governments to be better informed and more engaged in tackling governance challenges (Buckell and Baskett, 2017). BBC MA worked to strengthen the capacity of Kenya’s media sector to produce this governance programming.

Project Director Jackie Davies testified that they choose appropriate media and project design to address donor objectives based on lots of sound research. Davies confirmed that “it was probably the most researched program of its kind in Kenya” (*Davis, 2015, in interview*)⁶⁷.

The project team tried to ensure that *Sema Kenya* represented constructive, audience-driven debate, particularly when covering sensitive issues. The radio shows were focused not only on discussion but following up on accountability with those in

67 Jackie Davies, BBC Media Action Kenya, in interview with author Feb 2015

power. An important element of the success of the show was that the presenters knew that part of their role was to drive that accountability from politicians on the show.

For instance, Davies claims “If an MP or a governor or a senator says, ‘I’m going to build the road, I’m going to fix that road,’ then the presenter would ask, ‘Okay what’s the time frame, when is it going to start? When can people expect to see it?’ “We didn’t allow people to just come on and make statements without follow-up” (*Davies, 2015, in interview*).

BBC MA delivered a mentoring programme, initially with six local radio stations, and later with the national broadcaster Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). The mentors worked closely with the local radio partners to improve editorial processes, journalistic and production skills (such as interviewing and source-checking) and management skills (such as news-room management, programme scheduling and staff development).

The capacity strengthening programme with KBC included: editorial training; training in audience research and engagement; graphics; engineering support; production training as well as production and editorial support on-air. For KBC, the partnership with BBC Media Action resulted in the launch of a new governance programme modelled on *Sema Kenya*, called *Beyond the Headlines*.

Management at KBC reported that *Beyond the Headlines* “provides a new benchmark by which all other KBC productions are produced and that they hope to instill the same ethos, procedures and practices across the organisation going forward” (Buckell and Baskett, 2017:7).

This project had limited use of digital technologies. Davies explained “even though a lot of people are using their mobile phones to access radio content, [our project] is still using the traditional methods. It is still what we perceive to be appropriate, particularly in the areas we’re trying to reach - which are media dark areas”⁶⁸ (*Davies, in interview, 2015*). She maintains “radio is still the most effective medium to communicate with target groups that we are after” (*ibid*).

Both of these BBC Media Action projects did employ digital technologies, but to a limited extent. Spurway from the BBC Tanzania projects confirmed that both of their radio programme projects had related social media websites, but that they were just “future-proofing” or “add-ons” (*Spurway, 2015*).

Davies argues “social media is great, and this innovative ICT approach is very good, but I still believe that old media drives new media” (*Davies, 2015, in interview*).

Both these BBC Media Action projects in Kenya and Tanzania demonstrate how the organisation uses a mix of traditional media development methods and media for development approaches to achieve donor goals related to governance and accountability.

⁶⁸ These are areas that are not reachable at all through media such as newspapers or TV.

FARM Radio

A second organisation in the interview sample whose interventions could be termed ‘media development hybrid’ is Farm Radio International. FARM Radio is a Canadian NGO working with radio partners in 38 African countries to fight poverty and food insecurity.

A large part of the work of FARM Radio is training broadcasters, including direct in-station training, distance education and workshops to help them produce a higher standard of radio services. FARM Radio undertakes projects in both Kenya and Tanzania.

Table 17. FARM Radio

Organisation Name	FARM Radio International
Who was interviewed	Bart Sullivan, Head of ICT
Project Title	<p>In Tanzania, FARM Radio is implementing radio campaigns on food-security topics of nutrition, climate-smart farming techniques and women-friendly market/food processing ideas.</p> <p>In Kenya, Farm Radio runs radio campaigns promoting girls’ education in the Somali refugee camps of Dadaab (Northern Kenya).</p>
Problem(s) Identified	<p>In Kenya the goal is to provide useful information on low cost methods to improve food security in rural households.</p> <p>In Tanzania, the goal is to improve attitudes about the importance of sending Somali girls to school instead of keeping them at home.</p>

Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project objectives are being addressed with radio campaigns (3.5 months each) with 30-minute weekly shows. • FARM Radio develops radio scripts, information packages, an electronic news service and shares them with local broadcasters. • The broadcasters, in turn, use these resources to research, produce and present relevant programmes for their audience of farmers • Training of local radio journalists
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FARM Radio have successfully used various mobile channels and technology applications in their projects. ○ Each radio show features interactive windows in which listeners can participate with the questions of the week via their mobile phones. ○ In Kenya they use radio combined with mobile SMS and Interactive Voice Radio (IVR) polls.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Digital technologies are absolutely essential pieces to making radio more interactive in these projects” (<i>Sullivan, 2015, in email</i>).

Summary

FARM Radio training is targeted toward the practical needs of broadcasters. FARM Radio measure the quality of local broadcasters’ radio services and help them take steps to improve them, by appraising their programmes.

Digital technologies are central to these projects. Head of ICT for FARM Radio, Bart Sullivan, says “it is often overwhelming how many people want to participate. By using these mobile technologies more people can participate and have their vote counted or their voice heard” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*).

Sullivan confirmed that they have had “lots of steady participation and the midterm evaluations are excellent... Many people in Tanzania have started to change their practice around food/ farming and in Kenya, adults and shifting some of their views around girls education” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*).

Sullivan concedes that there are additional hurdles to using ICTs in these projects: Cost and ease of use are the two main obstacles. Sullivan says they “currently try and bear the costs for expensive services like sending audio messages as we work with the poorest farmers. But in general, it is important to try and keep costs down” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*).

He noted that it is important to remember the “technical abilities of the majority of listeners, their budgets and their limitations in terms of electricity and equipment” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*). “It’s also important to make it *easy* to interact - many listeners have a very basic technological capacity - if they are doubtful of their ability - they won’t try it” (*Sullivan, 2015, in email*).

Discussion

The projects in this section – BBC Media Action and FARM Radio - demonstrated having elements of media for development (M4D) - a focus on *content* - informing the public about health, governance or food security issues through radio programmes - but they also provide support to the media sector in additional ways: media training, journalism training, creation of new sources of news. This ‘media development hybrid’ contributes to ‘media for development’ objectives but also ‘media development’ goals such as structural support for media sector.

These projects are creating content that is needed by audiences in these countries, but they also address weaknesses within the Kenyan and Tanzanian media systems. In particular they address the lack of local media content, lack of quality reporting and dialogue on important governance issues and the lack of capacity in local media to address the information needs of rural populations.

These projects have furthermore developed platforms for discussion and debate, for educating citizens about their rights or about elections, and have provided forums for holding government representatives to account. As noted in the Country Case Study chapter, these are particular weaknesses in the media systems of Kenya and Tanzania when it comes to local rural populations.

D. Projects to strengthen the public sphere & create platforms for dialogue

This research found that much effort is focused on accountability and governance issues in the region. As noted, whilst some organisations fulfil the objectives of strengthening the capacity, and providing support to, the media sector, other organisations that took part in the interviews focused more on providing platforms for public engagement and discussion. This contributes towards goals of bolstering the public sphere and enabling wider groups in society participate in the governance of their country. Platforms for national dialogue can also potentially contribute to reducing to cross-ethnic conflict, which is a threat in the region.

As noted in the Media Development Theory of Change in Chapter 1 (Figure 2), media assistance projects operate consecutively at different levels of a media system - addressing the needs of audiences, practitioners and the sector. This section focuses on

organisations which focus on strengthening the public sphere – providing fora for dialogue and debate in society.

FEMINA HIP

Funded by the Swedish development agency SIDA and Irish Aid, Femina Hip focuses mainly on engaging with youth in Tanzania. They produce a range of media, including a widely distributed magazine, FEMA and two TV shows that target Tanzanian youth to “promote healthy lifestyles and financial literacy”⁶⁹.

FeminiHip endeavours to educate their youthful audience through their media products and work to motivate Tanzanian youth. Youth are key to the development of Tanzanian society, as 66 per cent of the Tanzanian population is below the age of 25 and 23 per cent of the population are adolescents (Chipeta et al., 2013). The government is making great efforts to get all young people to complete primary school, but the proportion who drop out is high and many young people find it hard to find employment. They are also a group that is frequently marginalised.

⁶⁹ www.feminahip.tz

Table 18. Femina Hip

Organisation Name	Femina Hip
Who was interviewed	Kris Kapella,
Project Title	<i>FEMA Magazine</i>
Problem(s) Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work towards an “empowered society that fosters democratic values, critical thinking and positive attitudes” (Chipeta et al., 2013). ✓ To create dialogue amongst Tanzanian youth.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communicates and connects with youth through its multimedia products as well as through face-to-face activities and outreach interventions. ✓ Activities are designed to connect youth to each other and to Femina Hip: to stimulate conversations and reflection; and to offer an opportunity to speak up, share and express concerns⁷⁰. ✓ Aims to foster democratic principles by encouraging volunteering, working together, taking action, and demanding rights.
Use of ICTs	They have established websites related to their media products and an interactive SMS platform. However, the website is not central to their work and the SMS platform is expensive to run. “It can be expensive. An individual SMS is quite cheap but when you talking about sending SMS to 50,000 people... Cost is a big issue” (<i>Kapella, in interview</i>).
Outcome	<p>42 per cent of Tanzania's population were familiar with FEMINA HIP's products. Each week, 2.8 million people read the newspaper Fema, making it the most widely read in the country.</p> <p>An evaluation report by funder SIDA found: “<i>Femina</i> has been effective, not only with regard to reaching youth with information, but also in creating a dialogue with young people regarding issues of concern” (Chipeta et al., 2013).</p>

70 FeminaHip Annual Report 2017

http://www.feminahip.or.tz/fileadmin/03_downloads/01_reports/FeminaAnnual_report_2017.pdf

Summary:

The Fema Magazine has been produced and printed quarterly for 20 years in Tanzania. It has one of the largest print runs and is one of the most popular and well-known magazines in the country. It is distributed to both secondary schools, colleges, local government and civil society partners across Tanzania. The magazine content includes sections on all of Femina Hip's strategic agendas: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Economic Empowerment, Citizen Engagement and connecting youth.

With their print magazine *FeminaHip* reach every district of the country. Kapella says "I don't think there's any district that we don't reach. When it comes to print, we reach more people than even the newspapers, they are again very limited to urban parts of the country" (*Kapella, 2014, in interview*). This is no small achievement as many rural areas in Tanzania are almost inaccessible by road.

Editorial collection is highly participatory and approximately 100 youth from 'Fema youth Clubs' engage in Youth Reporting so they contribute to the content with their own letters and stories. According to the organisation, the success of the magazine is largely due to its community-based editorial collection process. For every issue, editors travel to rural communities with a digital camera and document the real-life stories and views of ordinary people.

Kapella argues that "the magazine is actually what makes us the most innovative in a sense. We're doing something that's been around for ages and ages and it actually really separates us because we can reach basically almost anyone in this country which no other type of media can do" (*Kapella, 2015, in interview*).

The Fema TV Show has been on air since 2003, highlighting different themes and campaigns each season. Each episode features young people, experts, celebrities and politicians discussing critical issues relating to youth lifestyles. Each show highlights youth stories and testimonials and incorporates comic elements to reinforce the messages and recorded 'on the road' in different locations across Tanzania.

Femina Hip say that their change programs create opportunities and platforms for people to “actively participate in a process of dialogue, reflection, negotiation and mobilisation. We build our work around creating intention and motivation to act” (FeminaHip Annual Report, 2016).

FeminaHip aim “to reinforce the notion that people must take ownership of and act as agents in their own change processes”. A key part of its approach is “Edutainment”, entertaining and at the same time educating through their media products.

The organisation is an example of continued use of a traditional media as their main focus, which has widespread reach throughout Tanzania to engage youthful populations and work for social change. Their magazine and outreach activities provide spaces for dialogue, discussion and education which can empower youthful audiences.

WELL TOLD STORY

Another participant organisation in the research and whose goals focus on engaging with youth is Kenyan media research and production organisation ‘Well Told Story’ (WTS). Their work aims to contribute to social change and youth empowerment and

can also be termed “communication for social change”. Their projects provide platforms for discussion and engagement on important issues.

Table 19. Well Told Story

Organisation Name	WELL TOLD STORY
Who was interviewed	Rob Burnett CEO
Project Title	<i>Shuujaaz</i>
Problem(s) Identified	To encourage ‘youth discourse on governance, participation, & transparency’ & engage young people in national conversation about issues that affect them.
Methods	WTS use different communications platforms: monthly comic books, daily syndicated radio shows, SMS, video, national TV. The projects also include offline engagement with local government officials.
Use of ICTs	WTS are innovative in their use of technology. WTS employ many media in the projects- video, radio, television, comic books, SMS, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and music festivals - “which are basically experiential media” - to achieve projects objectives. Burnet says “we’re interested in our audience making the content, not us”. For example, in 2014, WTS made a TV series, and they asked their audience to make the other half of the series with their mobile phones, and submit their video on WhatsApp. Burnet claims that “mobile phones have changed the way people relate to one another; they’ve turned ordinary people into media makers”.
Outcome	Their media that has reached more than 69 per cent of Kenyans aged 15 -24 and they have won two International Emmy Awards. ⁷¹

⁷¹ The main character that Well Told Story focus their stories around is a 19 yr-old Boyie, who left school in 2009 but could not afford to go to college and remains job-less. The show reaches out to Kenyan youth with practical ideas they can use to improve their lives. He communicates to his listeners in Sheng and asks them to send him text messages with ideas on making money and better living. He in

Summary

Well Told Story endeavour to engage youth in order to achieve social and behaviour change (Dr Christopher Beaudoin, 2016). CEO Rob Burnet says “we are focused on how to make young people feel as if they have the power, they have the agency to make change happen” (*Burnet, 2015, in interview*)⁷²

They have developed a platform, centred on a comic-book character called *Shujaaz*, which engages youth in Kenya on important issues and provides a platform for public discussions. Burnett claims “the combination of the comic books, syndicated FM radio, SMS, social media, web and video animation is engaging 5 million youth every month in a huge public conversation; to help change the way people live, think, act and govern in Kenya,” (*Burnett, in interview, 2015*).

The projects are very often targeting 15-24 year olds in their projects, who are “the right audience for innovation”. Burnet concedes that if they were designing media for a forty to fifty-year-old audience, they would take quite a different approach. Burnett confirms that “different media have different jobs to do” (*Burnett, 2015, in interview*).

Burnett maintains “for a lot of people in Africa, an exciting comic book is cutting-edge ICT. So, most of our projects combine multiple media, all the time” (Burnet, 2015, in interview).

Well Told Story and Shuujaz have become an established trusted media platform that uses youth-friendly approaches to stimulate engagement with the population. For Well Told Story, much of their project work is communication *for* development,

turn shares those ideas with youth around the country through his radio programmeme. These ideas then form the content of the daily Shujaaz FM radios show and are the stories in the monthly comic books, and the topics discussed on DJB’s Facebook page.

⁷² Rob Burnet, Well Told Story, in skype interview with the author, March 2015

engaging with citizens and youth, and Well Told Story does not focus on capacity building the media sector in any way. Like FeminaHip, they provide a platform for engagement and discussion on important issues for local populations. Their projects show positive results with an increase in volume of conversations about agriculture and shifting attitudes.

TWAVEZA

Table 20. Twaweza

Organisation Name	TWAVEZA
Who was interviewed	Kees De Graaf – Head of ICTs
Project Title	<i>1. Makatuno Junction</i>
Problem(s) Identified	Citizen Engagement and Government Accountability:
Methods	<p>Production of a Kenyan soap opera that premiered in 2007. The story is set in a fictional village named Makutano and has a cast of different Kenyan actors. It captures different themes that affect local society such as corruption, education, early marriages.</p> <p>Throughout episodes, Makutano Junction communicates the idea that ordinary citizens can make change happen, by solving problems and pressuring government and public institutions to act.</p> <p>The goal is that by watching the show citizens will be provoked to discuss solutions to problems in education, health and water and take action for the better.</p> <p>Where public authorities are not doing the right things, informed citizens are encouraged to find ways of holding public leaders accountable, like the characters in the show.</p>
Use of ICTs	A mobile phone SMS platform for feedback was established.
Outcome	High quality show with broad viewership

Table 21. Daraja Project.

Project Title	<i>2. Daraja - Maji Matone</i>
Problem(s) Identified	Waterpoints in Tanzania: nearly half of the waterpoints in rural Tanzania were not working at the time & even minor breakdowns went unrepaired for months or years.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established an SMS reporting system • Encouraged people in rural Tanzania to use their mobile phones to report broken down water points, hand-pumps and wells. • Work with media to put pressure on the government to get problems fixed.
Use of ICTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central to the project. • Citizens encouraged to use SMS technologies to report broken water pumps to government.
Outcome	Very little uptake of the service

Summary

Twaweza was cited by several of the interview participants as an example of a project attempting to use digital technologies for engaging local audiences and citizens and so it shall be analysed in detail here. They have had much success with their Makatuno junction project, however Head of ICT, Kees De Graaf, claims that getting people to participate in projects to report to government through mobile technologies is more difficult than expected and that “the response rates are really very, very low” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

With regards to the response to their Daraja water pump project and use of ICTs, De Graaf, revealed “the reality did not live up to the promise. Rather than the 3,000 text messages we had expected in our pilot, we got 53, despite our best efforts to promote the service” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

The Daraja project illustrates the complications of using digital technologies for citizen participation in projects. The objective of the project was to engage citizens in reporting to their local government regarding water-points, thus looking for accountability from elected officials.

The Daraja project initially received a lot of attention and the approach ticked many of the right boxes for donors: citizen participation, transparency, technology, innovation, accountability and the use of mobile phones. As the project progressed however, the problem was getting citizens to engage with local government via SMS.

De Graaf says that persuading citizens to send messages and persuading government officials to act on those messages were the main challenges for this project. “We did pretty well on the second part of that - our record of turning information provided by citizens into action taken by District Water Engineers and repaired water points was very good. The problem was the first part - persuading citizens to engage” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

Daraja had undertaken lots of publicity, so awareness of the initiative did not seem to be an issue amongst the population, but they were not getting the citizens to actually use the service. “This raises questions as to why? Do they feel that they won’t get response? Is it a technical thing and it’s too complicated?” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

Ben Taylor who worked on the project for Daraja has argued that the failures of the project were not about technology:

Technology is not what matters here. Getting the human side of things right was clearly going to be much harder than making the technology work. ... Motivating

people to take action is tough, especially when the promise of anything happening as a result is distant and unclear. Our rural focus means we're dealing with a group of people who are poorer, with less education, and less politically engaged than their urban counterparts (Taylor, 2012).

To understand further the failure of the water pump project, Twaweza conducted a study on citizens' attitudes towards local government in Tanzania. The study found a "widespread sense of powerlessness among citizens, a sense that there's nothing they can do to hold local government to account." This "powerlessness of citizens has made them fear to form and/or join movements to raise issues, question the actions of leaders or fight for their rights" (Taylor et al., 2012:1).

De Graaf claimed that when it came to engaging citizens with these SMS technologies in order to hold local government accountable for their water-pumps and wells:

People don't really see the value in it... By and large, they think it's not going to help anything. They don't see the point, and there's many things that have to be right at that point for it to work. For example, they have to think that if they send a message, that it will go somewhere. They have to feel responsible for it, first of all. They must think that if I do [send a message] that there's at least a minimal chance that it will contribute to some change. There's a whole number of things that will go through people's minds before they actually send an SMS (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

What is of note with Twaweza, and one of the big lessons from the failure of the Daraja water point project, was the demonstrated power of the traditional media.

After the Daraja project, Twaweza pulled back from their initial exuberance with regards to digital technologies and now favour traditional media in their projects.

De Graaf, confirmed “we had actually high hopes for both ICT and mobile phones...We thought it was going to be a major part of what we're doing, but it has become a lot less than we thought” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*). Twaweza have now become much more focused on the power of traditional media, rather than ICTs to address their objectives and audiences.

When it comes to using digital technology in their projects they are “not pulling back, but we are definitely more careful. We're putting it under serious scrutiny” (*De Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

De Graaf contends “ICTs that stand alone, that do something by themselves, almost all of them, they don't work. Or many of them don't work” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*). This is in line with Robert Munuku from the A4T project who argued that an App-centred project was not going to work for their Kenya project. These complications will be explored more in the following chapter with regards to donor objectives in the region and engaging citizens with digital technologies.

Discussion

Whilst the three organisations in this section – FeminaHip, Well Told Story and Twaweza - are not directly involved in capacity building in the media sector - some are solely C4D projects - these projects provide avenues to engagement with local populations, using both old and new media methods. Certainly, regardless of ICT use, their aims are aligned in that they endeavour to increase citizen engagement,

participation and activity in the governance of these program countries. They illustrate a range of experiences of utilising digital technologies in projects and successes relating to achieving their objectives.

Certainly, the platforms that these organisations create for discussions amongst youth are important in such culturally diverse countries. Kenya has over 70 different ethnic groups, 42 tribes, and a growing non-indigenous population⁷³. As seen during the 2007 election, this can sometimes spill into inter-ethnic rivalry. Any platform for public discussion between these groups, in Kenya and Tanzania, which can foster inclusion and understanding and dissipate these tensions, therefore contributes to the democratic functioning of the country.

In this section, the data has illustrated the extent of use of digital technology in media development projects in a sample of media development organisations operating in the region. It addressed the question of, when digital forms of technology *are* employed in these projects, have they been effective for these organisations to achieve donor goals? And, if not, what are the reasons for this? The next section will analyse whether using ICTs has the desired impact, thus determining their use in future media development work.

Analysis: Digital technologies and donor objectives

In the previous chapters, it was noted how mobile and new digital technologies are being embraced by the development sector across Africa to address a range of development objectives in their programmes. Media assistance has not been immune.

⁷³ <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/kenya-population/>

In the area of governance for instance, mobile technologies have been mooted as having the potential for empowering citizens and improving democratic processes.

In theory, these technologies expand access to information and communications channels and create new opportunities for people's participation, giving voice to those who have previously been excluded from national discussions. In this research, these assumptions and theories are tested with regards to the media assistance sector.

In this chapter, the interview data showed the extent to which media development organisations are using digital technologies for their project objectives. This chapter addressed the questions:

- What are the characteristics of current media development practice in a modern East African context? (RQ 2b)
- Have ICTs impacted on the practice of media assistance in the chosen case studies? (RQ 2c)

Organisations were asked if they were employing digital technologies, and if so with what success had they achieved in their view? And if they were not using new media technologies, what were the reasons for this? Answering these questions will assist in clarifying the rationale for a continued preference for traditional media development approaches.

What was found is varying levels of use of digital forms of technology in media development activity from one project to the next. This was for a variety of reasons and reflects the objectives of the different projects; the target group, the type of media development intervention, the desired goal.

A media project trying to reach teenagers in urban areas will have a different perspective on utilising digital technologies than a project for capacity building in rural radio stations. Most projects choose their activities based on objectives, research and on a case-by-case basis, as noted by key informants.

For some organisations, digital media are central to their plans, such as Well Told Story. Other organisations have changed little in how they address media development goals, in particular with regards to media capacity interventions. The African Media Initiative, Kenyan Media Programme and Tanzania Media Fund do not focus on digital technologies at all in their programmes. Organisations such as BBC Media Action used them peripherally, or as “future-proofing” in their projects.

Evidence from the interview data reveals how Internews, FARM Radio and UNESCO successfully used digital technology as an add-on to their projects. Digital technology can make positive changes when integrated either with traditional media, such as the UNESCO radio project and Internews’ work with data journalism or software such as the Frontline:SMS Radio product.

It must be noted though that the use of ICTs in these projects is as an add-on rather than a central tool or strategy in the project. The Internews Data Journalism project is part of a larger overall capacity and training programme with Kenyan journalists, albeit a very successful part of the programme. UNESCO’s project offered ICT training as one of a range of trainings to the local radio stations and the correspondent’s networks were seen as one of the most successful aspects of the programme for creating new content.

As noted, the A4T project was initially focused on an app but the team had recognised that an app alone would not be sufficient for the project goals of transparency and

reporting misuse of local government funds. They concluded that in Kenya the technology element of the project needed to be backed up by local community outreach, and especially training of journalists to interpret this data.

In the FARM radio project, mobile phones and IVR were used to complement the training, open days and radio programmes that were created for informing rural citizens about food security practices. But there were cost and technical literacy issues for these projects.

Indeed, the combination of radio and mobile phones is seen as one of the most successful outcomes of using newer technologies in media and development projects. Mobile phones have effectively made radio more interactive, a two-way medium, no longer one-to-many (Gilberds and Myers, 2012b; Myers, 2008; Thompson, 2013).

One participant argues that “when ICTs interact with something else, when they interact with traditional media it becomes much more powerful” (*de Graaf, in interview*)⁷⁴.

The merging of radio and new technologies such as mobile phones has resulted in the growth of call-in radio shows in the region, which were rare before the arrival of mobile technologies. James Deane, Policy Director for BBC Media Action, has highlighted the importance of radio as a space for public discussion and claims that “even in countries where liberalization has been slow or non-existent, there are important examples of talk radio catalysing major social change. It is happening because many of these countries have been starved of spaces for public discussion and debate” (Deane, 2005:181).

74 Kees De Graaf, Twaweza, in skype interview with author March 2015

So, according to the research data, there are positive contributions that digital technologies can make to media development projects. One important outcome is the emergence of a new public sphere provided by the combination of old and new media.

However, the convergence process is happening slowly. Gilberd and Myers (2012) have noted the “contextual, technical and capacity-related factors that constrain the use of convergent technologies to facilitate knowledge sharing among development actors and to contribute to broader processes of social change in Africa” (Gilberds and Myers, 2012b:76).

What are the factors which constrain the use of these technologies?

As noted in Chapter 5’s presentation of Country Findings, one reason that can hinder use of ICTs is limitations in access to the internet and network coverage in these countries. In some regions mobile phones are not reaching the poorest or the most marginalised. Use of the internet is the same. Access to the internet relies on electricity, phone network and language abilities. And so, technology can only access, or reach, a certain proportion of the population and a very limited one in a lot of cases.

The data revealed that there are additional reasons factors such as, ease of use, network access, literacy and individual agency, that discourage media development organisations using digital technologies to address donor goals in their projects. The Twaweza testimony was evidence of the unexpected complications arising from using ICTs in projects for citizen engagement.

As key informant Kees De Graaf maintained “a lot of the initiatives that have sprung up, many of them haven't really brought the case that we thought... because technology can only do so much” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

An important factor that determines ICT use is the objective of each project. Donor goals in the region are focused on: Accountability, Participation, Engagement, Governance. To date, these media assistance organisations remain committed to traditional methods when addressing these objectives. The next chapter will analyse why this is.

Conclusion: Media Assistance activity in East Africa

This chapter presented findings from fieldwork conducted in the target countries. This data illustrates the characteristics of current media development interventions and analysed whether digital technologies have impacted on the practice of media assistance in the focus countries.

Evidence was presented which illustrated the make-up and format of media development projects currently being implemented in Kenya and Tanzania. These took the form of both media capacity building activities as well as ‘media for development’ activities. It was found that the hybrid form of media development projects is prevalent in this region. This is notable for particular objectives in the region such as engaging with youth and wider audiences on issues such as sexual health, food security or governance issues.

Evidence was presented from interviews with media development practitioners, or key stakeholders, in Kenya and Tanzania as to whether digital technologies can assist, or better address their project goals, thereby contributing to the primary question of whether traditional media assistance methods are still relevant.

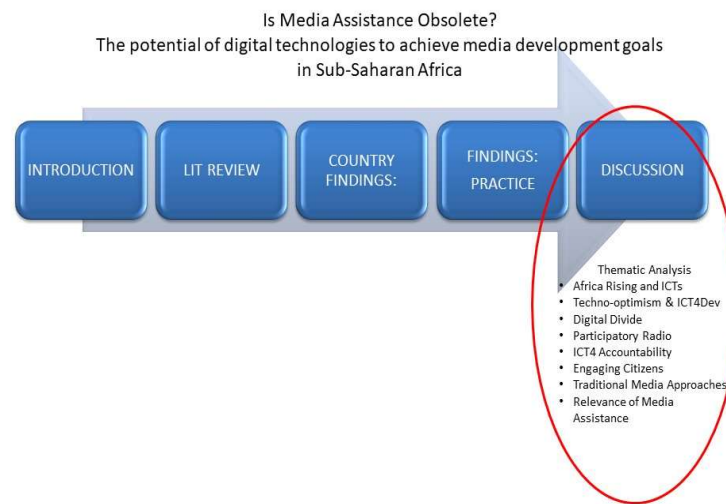
The data here underscores how digital forms of technology are not necessarily being used by individuals in the manner that donor or development agencies assume when they are promoting technology innovation in development.

What was revealed in this chapter is how digital technologies, such as mobile phones, do not necessarily result in increased engagement or participation from citizens of Kenya and Tanzania. Human factors come into play in a possibly unforeseen way when it comes to interacting with technologies and motivating the citizens of Kenya and Tanzania to use them for development ends. The Daraja water pump project was offered as an example of the complications with ICTs to achieve these objectives and the reasons why will be examined further in the next chapter.

The perspectives and interview data that were presented in this chapter will therefore be discussed in a wider context and in more depth in the next chapter in relation to use of digital technologies to achieve donor objectives.

Chapter 7

Discussion



Introduction

Chapter 6 presented data outlining projects being implemented by a sample of media development organisations in Kenya and Tanzania and the extent of use of digital technologies in these projects.

Despite their widespread availability and potential for some development objectives, this research found that digital technologies are not necessarily being employed widely in Media Assistance programmes in Kenya or Tanzania. There is a mix of experiences from the implementing organisations in this regard from the sample interviewed.

What is apparent is that with regards to media support interventions, such as capacity building and strengthening the sector, media assistance programmes are still using

quite traditional techniques. ICTs can certainly contribute to much needed upskilling of local media organisations, as demonstrated by the UNESCO radio project. With media *for* development projects, digital technologies seem to be used more centrally, if appropriate for project goals and target audiences.

Chapter 5 and 6 presented stakeholders' insights and they testified to the enthusiasm for technology from the funders of international media development in the region. However, this may be misjudged. This research found that despite enthusiasm for the use of digital technologies in media development, the digital divide still exists, and this impacts greatly on which tools are appropriate for media development objectives.

The interview data revealed that there are other important factors that must also be considered when planning which tools to use for media assistance programmes, and these include issues of access, cost, the technical literacy of audiences and whether people actually use the technologies in the way assumed. Furthermore, radio continues to be the media of choice for the majority of Kenyans and Tanzanians. Thus, many media development NGOs continue using traditional media methods in their projects.

In this chapter, the findings from the field are synthesised and analysed in greater depth. Specifically, this chapter dissects the reasons why ICTs are not being widely used in media assistance interventions in this sample. Gaining an insight into the limitations of ICTs for these projects will help understand the continuing appeal, and role, for traditional media development methods. This chapter therefore contributes to the question:

- What is the rationale for a continuing emphasis on traditional media methods?
(RQ 2d.)

This chapter offers eight salient themes which have emerged from analysis of the data. These serve to address the overall research question and draw conclusions with regard to the relevance of digital media technologies to the media assistance sector.

Whilst the previous chapter presented and analysed the research data, this chapter offers a thematic analysis which advances the argument relating to the continuing importance of media assistance in the current information ecosystems. These themes are presented below.

Theme 1: The role of ICTs in ‘Africa’s Rise’ is being overstated

The Africa Rising trope and reality of ICT use in Kenya and Tanzania

The starting point for the research was the ubiquity of stories emerging in western media adhering to the “Africa rising” narrative. As Taylor reported, “barely a week passes without a new article, report or conference eulogizing the continent and its growth figures.... Analyses thus far have had strong evangelical undertones, suggesting that Africa has turned a corner and that its emergence is imminent” (Taylor, 2014a:1-2)

At the same time, there appeared a growing movement expressing optimism in what technology could do for development, and further, for Africa. Headlines claimed that “mobile phones transform Africa” and one periodical created the moniker of

Kenya as ‘Silicon Savannah’ (Perry, 2011). Jeffrey Sachs⁷⁵ called mobile phones a ‘gift for development’.

It was noted in the literature review how enthusiasm for ICT4D⁷⁶ is rooted in this techno-optimism, where technology is increasingly proposed as a solution for development problems. As noted by Wyche and Olsen, “increased mobile phone ownership and access to the Internet figure prominently in this optimistic narrative” (Wyche and Olson, 2018:1).

Furthermore, optimism that ICTs can be a solution for the continent’s development problems “was accompanied by hype about the continent’s possibility of “leapfrogging” some stages of development, as though the whole process of development had been rendered less problematic” (Banda et al., 2009:1).

The data from this research illustrated how in recent years there has been a push from donors in the promotion of ICTs for development in the region. Findings from interviews with key stakeholders revealed that the media assistance sector has not been unaffected. The techno-optimist feels that access to ICTs can facilitate a wide range of developmental goals, for example in fields such as health, agriculture and humanitarian assistance. And there has of course been success in these areas.

Whether digital technologies can be applied successfully to media development objectives, however, is a matter of debate and the central theme of this research.

Making use of them would arguably be relatively easy for donors and practitioners working on media development, as use of these new technologies is user-driven, and

⁷⁵ Sachs is an American economist and director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. He is known as one of the world's leading experts on economic development and the fight against poverty
⁷⁶ Information Communication Technology for Development

relatively low-cost. But incorporating digital technologies in traditional media development models may be a more complicated process than it appears.

Kees De Graaf, who is Head of ICT at the organisation Twaweza, explained how at his organisation “when we started that mobile phones we thought were going to be a big hit.... because it is such a technical innovation; it makes such a difference already in people’s lives. Penetration is very high in Tanzania. You can practically reach almost everybody”.

De Graaf admits however that when it comes to digital technologies, “a lot of the initiatives that have sprung up, many of them haven't really brought the change that we thought. It has been a bit disappointing. I think we've all been, maybe, focusing too much on the technical part of it” (*De Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

More than one interview participant noted that if societal change was the result of higher mobile phone and internet penetration rates these countries would probably be seeing the impact already.

Abel Okuye from Afrobarometer argued that “if the mobile phone brings changes, especially by the youth in Kenya you would see the figures. I think Kenya and South Africa have like 98% penetration, very high figures. If political transformation was to come, there would be a lot of transformation by now for Kenyan and other countries. But that massive usage is not translating into some of the changes. Why that disconnect is happening, whether it’s lack of interest from people, I don’t know” (*Okuye, 2014, in interview*).

Whilst mobile phone usage and penetration has been rising exponentially in this region, a report by Afrobarometer shows that despite higher ICT penetration in Kenya,

corruption seems to be on the rise (Afrobarometer, 2015). The report found that two-thirds (64%) of Kenyans say that the level of corruption in the country had increased in that year. This is despite an increase in access to information and news sources for most Kenyans in the same time period (Afrobarometer, 2015)⁷⁷.

Likewise in Tanzania, despite growth in access to ICTs, Tanzanians perceive that the level of corruption has increased also (Aiko, 2015).

So, while ICTs may have transformed the social space of sub-Saharanans, Bailard points out that the level of mobile phone penetration has far outpaced *political* development in the sub-Sahara (Bailard, 2009). Thus, it cannot be assumed that technology is triggering social change, or that “the change that accompanies new technologies are automatically democratic and beneficial” (Allen and Gagliardone, 2011:29).

The research data suggests that it is possible that the potential of digital technologies for developing countries is being overstated. Stakeholders in the research felt the narrative of technology and Africa Rising did not apply to the broad population but is “a minority” (Munuku, 2015, *in interview*)⁷⁸

Eric Chinje from the African Media Initiative questioned the narrative of an Africa rising. “I think the man on the street in Kenya who can hardly afford two or three square meals a day would question the concept”. He reflected on whether digital media has in fact ‘changed the way Africa interacts with itself’ and whether it has ‘contributed to improved policy making. The question is who is talking to who and what impact is it having?’ (Chinje, 2015, *in interview*).

⁷⁷ Afrobarometer, Kenya Corruption on the Rise, April 2015

⁷⁸ Robert Munuku, Action for Transparency, Interview with Author Feb 2015

Kenyan writer and investigative journalist Parselelo Kanthai refers to the “Africa Rising” trope as “insidious little fiction manufactured by corporate interests” whilst Taylor notes “much of the [Africa]-boosting, local and international, will serve only political and financial interests” in (Taylor, 2014b:3).

In a separate study on the experience of ‘Africa Rising’, Brooks found that economic growth had limited developmental benefits for those in the middle. He argues that “despite the optimism, poverty ratios remained stable and impoverishment was widespread. Change was occurring, but the gains were uneven” (Brooks, 2018:1).

The Irish Ambassador to Kenya, Vincent O Neill spoke in interview of this contradiction with regards to the Africa Rising story and these uneven gains, what he referred to as the ‘dual narrative’:

[There is a dual narrative]. Kenya has only recently graduated but it's still a lower, middle income country. It suddenly came into the lower part of the middle bracket. However, there are still very high poverty rates in 40- 45%. There's huge inequity across the country. The physical environment is very, very difficult. There are very high rates of maternal mortality and childhood mortality in those regions. Yet, you come down closer to some of the urban areas and you have a strong middle class. The major disease is diabetes or hypertension or obesity.... You have a few different worlds going and part of the economic disparities, the inequalities, are both a function and a cause of the tribal politics that has been here since independence (*O' Neill, 2015, in interview*).

And although Kenya is the biggest and most advanced economy in East and Central Africa, it is pertinent to remember that it is still a poor, developing country, with approximately 38% of Kenyans living in absolute poverty (World Bank, 2014).

So, when one reads ‘Africa is rising’, this is essentially for a small, urban based group. There are still very high poverty rates in these countries, c.40-45% but in some areas this can be as high as 85% (*O Neill, 2015, in interview*).

This is an important aspect in the research. For the most part, Media Development projects are not necessarily targeted at the urban middle classes. Media Development projects are in the main funded by international donors to bring information to audiences where they have problems accessing information – either in “media dark” areas or in countries where populations or groups may have restricted access to independent news.

As noted, media assistance is focused on strengthening of the media sector, and this also means making more media and information available to wider populations of Kenya and Tanzania. Often, efforts are focused on poor, rural or marginalised groups, this is the reason why they are funded by international aid agencies and foundations.

As noted, there are large swathes of the population who are still underserved and unreached by news and information, unable to take part in national debate or conversation.

A 2016 World Development Report suggests that “to get the most out of the digital revolution, countries also need to work on the “analog components” (Peña-López et al, 2016:1). This has echoes of the ‘enabling environment’ of which Price and Krug stressed was crucial to the success of media assistance (Price and Krug, 2000).

The projects outlined in this research demonstrate how donor priorities in Kenya and Tanzania centre around governance, empowering citizens, dealing with health issues, connecting with youth, and facilitating dialogue. Despite the excitement of the ICT4D sector and the optimism relating ‘Africa’s Rise’ to technology, the data from this research found that ICTs have limited application for addressing these goals in the context of current media assistance projects.

So, despite the framing of economic growth in Africa linked to technology, the limitations of these technologies are noted in this research. As noted by a 2016 World Bank report: “digital technologies have spread rapidly in much of the world, but Digital dividends – that is the broader development benefits from using these technologies – have lagged behind... Their aggregate impact has fallen short and is unevenly distributed” (Peña-López et al, 2016).

Theme 2: The prevalence of a techno-optimistic narrative in development

Digital technologies and ICTs are not always the correct intervention according to key stakeholders. Indeed, they may serve the interests of corporations more than citizens.

As noted, a trend in the media development sphere in recent years has been the emergence of a new generation of donors emerging from technology Foundations originating in Silicon Valley who often emphasise technological solutions for development. The Gates Foundation run by Bill and Melinda Gates; the Omidyar Foundation established by Pierre Omidyar, owner of eBay; Google.Org; and the Skoll Foundation (Jeff Skoll, also of eBay) – these foundations are increasingly involved in international development, as well as media development, and have an impact on the discourse about development. It has been called tech-philanthropy (Callahan, 2017).

Nelson argues that the Gates Foundation “may not have invented media for development but in recent years it has undoubtedly helped to set the agenda” (Nelson, 2009). Whilst media for development is only a part of the broader media assistance sector, it gives some indication of the influence these foundations are having on the discussions taking place and the influence they may have on the direction of media assistance.

What is noteworthy for this research is that claims about the potential of technological innovation to contribute positively to the lives of individuals and communities often emanate from these philanthropic foundations. Donors such as the Omidyar Network, Skoll Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are proponents and funders of the use of ICTs as a solution to development problems.

Thus, it is pertinent to ask: what drives the techno-optimist view of new technologies in development? And whose interest do they serve? For instance, a focus on providing access to new technologies in the Third World could be seen as a mechanism of allowing corporations to establish new channels of market entry.

The ownership structures and the means for access to the much celebrated ‘new’ public sphere, which is being enabled by the internet and mobile phones, are often owned by transnational corporations such as Vodacom, Safaricom, Microsoft or Facebook. Increased use of their products means more reliance on and future revenue streams for these corporations.

In the same way that it can be argued that the state sponsored media assistance of the 1990s was motivated by the desire to create new markets for media products in Eastern Europe, it can equally be argued that media development and assistance in the current day, now funded more by private technology foundations, is motivated to

create new markets for those products, whether it be mobile phones, software applications or social media platforms.

Boyd-Barrett updated the concept of media imperialism with reference to what he calls the “digital media empires” (Boyd Barrett, 2014). He argues that the structures of power and control that were at play in media imperialism continue to regulate access to and consumption of global media, but “it’s no longer just Disney and Dallas - it’s also now Apple, Facebook and Google” (Boyd-Barrett, 2014:118).

Indeed, Facebook’s attempt to provide free internet access to all Indian citizens in 2015 - called Free Basics⁷⁹ - resulted in accusations of the corporation’s “neo-imperialism”. Research by Bonilla et al. found that Free Basics exists “primarily as a mechanism for collecting profitable data from users” (Bonilla et al., 2017).

As was noted in the literature review, there are ‘ideological connotations of the new’ in discussions about new technologies and development. Jackson Banda spoke of the “modernist belief in social progress as delivered by technology” (Banda, 2006). This modernist narrative is associated with an ideology about the Third World ‘catching up’ with such Western societies. Banda argues “indeed, this narrative is subscribed to not only by the entrepreneurs, corporations who produce media hardware and software in question, but also by whole sections of media commentators, educationalists and cultural activists” (Banda, 2006:4).

⁷⁹ The platform, presented by Facebook as a way to help people connect to the internet for the first time, offered a stripped-down version of the mobile web that people could use without it counting toward their data-usage limit.

For the purpose of this research, this serves as a critical note to the techno-determinism of recent years in relation to development in the region. Manji (2008) warned about the dangers of technological determinism and questioned

Why are we not holding conferences about the role of the pencil in development? Or the role of paper? There is more evidence of social progress made by these humble instruments than all the information and communication technologies (ICTs) over the last 20 years.... There is nothing intrinsically progressive about the pencil or paper. It depends on who uses it and for what purpose (Manji, 2008:129)

This thesis proposes a more practical and evidence-based perspective in contrast to the techno-optimistic narrative which has dominated the development debate in the past decade. Key stakeholders who contributed to this research confirmed that using ICTs in their projects was not necessarily the right approach for addressing donor goals, despite pressure to use them.

Daniel Dedayan from USAID Tanzania confirmed in interview that “there is an excitement about new technologies” and at USAID “we’ve had that excitement”. He revealed that they “are definitely getting a push from Washington to be innovative” in their projects (*Dedayan, 2014, in interview*).

Alex Pitkin from the organisation Frontline SMS⁸⁰, argued that “there are lots of projects that get funding because they are doing something innovative.... It’s more likely to get funding if they have good ideas on technology”. But he questioned why

80 Frontline SMS is a NGO which teams SMS with Radio for interactive discussions. It is a free, open-source software used by a variety of organisations to distribute and collect information via text messages (SMS). Their radio product - Frontline SMS: Radio - helps radio stations increase listener engagement, build interactive programming and manage data in real-time, all using SMS

“funders are doing Twitter campaigns [in their projects] when they maybe should just be putting money into people on the ground on bikes” (*Pitkin, 2015, in interview*)⁸¹.

Sasha Kinney who works with *PAWA254*, a community-based activism organisation in Nairobi, also spoke of “the big technology bias” that has appeared in the aid sector over the past five years. “This idea of advanced technology, its funder-driven and it’s sexy and popular, and there’s very little regard as to what is really appropriate to reach a certain audience or engage them” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*)⁸².

Kinney claims the message the NGO community is getting from donors is “Tech is new, we have to use tech. Tech will revolutionise everything on its own”. But she argues that “people forget to give training in the fundamentals...It’s kind of backwards” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*).

This is of note because it tells of the push for use of new or digital technology regardless of whether they are the appropriate intervention or tool or whether their use is evidence-based. Kinney confirms “no-one ever asks about adoption or usage, no, because they also don’t want to see failure... They’re not really thinking through really what’s needed” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*). As Chinje from AMI argued “the donors want something more sexy (*Chinje, 2015, in interview*).

This research therefore offers evidence to counter the ‘cyber-optimism’ in development. It needs to be considered that implementing technology-related development solutions may serve other interests than the citizens of the “beneficiary” country. Christensen warned of the “fundamental questions regarding the increasingly

81 Alex Pitkin, Frontline SMS, in interview with author May 2014

82 Sasha Kinney, PAWA, in interview with author Nairobi Feb 2015

blurred lines among policy, development aid, technological determinism and commodification” (Christensen, 2012:250).

And Gumucio-Dagron (2008) claimed “in the name of the ‘digital divide’, great business is being made” (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008:77).

Theme 3: The Digital Divide remains a hurdle for ICTs in media development

There is a ‘dual narrative’⁸³ in Kenya and Tanzania and this impacts on the extent to which media development projects should use digital technologies or ICTs.

The term digital divide was introduced in the mid-1990s and defined as the gap separating those who have access to new forms of information technology from those who do not (Srinuan and Bohlin, 2011). Compaine (2001) argues that “if we are indeed in an Information Age, then not having access to this information is an economic and social handicap” (Compaine, 2001:ix).

Access does not just mean actually having physical access (such as actually owning a phone, for example), access also means knowing how to use these technologies, and being able to afford to use them. So, albeit there has been much progress in Africa in bridging the digital divide as mobile adoption rates have exploded over the past decade, there are still many challenges.

The Country Profiles data presented in Chapter 5 highlighted the extensive changes in the media environments of both Kenya and Tanzania. Yes, there is a huge growth in mobile phone use and a definite growth of online activity, such as social media,

⁸³ ‘Dual Narrative’ is the term used in interview by Irish Ambassador to Kenya Vincent O Neill in reference to those with good access to communications and media and those who do not

forums and blogging. Many people now use social media to access news; Twitter and Facebook are very popular. So, there has been a very definite expansion in media and communications channels.

There has also been an opening up of the media sector and a proliferation of media outlets, both print and FM radio. These changes have come after a phase of liberalisation in the media sector in these countries. Digital TV has recently been introduced in Kenya and Tanzania.

However, these phenomena are mainly observed in urban areas. In both Tanzania and Kenya, the majority of populations live in rural areas (c. 72% in Kenya -76% in Tanzania) and in these areas citizens have limited access to a range of media for a variety of reasons outlined in Chapter 5. For instance, print media is very limited in rural areas of Tanzania due to lack of infrastructure; roads are very poor quality and, in some areas, unpassable so distribution is difficult.

Chapter 5 illustrated this sharp urban/rural divide. It revealed how the two target countries of Kenya and Tanzania are predominantly rural and poor, factors that continue to hamper access to news and information. Interview participant Kris Kapella from *Femina Hip* commented:

The technology is here now, it is just the fact it hasn't filtered down to all levels of society yet and I don't think that is going to happen for while... The fact is here you are still dealing with a predominantly rural poor population which doesn't have access to even the most basic of services (*Kapella, 2014, in interview*).

These countries remain divided, with a growing affluence and connectivity for the residents of the major cities and continued poverty for the rural majority. The Irish Ambassador to Kenya, Vincent O' Neill, called it the “dual narrative”.

Thus, despite widespread optimism for ICT in development, the majority of the citizens in Kenya and Tanzania live in rural areas where access to even traditional media continues to be difficult for many of these people. Although mobile technology can circumvent infrastructure hurdles, access to new technologies and the internet is still challenging. In fact, Norris believes that the rapid growth of the internet is exacerbating existing inequalities between the information rich and poor (Norris, 2001).

There are several aspects of the digital divide which are relevant to this region:

1. Access

As has been illustrated from the country data, the use of digital technologies and social media is mainly an urban phenomenon. The issue of limited access for rural populations is due to a number of factors - access to either consistent network coverage or internet access or even a consistent electricity supply.

Understanding Kenya's official languages of English and Kiswahili is also key to using newspapers, government documents, the internet, and SMS services, all which are primarily in those two languages. However, only 59 per cent of rural respondents said they can speak and understand English, compared to 80 percent of those in urban areas (Bowen, 2010).

Lower levels of education in rural areas also limit the scope for information gathering, particularly given that new ICTs such as the internet and SMS services usually require literate audiences (Bowen, 2010).

2. Technical Literacy

The technology itself is an issue. Citizens of Kenya and Tanzania are most definitely using mobile phones in an enthusiastic manner, but at the timing of the fieldwork these were predominantly what are called ‘feature phones’ (i.e. not internet enabled), and are used only for making calls or sending SMS. Many of the mobile phones used are cheap Chinese imports. They are certainly making it more affordable for larger part of the population to have access, but many of the phones do not have the character sets of particular languages that the users speak. Often users cannot use the more advanced applications and services on these phones and use them mainly for calls. As one participant mentioned, some cannot use their address book or contacts (*Spurway, 2014, in interview*).

Sara Chamberlain from BBC Media Action has discussed the limited ways in which users use their phones:

What we've discovered...is that people don't know how to use that technology. What we discovered is that only nine per cent had ever sent a SMS. The reason that only 9 per cent had ever sent a SMS is because the majority of the phones that they have are used, second hand, very poor quality sort of brick phones. They're copycat, so ‘Nokais’ and ‘Simsungs’ that are coming in over the border and are in foreign languages. Essentially people have a very basic piece of technology in their hands that's in a foreign language which is really limiting their ability to actually use it for anything other than a voice call. The majority can only make and receive voice

calls and that's really it. That really dictated our choice of technology (Brown-Martin 2014).

Thus, mobile phones and ICTs are not yet being used to their full technical potential by citizens in these countries. The ideology of a technology-led revolution is undermined by the fact that it is underpinned by very basic devices and crude applications.

3. Cost

One of the largest hurdles for Kenyans and Tanzanians to access information via new technologies is the cost. The growing middle class are mainly based in urban areas, and the price of more expensive phones and data schemes is out of the reach of many citizens. Even if they can pay for a device, they cannot easily afford the telecommunications and data usage charges that are required to access the internet.

Kenyans and Tanzanians at the Bottom of Pyramid⁸⁴ ('BOP') are already known to be making sacrifices of basic food and utilities, so they can buy credit on their phones: "People would rather not buy bread or milk but have airtime"⁸⁵ (*Patterson, 2015, in interview*).

This was echoed by Angela Okune from iHub: "There's no doubt that even bottom of the pyramid they sacrifice milk to get calls. They're sacrificing; they're walking instead of taking a matatu because with that 20 Ksh, they call someone and look for job and potentially make 2000 Ksh" (*Okune, 2015, in interview*).

⁸⁴ In Aid work this is the largest, but poorest socio-economic group
⁸⁵ UNDP, Siema Patterson, Feb 2015 in interview with the author

In a more commercial regulatory environment, where prices and taxes are lowered, we can anticipate that prices will come down and these services will soon be within reach of the mass population. Kenya has a more business-friendly and consumer-friendly environment where the existence of several operators make sure the data and call prices will fall, and cheaper mobile and Smartphones are entering the market.

In Tanzania, the government is making cost more restrictive by imposing new taxes on mobile devices or telecommunications fees. In their report on digital inclusion and mobile tax in Tanzania, the GSMA⁸⁶ found that mobile communications is one of the most heavily taxed sectors in Tanzania, with operators subject to 10 different taxes, along with regulatory fees and charges.

These taxes increase the total cost of mobile ownership for Tanzania consumers and create “barriers to affordability” (*Digital inclusion mobile sector tax Tanzania*, 2015).

For instance, Richard and Mandari (2018) found that transaction cost have a significant negative influence on the usage of mobile banking services in Tanzania (Richard and Mandari, 2018).

Consequently, at the time of the fieldwork, the cost of accessing information on new technologies was still prohibitive for a large part of these populations. As one interview participant remarked “technology seems to be ahead of people’s capacity to afford things” (*Wafula, 2014, in interview*).

Thus, technical literacy, language barriers, electricity supply and cost restrict citizens of these countries accessing new digital forms of media and the internet. The digital divide remains a substantial problem in this region and the urban/rural split is a critical

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aspect with regards to uptake of digital technologies with target groups for media development projects.

As one interview participant confirmed “for reaching the last populations or reaching the millions of citizens, ICT is not yet the big thing” (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*). And as the World Bank notes in their 2016 Development report “the lives of the majority of the world’s people remain largely untouched by the digital revolution” (Peña-López and others, 2016) .

As a result, media development projects have not necessarily changed what they are doing ‘on the ground’ in Kenya and Tanzania. Use of digital technologies or social media platforms is often as an add-on or “future-proofing” in these projects (*Spurway, 2014, in interview*).

Theme 4: Participatory Radio has emerged as a new public sphere

Radio is still of huge importance and ICTs combined with radio is an area of some success for media development

An issue of interest that emerged from the data relates to the convergence of radio and newer forms of technology, in particular the mobile phone. In this research, the UNESCO and FARM Radio projects illustrated how the potential for participatory radio programming is enhanced by the spread of mobile phones.

Radio remains the dominant electronic medium of communication throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Gilberds and Myers found (2012) “low production and distribution costs coupled with widespread liberalisation of the airwaves in many sub-Saharan African countries have made radio the most affordable, pervasive and flexible mass

medium available” (Gilberds and Myers, 2012:77). It is a medium that also resonates with dominant oral culture in many African societies.

Many people, especially in rural areas, depend on the radio for news of the latest innovations and market prices, to advice on tackling agricultural, health and other developmental problems. This research shows that one of the biggest successes with regards to ICTs seems to be convergence of new digital technologies with radio which facilitates two-way flows of knowledge.

Research undertaken by Carleton University in Canada found that most radio stations now have talk-shows incorporating listeners’ phone calls on a regular basis (Gilberds and Myers, 2012). According to Freedom House, “their call-in shows have fostered increasing public participation” (Freedom House, 2014).

These call-in radio shows are taking over the airwaves and are said to be transforming how Africans listen to and interact with each other (Hudson et al., 2017). This two-way communication has been called “Participatory radio”.

Thompson suggests that the combination of radio and cell phone is empowering local audiences and argues that it is because they can now engage with others and with issues:

Radio is the original ICT in Africa, and the cell phone is its most recent add-on ICT.... The cell phone is empowering people by allowing them to engage with the number one electronic purveyor of information and entertainment on the continent. As oral culture predominates in most of Africa, radio and the cell phone are simply extensions of the human voice; they are the electronic post office that functions while the traditional post office barely exists (Thompson, 2013:13).

Talk-based radio, which involves free-ranging studio discussions, phone-ins, political interviews, interviews with celebrities and music, are becoming some of the more popular programming for broadcasters.

Talk Radio may be an old and much-used format in the West for decades, but in the past years it has been ground-breaking for people who live in these remote areas.

Africans can now voice their opinions in public, talk to politicians about their grievances and engage in debate in a way that was hardly possible a few years ago.

As Gordon (2012) maintains

The very definition of radio is changing ... Ordinary community members have been empowered to participate by sending in stories, calling in to give their views, and giving comments on policies thus challenging the hegemonic control on content production by journalists (Gordon, 2012).

Although few local radio stations have the resources to invest in significant independent news-gathering operations, talk shows are opening up new spaces for political and public debate, and through debate to public engagement (*Lopes, 2015, in interview*).⁸⁷ Converged radio has been compared to Habermas' coffee houses, as Deane noted:

Habermas originally argued that a public sphere, independent of the reigning governments, was established out of a space carved out in the coffee houses of enlightenment Europe. The radio revolution in many developing countries can arguably be seen as a similar phenomenon, where public debate over radio meshes

⁸⁷ Claudia Lopes, in phone interview with author, May 2014.

with the billions of informal and interconnecting conversations enabled by the new technologies of mobile telephony and the internet (Deane, 2005).

Indeed Ethan Zuckerman, Director of the MIT Center for Civic Media, claimed that “considered together, radios and mobile phones can serve as a broad-distribution, participatory media network with some of the same citizen media dynamics of the internet” (Zuckerman, 2007).

Therefore, Africa's rapid spread of mobile phones, combined with the ubiquity and popularity of radio presents a significant opportunity for public discussion. It provides a two-way communication channel, one accessed by a broad church of the population.

Interview participant Claudia Lopes, Project Director from the *Africa's Voices* project, confirms how radio phone-ins and text-ins can impact public debate, public opinion and the ability of citizens to hold authority to account: “suddenly there are spaces where people can get relevant information and within which they might even participate” (Lopes, 2015, in interview).

The opportunity for audiences to express their opinions and gain acknowledgement of taking part in a discussion by other members of the community seem to be significant drivers for participation in her *Africa's Voices* programmes. Lopes argues that “they want to be recognised, give their views – and they hope the presenter will read their message out on air and perhaps greet their mother” (Lopes, 2015, in interview).

Participatory radio echoes the positive aspects of Habermas' ideal public sphere in the coffee houses of Europe: discussion, deliberation and debate.

However, Lopes admits “people in urban areas participate more and we have to be very honest about this” (*Lopes, 2015, in interview*).

And barriers to participation are more complex than just access: women and girls with low educational levels were much less likely to call in to a radio station than men and boys of a similar income and educational level. Lopes cautioned “this divide still exists with interactive radio essentially. It doesn’t mean that women don’t listen to the programmes. They listen to the programmes and the programmes will reach them but they don’t participate which is different” (*Lopes, 2015, in interview*).

Manyozo et al (2011) found that in rural areas, where women are economically marginalised, the more expensive an ICT instrument is, the more its ownership is likely to be dominated by men (Manyozo et al., 2011), further limiting women’s ability to participate.

So, although the convergence process of the mobile phone and radio is happening and is positive and exciting, it is still subject to the digital divide: the disparities governed by geography, income and gender still exist. Jackie Davies from BBC Media Action confirmed “there are huge populations in this country who don’t really have a voice in the national debate, about anything” (*Davies, 2015, in interview*).

Consequently, this new public sphere is not the ideal that Habermas or the techno-optimist envisages. Criticisms of the new public sphere which has been facilitated by digital technologies and the internet were noted in the literature review. Perhaps the concept of the public sphere is itself is a utopian ideal, as Grbeša claimed “the public sphere is an ideal model that has probably never existed” (Grbeša, 2004:119).

Theme 5: The ICT for Accountability Model has not delivered as promised

Participation and citizen engagement are often the objectives for using ICTs in projects but as illustrated in the case studies these are not guaranteed.

During the field trips to both Kenya and Tanzania, it was found that there is much development work going on in the area of citizen participation and accountability using ICTs and apps. Aran Corrigan from Irish Aid confirmed how “there is a lot of this going on in Tanzania, a lot of ‘accountability for checks’” (*Corrigan, 2014, in interview*).

Corrigan explained that “these projects depend on the idea that you empower citizens to act and the government responds and the services get better. We all work with that sort of model. It’s called the Accountability model” (*Corrigan, 2014, in interview*).⁸⁸

This Accountability Model envisions that ICTs will empower citizens to act and this will promote openness and transparency which will result in increased government responsiveness and accountability. It will make public discussion between citizens and governments easier. Traditional Media Assistance also works towards these goals.

Integrating ICTs into projects for these ends is not always straightforward however, and organisations in the sample have experienced problems with implementing ICTs in this regard. Corrigan offered the example of the Daraja Water project in Tanzania and its use of new technology for citizen participation in accountability and governance projects but “it failed” (*Corrigan, in interview, 2015*).

The objective of that project was to engage citizens in reporting to their local government regarding water-points, thus looking for accountability from elected officials. The Daraja project showed how it can be a challenge to incentivise people

⁸⁸ In interview with Author, Dar Es Salaam, Feb 2014

to engage and participate with digital technologies in development projects. One explanation proposed is that users have not seen evidence that using them will help to make a change to their lives.

The Daraja experience was raised by several of the interview participants and is interesting because the problem also exists in Kenya with regards to the technology and engagement model – or the ‘Accountability model’.

De Graaf Head of ICT confirmed “we actually had high hopes for both ICT and mobile phones.... We thought four or five years ago it was going to be a major part of what we’re doing, but it has become a lot less than we thought” (*De Graaf, in interview, 2015*).

This is in line with other research into whether Kenya’s ICT revolution has triggered increased citizen participation. Salome (2016) found that ICTs do not necessarily trigger better governance. She found that despite an explosion of e-government tools, “only a small minority of Nairobi citizens use ICTs to engage with the state” (Salome, 2016:4).

Heeks (2003) found that many ICT projects aimed at better governance result in lower expected returns especially in developing/transitional countries where 35% of e-governance related projects are likely to fail (Heeks, 2003). Recent findings from the World Bank attest “it’s actually quite shocking how many e-government projects fail... we see a lot of disappointment and wasted investments” (Peña-López and others, 2016).

So, even though mobile phone penetration is growing all over Africa, people may not necessarily want to engage with national and local governments through mobile

phones, e-initiatives and social media. There exist numerous websites, mobile phone and web applications for governance which are not used as often as the developers expected.

This begs the question that if people have the technology in their hands, and if they can afford the connectivity, why would they *not* engage with ICTs in these development projects? What are the reasons that audiences and citizens did not respond to technologies in the way presumed? (See also Fung et al, 2010).

The Daraja project found “low user expectations regarding government responsiveness to feedback, particularly given a long history of unfulfilled promises from politicians, government, NGOs, and others ... in relation to water supply services” (Taylor, 2012). Sika et al (2014) suggest:

Citizens are not optimistic about action being taken on the issues they raise, thus limiting their use of the applications. This is brought on by the lack of consultation during the creation of the ICT tools in governance, lack of follow up procedures on the issues raised, poor communication by government on the course of action to be taken on issues raised by citizens, and, the fact that there are more people who share negative experiences they have had with government than there are people who share positive experiences (Sika et al., 2014:19).

Afrobarometer research in Tanzania found that “most Tanzanians are dissatisfied with the current level of public service delivery, but only a minority takes direct action for change”. Many Tanzanians feel that their opinions are not heard and that it is a useless battle to try to influence policy makers (Aiko, 2012:1).

This is backed up by a USAID report which found that Tanzanians have “a passive tendency to shrug and accept things as they are.....a “*culture of silence*,” (Dichter and Aulick, 2013:4).

Twaweza tries to address this in their work. De Graaf says that part of the reason for setting up the programme was “to challenge the culture of apathy and to be part of a wider effort (through Twaweza) to replace this with a culture of citizens' agency - citizens taking action to hold government to account and to improve their own lives (*de Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

But Twaweza’s use of ICTs to address this was a failure. In fact, none of the evaluations undertaken of the Daraja project uncovered evidence that Twaweza’s information was “registering with citizens on any scale, still less triggering increased citizen action” (Green, 2013a) (Eissa et al., 2013; Gunning et al., 2013).

It is an important point for this research, and for projects hoping to use ICT for Accountability - the issues of agency and engagement. As Aran Corrigan from Irish Aid noted, many donor-funded citizen engagement and participation projects which focus on governance are based on this concept of engagement.

Angela Okune, Head of Research at Nairobi’s iHub, argues that for audiences to engage with these technologies, whether for accountability or participation or governance objectives, what audiences need is to see the benefit. “There's engagement... if you're going to see a real key benefit. If you engage, or you take part in polls, or you vote, you do all these things and then you feel like none of that made a difference ... you just opt out” (*Okune, 2015, in interview*).

Interview participant, Sasha Kinney from *PAWA254*, also questioned whether, despite the huge growth in access to information, and the growth in two-way communication, these citizen participation initiatives are creating active citizenship. She concluded, no. “I think there's a lot behind that. It's not lack of information. I think it's that people don't see a viable course of action. They don't actually see something that they can do that's actually going to change things” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*).

Kinney argues that Kenyan’s post-dictatorship mentality is one reason for this: “The idea of collective action and the fact that you could really leverage your numbers as a source of power is just still really underdeveloped here” (*Kinney, 2015, in interview*).

This sense of powerlessness was also noted by the head of Twaweza, Rakesh Rajani, who observed in Tanzania, “people don't have that sense of agency that something could – and should – be changed. ..It is basic to the way western democracies work, so it's hard to appreciate how its absence shapes a political culture” (Bunting, 2011).

Zanello and Maassen (2011) analysed the conditions that bring citizens to become active citizens. They found that citizen agency is driven by people but it needs some form of accountability from the authorities to take place. They maintain that for citizen agency to work ” they must have the conviction that they can make changes” (Zanello and Maassen, 2011:6). Individuals are willing to participate in political life only if they feel that somehow they are able to make a difference.

As Green notes, in the East African context, “confidence in engaging with the governmental sectors has been eroded by years of unresponsive and corrupt systems, so much so that even when there is a genuine opportunity to engage or provide feedback, citizens often don’t do so” (Green, 2013b).

Most of these projects using digital technologies are based on the model that action on the part of the individual will lead to action on the part of those in power when they hear from their citizens. But if change does not happen, citizens learn not to bother participating. A key demotivating factor in the two-way interaction between citizens and governments using ICTs is the belief by citizens that nothing will come out of the interactions.

Findings from this research illustrate how sustaining the motivation of citizens to participate is a challenge. Interview participants attested to the importance of understanding what drives citizens to engage in development projects. A critical aspect is that people must have trust in feedback or accountability mechanisms and be convinced that, by providing feedback, they can influence positive social changes. There must be evidence that their actions, their agency, might lead to change.

Thus, it cannot be taken for granted that citizens, when given the opportunity to provide feedback or interact, will have the incentives to do so.

Interview participant, Okune from Nairobi's iHub, attests how "access is not really the issue anymore. Simply giving someone a phone is not going to make them so excited and start calling the government and demanding their rights you know? There's so much else involved there. I think the question is – is the government willing to change as a result of listening to Citizens Voices?" (*Okune, 2015, in interview*).

Okune continues with regards to ICTs such as the mobile phone "as a communication tool, yes, for sure it will continue to grow. As a tool to improve governance, as a tool for social good, I think that's a lot harder and that's a lot more up in the air. It really depends on, I think, government will" (*Okune, 2015, in interview*). And that is an issue outside the realm of achievable goals in Media Assistance projects.

Theme 6: Traditional Media platforms have underestimated potential for engaging citizens

Traditional media Assistance projects provide positive results for engagement and participation by citizens, as illustrated by project data.

As noted by participants in the research, the presumption of a link between ICTs and Accountability processes is problematic. As illustrated by the project data, one of the problems with digital technologies in media development work is that they do not automatically guarantee participation by citizens or engagement in accountability processes.

In an assessment of Twaweza initiatives, Lieberman et al. (2013) concluded “there are lots of prerequisites to behavioural change and the usefulness of ICTs for generating citizen action is likely oversold” (Lieberman et al., 2013).

Participation and engagement are central in media development work because of their relationship to governance and democracy. Norris argued, political participation is the “lifeblood of representative democracy” (Norris, 2002) and Hauser claimed that democratic governance rests on the opportunity for citizens to engage in ‘enlightened debate’ (Hauser 1998).

As noted in the literature review, Habermas’s study of the public sphere centred on the idea of political participation as the core of democratic society. The public sphere served as a forum for deliberation by citizens around issues and decisions relevant to governing.

Habermas spoke of “the power of public discourses that uncover topics of relevance to all of society, interpret values, contribute to the resolution of problems, generate good reasons, and debunk bad ones” noting that “Discourses do not govern. They generate a

communicative power that cannot take the place of administration but can only influence it” (Habermas, 1992:452).

This concept of public sphere is central to models of deliberative democracy, which is based on the idea that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. As distilled from the literature review, Habermas, amongst others, had proposed that the media fulfilled the role of the public sphere, until it was spoiled by its ‘structural transformation’ (Habermas, 1962; Hauser, 1998; Norris and et al, 2010).

Increasing political participation is also seen as one of the key routes to building accountability between citizens and leaders. Accountability is enhanced when citizens play an active role in making demands and when officials are expected to respond to those demands.

This has implications for media development.

Often in media development projects the objective is to draw wider society into the national conversation – reflecting a range of views and political opinions, thus encouraging this ‘deliberation’. Yes, media assistance works towards strengthening the independence and freedom of the media, but to what end? Because of its watchdog role, its agenda setting role and its potential to hold leaders to account, thereby contributing to democracy. This also involves bringing wider society into discourse, debate and deliberation – not just urban groups or elites.

Media development projects use media and communication to help foster this political participation. They can do this by providing access to information, stimulating

discussion and helping people interact with decision makers. This is particularly important around elections where media has a central role to play.

This relationship can be evidenced in the project documents from media development organisations. For instance, the objectives of the BBC Media Action project in Tanzania, *Haba na Haba*, included increasing the capacity of journalists and media practitioners to produce quality radio programmes. This would contribute to improving Tanzanians' knowledge of key governance issues, including their rights and responsibilities and the country's political processes. They also aimed to "*create a national and inclusive conversation which results in Tanzanians feeling confident to freely express their views about issues that matter to them and confident that these views are being heard and responded to by their leaders*" (Bangapi et al., 2017:10)

With the *Sema Kenya* project in Kenya, the BBC Media Action objectives were to improve Kenyans' access to reliable, trustworthy information and also increase their knowledge of key governance issues. The project worked to "rebuild trust in the democratic process in Kenya *by creating a national and inclusive conversation and debate and encouraging dialogue as a means of settling conflicts within and among communities*" (Buckell and Baskett, 2017:11).

The intended cumulative outcome for the project was that "individuals, communities and governments...are better informed and more engaged in tackling challenges in governance' and thereby contributing to more accountable state-society relations and governance " (Buckell and Baskett, 2017:11).

Thus, while the media development sector focuses first and foremost on supporting and strengthening the media sector it is often done in tandem with bolstering this element of deliberative democracy – a platform for public debate. A platform for

ensuring that citizens can become active participants in their societies, to engage people across all sections of society.

As noted, participation is important for this research as digital technologies are often posited as a new and better way in which global citizens can participate in the public sphere and hold those in power to account. Can digital technologies do a better job than traditional media in this manner?

Digital technology certainly has a role in achieving development goals, such as health and improving public service delivery (Heeks, 2002; Sika et al., 2014; Singh et al., 2010). And they have been mooted as assisting countries leapfrog development stages (Fong, 2009; Steinmueller, 2001).

However, this research has shown how it can be a challenge to incentivise citizens to engage and participate with digital technologies in some development projects. One explanation proposed is that users have not seen evidence that using them will help to make a change to their lives.

In contrast, results from a sample of projects that took part in this research show the power of traditional media to nurture this citizen engagement. An evaluation of the DFID-funded radio discussion programme, *Sema Kenya*, found that regular listeners and viewers of the show were significantly more likely to participate in politics frequently (34%) compared with those not exposed (21.5%) (*Sema Kenya: Can a debate programme increase people's knowledge of democratic processes?*, 2015).

In a separate evaluation for the Tanzanian radio programme, they found “*Haba na Haba* contributed to people being more informed about and engaged in politics.

Audiences were more knowledgeable about the key governance issues that mattered to

them, discussed these more with friends and family, and participated more in governance-related activities – all factors that support bottom-up accountability” (Bangapi et al., 2017:7).

A further example is the Twaweza project ‘MiniBuzz’, a daily current affairs programme on TV with the goal of stimulating citizen debate among Tanzanians. Set in a *dalla dalla* (a commuter mini-bus), the programme aims to “stimulate agency by informing and providing space for exchange of views among citizens” (Wolff and Lipovsek, 2014).

A report praised the show for its setup, which allows for a large variety of people, who usually do not express their opinions publicly, to share their thoughts on issues such as service delivery, quality of education, food prices and even traffic jams in Dar es Salaam (Wolff and Lipovsek, 2014).

These types of TV and radio show are popular when trying to model behavior changes, especially empowerment. They might empower citizens and encourage ‘agency’ to demand their rights. Wolff and Lipovsek argue “every day, millions of people watch that show, so imagine if every day you see ordinary people like yourself speak out and have an opinion, angry at the government or pleased with the government. We think that if you see that every day, it will do something to your own psyche as well. At some point, you'll start feeling it normal that you can do that” (Wolff and Lipovsek, 2014).

A study by Rath et al (2015) found that of the 13 million Tanzanians (or nearly half of those who watch TV regularly) who have seen Minibuzz, the majority watch it to get information on current topics or hear the views of ordinary citizens: 18% reported this

was the best part of the show (Rath et al., 2015). The report found that “Twaweza’s programmes have ushered in innovative citizen agency around important social, economic and political issues of the day” (Rath et al., 2015:93). De Graaf confirmed Twaweza now hope to make more impact with media partnerships such as these.

What the evidence from this sample of media development projects illustrates is that digital technologies alone have limited success for engagement and participation in public accountability or governance projects, whereas traditional media platforms have shown to be successful for these goals. This points to why many organisations continue to use traditional media to achieve these same objectives.

Theme 7: Traditional Media assistance methods remain relevant

Stakeholders confirm there is a continuing need for journalism training and capacity building, but in a different format.

Focusing on the non-technical aspects of media support interventions leads back to a central part of media development projects since their emergence decades ago as part of democracy support programmes. A significant aspect of ‘democracy promotion’, media assistance has the objective of fostering ‘free and independent media’. Part of this process is to increase the skills of journalists and strengthen the capacity of media organisations.

The topic of training in media development projects has received much criticism over recent years in evaluations of projects and strategies (Howard, 2003; Ognianova, 1995; Rhodes and Lange, 2007; Skjerdal, 2011). This is especially true in light of analyses of media development activities where “parachute professors” delivered

short, culturally insensitive and in the end, ineffective journalism training (Ognianova, 1995).

Hume coined the term “media missionaries” for the journalists and media workers who poured into the former Soviet Union (FSU) after the fall of the Berlin Wall “to spread the gospel of democracy.... some of America’s most altruistic journalists, who hoped to midwife a newly independent press” (Hume, 2004).

Miller has criticised how “media assistance donors – project originators, designers and funders – conceive of their work in ideal terms as a kind of supra-political, even altruistic technology transfer. Exporting Western journalism as a means of establishing democracy, from this point of view, is hardly contentious; it is, instead, a gift, from the developed West to the ‘transitional’ or developing Rest” (Miller, 2009:10)

Eric Chinje, from African Media Initiative, spoke in interview about traditional media development training and how it “could go on forever with nothing really happening. I know that first hand because over two decades in the World Bank, I trained easily, easily 2500 reporters, easily. Every year I had anywhere between 200-300 and it went nowhere” (*Chinje, 2015, in interview*). As Rolf Paasch said of Tanzanian journalists “they have been over-workshopped!” (*Paasch, 2014, in interview*).

However, journalism training is still recommended in media development policy documents and during this research it was found that several of the interview participants supported training but in new and different formats. Chapter 5 illustrated the enduring need for further professionalisation of the sector and support for journalists in Kenya and Tanzania.

Eric Chinje from AMI, Ernest Sungura from Tanzania Media Fund and Anthony Wafula from HIVOS all argued that journalism training and capacity building is still needed in the region. They stressed however that it has to be the right type of training and targeted at the right people. In the African Media Initiative project, Chinje envisaged a continent-wide network of mentors and trainers in speciality subjects which would have more impact than years and years of training individual journalists.

John Okande from UNESCO believes this format would work better: “We need to do more mentorship, specialised mentorship on the critical elements”. “Rushed training” was one of the leading causes of challenges amongst community radio stations. Radio agents admitted not being completely comfortable with the technologies, but did not communicate this due to lack of time” (*Okande, 2015, in interview*).

Dickens Olewe supports a mentoring approach, “not necessarily just a seven day thing and then go back to your newsroom..... that doesn’t work I think.. because it’s a different eco-system” (*Olewe, 2015, in interview*).

He suggested that embedding trainers and mentors in newsrooms is the way forward. “Something the Code4Africa did about two years ago, they sponsored a training fellow to be in the news room for six months. Essentially you have your training but then you also have somebody seconded to follow you in the newsroom and to be a resource to help you with the stuff you have learnt and also to help at no cost.. His expenses are paid for by the sponsoring organisation and through that, you can hopefully start planting seeds of change” (*Olewe, 2015, in interview*).

Elsie Eyakuze, a Tanzania Blogger and key informant, suggested that donors should “stick around and actually spend the money on quality, longevity and dependability rather than simply quantity and youth-centric stuff. Investing in media is investing in

the intellectual trust of a country, that's not something done lightly" (*Eyakuze, 2015, in interview*).

The data relating to the professionalisation of the journalism sphere in these countries, and presented in Chapter 5, shows that there is still much to be done and support needed. There is always a need for impartial and reliable information. As Howard argues "a reliable news media enables well-informed citizen decision making that, when freely exercised, in turn contributes to democratization" (Howard, 2003:8). As noted in the literature review a strong fourth estate can support accountability and transparency.

Siema Patterson from UNDP also admitted quietly that, despite the exuberance in Kenya with regards to ICTs and the sharp growth in mobile phones and citizen journalism, "at election time, Kenyans still turn to the BBC" (*Patterson, 2015, in interview*). This suggests that citizens still want a trusted, reliable source of news to supplement their information requirements at these critical times.

The data illustrated how data journalism training has been a successful media development intervention by Internews. As a result of Open Government partnerships, governments around the world have committed to making more data available to the public. This has created opportunities for data integration into investigations, as journalists begin to bring data into their work. Data journalism has proved to be a successful new media assistance method in which journalists will continue to need skills training in accessing, interpreting and re-visualising this data for the general public. It illustrates how the traditional training model has adapted to the new digital environment.

Theme 8: The changing information ecosystem makes media assistance more relevant than ever

Digitisation and fragmentation of media means that independent and reliable news platforms are more important than ever and these need donor support.

This research has focused on digital technology and media assistance in the Sub-Saharan region. Throughout the research other interesting trends were revealed, in particular with regards to growth of traditional media outlets, which was noted by the stakeholders. One of the by-products of a focus on new technologies and social media is not to fully appreciate what has been happening with traditional media in the same period.

Notable changes have also occurred with traditional media over the last 5 or 10 years, which has grown in popularity in many parts of Africa, and elsewhere. In many settings, the number of radio and television stations, satellite television channels, commercial and community channels, and broadcast channels has multiplied. As noted in Chapter 5, there are considerably more of them available to consumers now. This has created a competitive media market, and in some media markets (such as Kenya) these outlets are increasingly targeted at particular communities. These can be linguistic or ethnic communities, factional or political communities.

As a result, there has been a fragmentation of media, and a lot more media associated with particular entities and identities in society. This has some advantages because it has created a voice for communities who have never previously had a voice and now have a legitimate outlet for anger or grievance. They are now able to have a discussion in their own language and in their own community.

However, according to stakeholder James Deane, Policy Director from BBC Media Action, this can also lead to much more divisive politics, much more polarised political contexts, and it has spilled over into hate media. This was evident in Kenya around the 2007/8 elections.

Deane argues that these more fragmented media systems are “increasing political polarisation and driving greater extremism in society” (*Deane, in interview, 2015*). In this thesis, the Case Study analysis revealed how in Kenya and Tanzania there has been an increasing corruption of media - political actors are increasingly buying up, taking over, and intimidating the media to advance their own interests. Co-option of the media by narrow factional interests appears to be growing. It is referred to as ‘media capture’ (Schiffrin, 2017).

Deane argues that “most of the media ... actually now doesn't exist to inform a public or enable a public debate or even hold power to account in the public interests. It exists to advance an agenda” (*Deane, 2015, in interview*).

As a result, what has emerged is a much more crowded, complex and much more polarised set of media environments, and much more disaggregated information environments. And as people become increasingly exposed only to information and opinion with which they already agree, the resulting “echo chamber” effect drives a process of so called ‘group polarisation’ (Sunstein, 2009).

This is remarkably different to the media landscape of post-cold war Europe where media development first gained traction. In the post-Cold War days when Media Development thrived, there was very little trust in government media. This is still the case and most state broadcasters are in trouble when it comes to trust. Bussiek claims

a majority of citizens are dissatisfied with their national broadcasters and that “they lack credibility – perhaps the most important quality for any successful media” (Bussiek, 2016). But, increasingly, so are a lot of commercial media (Moehler and Singh, 2011).

Thus, what is becoming more urgent in such a fractured, polarised and politicised environment is a reliable source of information, a source that audiences can trust. Deane claims audiences “want something that they can trust and rely upon to triangulate all the other information they’re getting” (*Deane, 2015, in interview*).

The need for reliable news sources and a platform for a national debate is especially valid in the context of countries in conflict or transition. In countries like Kenya and Tanzania, which have many ethnic groups, often with tension “bubbling just below the surface” (*O'Neill, 2015*), it is becoming especially important that there is a trusted platform for a national public conversation, which represents the views of the whole of society and reflects a range of views and political opinions.

Putzel and Van der Zwan (2006) argue that in countries where there has been conflict, such as the post-election Kenya, there is a need for a national public platform through which people can argue out their differences, understand each other, and understand people who are very different from themselves ethnically, politically or religiously (Putzel and Van der Zwan, 2006). However, as noted, media in these countries are often aligned with political and ethnic groups.

Deane argues that “currently it is very difficult to see where that national public conversation would take place” (*Deane, in interview, 2015*). Whether such national conversations can occur on social media or the virtual public sphere is questionable as

these spaces have been shown to create ‘echo chambers’ (Sunstein, 2009) and Fenton argues that social media “reinforces political fragmentation and inhibits solidarity among the disenfranchised” (Curran et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Papacharissi maintains that the internet frequently fragmentises political discourse and risks “spinning them in different directions” (Papacharissi, 2002) and Gerhards & Schäfer suggest that internet technologies “might actually silence societal debate” (Gerhards and Schäfer, 2010).

In a report from the Centre for International Media Assistance, Abbott argued

Contrary to the idea that digitization provides a panacea for all that’s wrong with media systems, many experts believe that what is fundamentally still needed across the world is better journalism, along with a means of ensuring that all people have access to fair, balanced and quality news and information (Abbott, 2016:6).

As noted, interview participant Siema Patterson from UNDP revealed how most Kenyans “still turn to the BBC World Service” when it comes to election time in that country (*Patterson, 2015, in interview*). Despite an increase in news outlets now available to them, new and old, they believe they can trust the information from this source. This was reinforced in a survey on the value of the BBC's brand in Africa where the BBC was found to be the most admired media brand in the region (*Shishkin, in email 2015*).

The evidence from this research suggests that the need for donor supported assistance for independent and impartial media, one which can reach the broad populace, provide

a platform for balanced and ‘rationale debate’ and has not been subject to ‘media capture’ (Schiffrin, 2017) is more urgent than ever. Abbott questioned “whether commercial media systems alone can adequately provide for quality news and information with sufficient democratic value” (Abbott, 2016:6).

As Nelson noted “although it is extremely important to stimulate innovative new platforms, it is at least as important to help trusted sources” (Nelson, 2012:22).

Conclusion: The resilience of the traditional media assistance model

When assessing the contribution that digital technology can make to media development goals, it is worthwhile to recap what the original motivations and aims of the sector are. As covered in Chapter 1, media assistance programmes have historically focused on strengthening the media sector, promoting better governance through accountability and transparency and supporting a healthier public sphere. Support for these programmes is based on the presumption that these goals would create a healthier and stronger democracy (Kumar, 2006).

Projects and activities work to improve standards and quality of journalism, and also assisting in the creation of regulatory and legal environments which provide an “enabling environment” for a free press. The objectives of the media development sector are varied but all focus on a more robust and plural media sector which can hold those in power to account.

The primary focus of this thesis is whether **media assistance is still relevant given the digital transformation in the media and communications environment**. In particular, it investigates at the impact of digital technologies on the relevance of media assistance in Kenya and Tanzania. Have ICTs impacted on the practice of

media assistance in these countries? And if not, what is the rationale for a continuing emphasis on traditional media methods?

Analysing the data from this research has shown that although use of digital technologies is certainly growing in East Africa, and have provided alternative platforms and avenues for news, media development organisations are not necessarily changing their practice to achieve donor goals. Despite enthusiasm for the use of ICTs in development, this research found that digital divides still persist in Kenya and Tanzania and this impacts on the decision of what interventions are used in media support initiatives.

This chapter analysed the reasons why digital technologies have not been effective in achieving donor objectives, such as citizen engagement, participation and accountability in Kenya and Tanzania. It found that

- For reaching young, urban based youth in the region with messaging for behaviour change, yes, digital technologies certainly have a role. However, this group is not a majority in Kenya and Tanzania and there is still a digital divide.
- For increasing citizen engagement for governance and accountability - long-time aims of the media development sector – ICTs have not yet proven themselves as effective tools to achieve these objectives. The ICT4Accountability model is flawed.
- Traditional ‘media development’ and ‘media for development’ approaches continue to be used to address donor objectives, including engaging citizens, and key stakeholders explained the rationale why this is the best approach

- For goals such as widening of the public sphere and providing platforms for broad national discourse, these are better addressed by a medium that can be accessed by all of the population: radio being the most prominent means of access.
- The internet is not an ideal public sphere, and online spaces have increasingly become fragmented and fractured further limiting its role as a unifying platform for national and cross-ethnic discussion.

The reasons for failures, or not using digital technologies, were discussed. Engaging audiences and citizens using these ICTs is not straightforward. The findings suggest that projects need to use traditional media or community outreach in conjunction with ICTs for more success. This is supported by research by Nairobi's iHub, who found that using ICT tools for governance (or e-participation) is most effective in cases where low-cost and non-internet based methods and tools (such as radio and feature phones) are used, and in areas where forums exist for citizens to physically meet, then follow up on issues raised using ICTs (Sika et al., 2014).

Citizens need to see the benefits of why they should use these technologies, and see the results of doing so. In particular in Tanzania, citizens also need to feel empowered or they have 'agency' enough to assert their rights.

As Rajani (2008) argues "citizen agency is not only the purpose – or the ends – of development and democracy, it is also its most effective means" (Rajani, 2008).

The data from this research suggests that technology is not a 'silver bullet' for media development. Colin Spurway from BBC Media Action in Tanzania suggests that donors should be "sceptical about pressures to use new technology" to achieve these

objectives “just because new technology is making such an impact on our rich western lives” (*Spurway, 2015, interview*).

Spurway argues that when it comes to media development work, “it is important not to be distracted by the latest gimmick. If people are suddenly excited about Snapchat it doesn’t mean you got to go and do everything on Snapchat or WhatsApp. We need to have a more stable perspective than to be that sort of reactive. And we have to be grounded in the realities of our audiences’ experience and not just our own” (*Spurway, 2014, in interview*).

It is for these reasons that more often than not media development organisations are continuing to use traditional approaches: training, capacity building, and production of relevant content, in particular supporting local news and strengthening platforms for national discussion.

What this research thesis suggests is that the broad societal, political and cultural issues at play in citizen participation, accountability and good governance are not easily addressed with new digital technologies. As noted by Nelson, “getting constructive outcomes for and from media systems requires thinking about media development more as a governance issue rather than a technical one” (Nelson, 2019)

The themes outlined in this chapter indicate that media development interventions using traditional methods are certainly still relevant, and even perhaps underestimated, in the new technological information ecosystems. This shall be discussed further in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In the context of considerable enthusiasm from global donors with regards to the potential of new technologies to answer development problems, this thesis has posed the question as well as tested the proposition that Media Assistance is obsolete. Examining the changes, if any, that have followed through to media development projects in practice, the research has investigated whether the methods and approaches of the Media Assistance sector are still relevant in an increasingly connected technological global information system.

The thesis began with a discussion of the changing environment in which Media Assistance now takes place. Donor priorities have changed since media assistance emerged, as has the geo-political landscape in which it takes place. In post-Cold War Europe, media assistance was seen as central to democracy building and establishing free market societies. More recently, with the crisis in western journalism as a result of the failing business model and pressure from online news, the model which media assistance promotes as a template has been called into question. But in an environment of ‘disordered information’ and fragmentation of media, this research argues that media assistance can continue to play an important role.

Despite narratives of ‘Africa rising’, ‘Silicon Savannah’ and unchecked optimism about ICTs and African development, this research finds there is currently limited

application of digital technologies in media development work in the region. This is in line with research by Kalathil (2017) who found that “overall, despite the advent of digital media and the multitude of changes wrought within the global media landscape, the priorities of broad media development assistance seem to have shifted only marginally” (Kalathil, 2017).

This chapter, the Conclusion, will draw together the context, theoretical background and significance of the research and conclude its assessment on whether media assistance is still relevant in the current technological information ecosystem.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws on theories concerning the role of media in society and how media is related to development. The media development sector is founded on a Theory of Change based on related theoretical positions regarding the role of journalism and a free press in accountability and transparency, participation in the public sphere and in democracy. The study also critically assessed the theories of change related to ICT for Development and this was evaluated throughout the research.

In Chapter One the media development theory of change was outlined and this model draws on theories that were evaluated in the Literature review. The model, which is based on Western liberal model of the press, suggests a fourth estate, which is free and independent, will contribute positively to democracy.

This theoretical framework is based on the evidence of how an independent media, which produces reliable and trustworthy information, can contribute positively to a

democracy, through its role as watchdog, as agenda setter and as a platform for discussion (Norris, 2008).

The media development theory of change is also based on theories of the public sphere as advanced by Habermas, whereby, by means of the media, populations of a country can fulfil their roles as citizens by participating in the public sphere, hold leaders to account and influence how their country is governed. Much media development work is based on this framework which reflects the importance of political public dialogue and assumes that by strengthening the public sphere, it will lead to greater debate, deliberation and discussion across society about important issues. This is the rationale by which donors have used media assistance as a tool to address participation, transparency and governance objectives.

Therefore, media assistance methods and activities, such as those outlined here throughout the study, are presumed to contribute to a stronger media sector, a strengthened fourth estate and an enhanced public sphere. These in turn contribute to more reliable information being available for citizens, further educating them about issues relevant to them and stimulating discussion which can empower citizens to hold those in power to account. This process will, in theory, result in increased participation in public life, improved accountability and thus better governance.

However, there are flaws in this theoretical framework, which have been discussed throughout the study. One is whether the media in many settings today can be considered truly independent. As noted in the country profile chapters, the media in both Kenya and Tanzania are not considered independent, are owned and controlled in the main by politicians and businessmen, and these are used to promote their owners' agendas, whether business, political or electoral aspirations.

In this thesis, Chapters 5, which presented a Case Study analysis, revealed how in Kenya and Tanzania there has been an increasing corruption of media - political actors are increasingly buying up, taking over, and intimidating the media to advance their own interests. Co-option of the media by factional interests appears to be growing and is referred to as “media capture” (Schiffrin, 2017; Powell, 2017). In these countries, it was also noted how ethnic and tribal conflicts are played out through the media.

Under these circumstances, where owners control and influence the agenda of the media, it is difficult for journalists to carry out impartial and unbiased reporting, as it is taught in media assistance programmes. Thus, regardless of how good these capacity-strengthening programmes are, when journalists are working under challenge of media control, self-censorship and sometimes intimidation, it is difficult to implement and undertake the role of watchdog, and fulfil this democratic role.

Another problem with the theoretical framework for media development assistance is that it is difficult to define what development is. As noted in the Chapter 3, “developed” can mean different outcomes for different donors. For instance, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on 17 goals which include gender balance, migrant issues and climate change.

And, how does one define when a country is finally “developed”? One criticism of media development is that it remains closely allied to the “modernization” paradigm of development, the idea that the underdeveloped could be ‘developed’ through the transfer of particular technologies (Lerner 1958; Shcrammb1964; Rogers 1962). As noted, Rogers proposed that media could be a ‘magic multiplier’ for development by fostering transmission of messages between the developers and ‘developees’ (Berger,

2005:3-4), irrespective of the impact that this would have on local cultures. Reid-Henry called this “the replacement of traditional poverty by a more modern form of misery” (Reid-Henry, 2012).

Furthermore, modernisation theory has been criticised for using western-style political and social institutions as indicators of progress. For instance, according to this theory, and the media development theory, “local media were expected to emulate Western patterns of behaviour and contribute to the construction of democracy” (Miller, 2009:10).

The media development theory of change is based on western liberal ideas of the press and this model promotes a privately-owned press. As Jacobson argues media development theory of change “embodies a set of normative values concerning what journalism has to offer Western-style political systems” (Jacobson, 2019:191).

The theory does not take into account local cultures and contexts nor how understanding of concepts of impartiality or objectivity can change depending on the “developee” (Berger, 2010:550). Nyamnjoh (2005) argued that western media programmes, instead of acknowledging local conditions, required that ‘aspiring journalists in Africa must, like containers, be dewatered of the mud and dirt of culture as tradition and custom, and filled afresh with the tested sparkles of culture as modernity and civilization’ (Nyamnjoh, 2005:3). Shaw outlined that that “the African model of journalism lays emphasis on the community (civil society), or communities (civil societies), the Western Liberal model emphasises the individual” (Shaw, 2009:20).

Furthermore, Skjerdal offers that “libertarian discourse assumes an exclusivist view of the journalism profession where the media constitute a clear-cut fourth estate and

journalists accordingly make up a fraternity distinct from other societal communities. In contrast, African journalism models are strong in their belief that social and cultural identity comes prior to professional identity” (Skjerdal, 2012:648).

As outlined by LaMay (2008), “exporting press freedom” is a complex endeavour and has been a complicated and not altogether successful process for many media assistance programmes in the past decades.

More recently, media development programmes have acknowledged the flaws within the model and are more rooted in local communities and consultation with “developees” (Berger, 2010:550).

Thus, the media development theory of change is not without its shortcomings. In fact Noske-Turner argues that “few media assistance evaluations manage to provide sound evidence of impacts on governance and social change” (Noske-Turner, 2014). And Schiffrin and Zuckerman argue that “the multitude of variables that affect any process of social change makes it hard to isolate—let alone measure—the impact of journalistic efforts” (Schiffrin and Zuckerman, 2015).

Abbott offers that, when it comes to media development, there are many “unique challenges” for “selecting a research framework or methodology to assess impact. One reason for this is media development constitutes a vast range of activities, programs and types of support” (Abbott, 2019:48). In fact, she questions “whether there is a measurable theory of media development and one that is evaluable” (Abbott, 2019:42).

At the same time as critically reviewing the theoretical framework on which the media assistance sector is founded, this thesis has also tested the ICT for development

framework. This theoretical framework assumes that ICTs can contribute positively to the same development goals as the media assistance sector. The narrative in western media in past years has reflected a cyber-utopian approach to development and democracy with regards to what mobile phones and the internet can do for the continent of Africa. The objectives of the ICT4Development sector often overlap with those of the media development sector – that is, citizen engagement, transparency, accountability and governance.

Zanello and Maassen (2011) confirmed that since the late 1990s, the prospect of using ICT to improve accountability, transparency and effectiveness of authorities has attracted much optimism (Zanello and Maassen, 2011). The opening up of new online public spaces, potentially accessible by all, has resulted in assumptions about increasing participation and accountability in the democratic sphere of a country. Techno-optimists such as Negroponte, Sachs and Diamond talk of “liberation technologies” and proclaim a new democratic space has been created that can be accessed by all which “will increase the political influence of ordinary citizens” (Graham, 1999:79).

But this has not necessarily occurred.

The flaws with this model have been discussed: The internet may provide an additional space for political deliberation, but its role in extending the public sphere is limited because of its fragmented nature, inequalities in access, uncertainty regarding validity of information and the phenomenon of echo chambers. For instance, Polat (2005) argued that the internet does not offer much for extending the public sphere or providing an alternative virtual public sphere because the internet is not universally accessible by everyone. Dahlberg argues that online discourse is overall too

fragmented and decentralised for a public sphere: “online deliberation appears to take place among like-minded people which results in a fragmentation of cyber-discourse into mutually exclusive cyber-communities” (Dahlberg, 2001:618). Papacharissi suggests that the electronic public sphere is “exclusive, elitist and far from ideal” (Papacharissi, 2002:14).

This research illustrates that ICTs are not necessarily the best tools to achieve development goals and engagement with them has been disappointing.

A complication with both these frameworks - the media development model and the ICT for development model - which was highlighted in the study is the assumption that end users of these programmes will act as expected. With some ICT projects end users did not engage or use the technology as presumed.

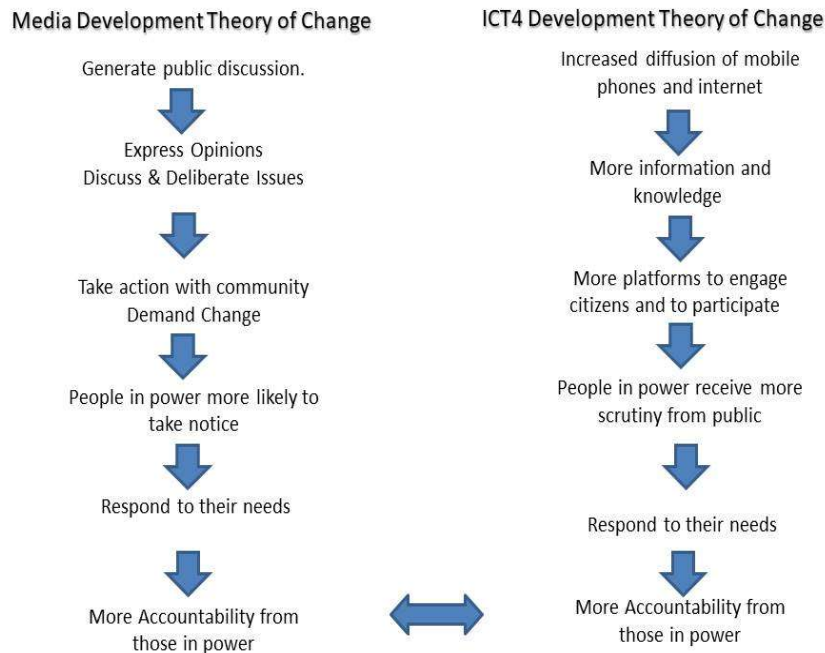


Figure 15. The ICT4Development Theory of Change and the Media Development Theory of Change are often working towards the same development goals and this is the framework on which this research is based.

This challenge was illustrated with the ICT4Accountability projects presented in this study. The assumption with those projects is that “technological interventions are almost sufficient unto themselves [and that they] set into motion social forces and reactions that result in increased accountability and responsiveness” (Myers, 2013:25).

But the data shows how end-users, audiences and citizens do not necessarily behave in the ways assumed in these theories of change. This can be as a result of a range of reasons including apathy, or disillusionment with the political system, and lack of belief that their actions will produce change.

The same could be said with traditional media assistance programmes - even if citizens have more information and better information available to them, they may not use this in activities that progresses better transparency or governance or results in ‘development’.

Zuckerman and Schiffrin (2015) note that “just because journalists have exposed people to information doesn’t mean that people will take action or demand policy changes in response to that information” (Schiffrin and Zuckerman, 2015).

This research evaluated two interrelated theoretical frameworks which are based on theories of media, public sphere, development and ICTs in Development. It finds that despite techno-deterministic claims of the potential of ICTs in development, in fact traditional media assistance methods (i.e. strengthening the institutions of traditional mass media) are still more relevant in this sample of projects and can make a positive contribution towards achieving development goals.

The theoretical framework and the theory of change on which media assistance is founded, although not perfect, remain valid in the context of this research.

Empirical Findings

The main findings were presented and analysed within Chapters 6 and 7 and are summarised below in response to the research question: Is Media Assistance obsolete?

Specifically, the research asks: **have digital technologies impacted on the relevance of media assistance in the chosen case study countries? (RQ2)**

To answer this, the research investigated, through a process of practitioner-based studies, a series of sub-questions, which will be dealt with in this section:

What are the characteristics of the current media and information environment in the selected case studies of Kenya and Tanzania? (RQ 2a)

The research showed the extent of change in media in Kenya and Tanzania as a result of use of mobile phones and new digital technologies, as this will impact the uptake of these tools in media development work. Arguably, radical changes in the media systems and audience habits in these countries will have an impact on the interventions needed and the practice of media development in those countries. The research illustrated, through primary and secondary data, how the media landscapes and media sector have changed in the case study countries as a result of digitisation.

The data revealed that the information ecosystem in Kenya and Tanzania have changed considerably in recent years, in particular with the introduction of mobile phones and social media applications. There has been notable growth in citizen journalism and a convergence of new and older media with radio and mobile phones. The data illustrated how the growth and penetration of digital technologies has provided important access to alternative news sources and online fora such as Twitter and Facebook have widened the public space for discussion for the citizens of Kenya and Tanzania.

This is particularly important for areas not served by traditional media outlets. Citizen journalism platforms such as *HiviSasa* have provided essential new sources of news for rural audiences, relevant to the populations who are not served by a Nairobi-centred and Dar-centred news agenda.

However, in the case study countries, issues related to the digital divide limit the extent to which this has broadened the public sphere and access to trusted, quality information. Problems such as cost, location, electricity, gender and education limit uptake of newer digital media amongst the wider populations of Kenya and Tanzania. Use of these platforms is often limited to urban populations and not rural populations. There are also problems of a gender digital divide as well as the urban-rural split, or “dual narrative”, when it comes to experiencing the benefits of newer technology.

Moreover, it was noted that digital technologies could even be widening the digital divide in some countries. Alzouma found that newer forms of media can be “intimidating technology which can contribute to widening the gap between those who possess everything and those who do not” (Alzouma, 2005:352).

Therefore, despite growth in these technologies, in particular the mobile phone, the most popular medium remains the radio, which can be accessed by the broad population.

The study then investigated what these aforementioned changes in the information ecosystems of Kenya and Tanzania mean for the media development sector. Are Media development NGOs using digital technologies in their projects along with, or in place of, traditional media?

What are the characteristics of current media development practice in a modern East African context? (RQ 2b)

To address this question, the thesis interviewed key stakeholders undertaking projects in Kenya and Tanzania and through face to face interviews learnt whether they are now employing digital technologies in their media development projects. This

enabled the research to get the perspective of those working in practice as to whether digital technologies are relevant for donor objectives.

Chapter Six documented the findings relating to projects being undertaken in Kenya and Tanzania at the time of the fieldwork. The project data examined the objectives of each of these projects including the methods with which the project and organisations address these objectives; the extent of their use of ICTs in these projects; and the outcome in relation to their projects activities.

The data illustrated that Media Development Organisations are not using digital technologies to a great extent in their programmes in this region. Media Capacity projects attest to using them only peripherally. Media sector reform and capacity building projects such as those undertaken by Tanzanian Media Fund, African Media Initiative and Kenyan Media Programme attested to limited or no use for digital media in their programmes.

The larger “hybrid” projects still use traditional media to reach wider target groups, with digital technologies as “add-ons” or “future-proofing”. This was evidenced with the BBC Media Action capacity building and content creation projects.

On the positive side, successes were discovered with regards to use of digital technology in the area of Data Journalism, which is linked to recent Open Government policies in the region and more data becoming available to the public. Internews have shown success in this area.

The convergence of radio with mobile phones, enabling two-way communications, chat shows and debates were successful activities in terms of achieving participation in the public sphere using digital technologies. UNESCO and Farm Radio had

success in this regard with their Participatory Radio initiatives. Thus, mobile phones are offering new and exciting opportunities for audiences to participate in radio broadcasting and on-air debates (Allen and Gagliardone, 2011).

Successes using digital technologies and apps were also found where the target audiences of communication plans focused on youth and in urban areas (with Well Told Story projects for instance). However, these were more in media *for* development and behaviour change projects as opposed to media sector assistance projects.

The data also revealed limited success using digital technologies in projects where participation in the new public space was expected for objectives such as service reporting and accountability. Twaweza's Daraja project was presented as an example of problematic use of digital technologies for citizen engagement and accountability.

Have ICTs impacted on the practice of media assistance in the chosen case studies? (RQ 2c)

The results show that use of new digital technologies in media development projects is (currently) limited. This implies that they are not necessarily the right tools for achieving donor media development objectives. For the most part, use of traditional media continues to be favoured to achieve media development objectives with this sample of Media Development Organisations. Explanations for this are related to the issues such as the digital divide and how technology use is for the most part limited to urban centres, as noted above.

What was noted in relation to use of digital technologies in media development projects is the significance of project objectives. And as illustrated by data in the Chapter 5, the present-day needs of the media systems of Kenya and Tanzania include the creation of local news and content, professionalising the journalism sector, platforms that hold government accountable and the safety of journalists.

The Media Development sector focuses on strengthening and improving the capacity of the media sector, but additionally, according to one leading advocate and practitioner, the objective is ‘reach’ (*Deane, 2015, in interview*)⁸⁹. This means reaching those audiences who cannot easily access reliable information or news that might improve their lives.

These groups are often the poor, the marginalised, women, or ethnic minorities. The reason they need access to donor supported media might be to get access to better information relating to food security, humanitarian assistance, information relevant for elections or to give them access to a public platform.

Thus, Media Development projects need to engage with, or reach, these groups by the means and medium that are most appropriate to them in their current setting. It is for this reason that the media development projects in this study remain committed to using traditional media to achieve their project objectives, according to key informants working in practice.

Consequently, digital technologies are not considered core to media development activity at this time. These technologies are certainly revolutionising the information landscape and citizen journalism provides an important source of news for citizens of

⁸⁹ James Deane in interview 2015

Kenya and Tanzania. But digital technologies currently offer limited advantages over traditional media for the principal goals for media development in Kenya and Tanzania.

As Deane from BBC Media Action notes: “I haven't actually seen a tremendous amount of compelling evidence of how those projects that have specifically privileged the use of social media or new technologies to achieve objectives in and of themselves, having some unique advantage” (*Deane, in interview 2015*).

What is the rationale for a continuing emphasis on traditional media methods?
(RQ 2d)

By examining the sample of media assistance projects, the research provides a counter narrative to the techno-optimism in relation to use of digital technologies for development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, the data shows relatively low utilisation of ICTs in the sample of projects reviewed.

The process and mechanisms by which citizens engage and participate using digital technologies were revealed. What was found is that dissemination and diffusion of digital technologies, such as mobile phones and social media platforms, is widespread (but not equal) in Kenya and Tanzania but this is not enough to guarantee increased participation and engagement. Digital technologies and social media are not necessarily used in the ways assumed. Thus, the potential for these technologies to achieve goals such as participation, governance and a more equitable public sphere has not necessarily been realised in the way the cyber-optimist narrative envisages.

For engaging citizens, and for public discussion and debate, traditional media remains an appealing and relevant platform and evidence from projects has demonstrated effectiveness.

Media Development interventions are based on thorough research of media systems and audiences and for the most part the organisations participating in this research deemed traditional media a more appropriate route to achieve their donor objectives.

This study showed that those projects more focused on media sector reform attested to limited use or uptake in new technologies in their programmes. Their focus continued to be on traditional capacity building or production training, and creating spaces for public discussion.

Additionally, the target audiences of media for development projects in Kenya and Tanzania (often rural populations) are not using mobile phones in an advanced way beyond calling and texting, and media development programmes need to take this into account.

While projects are being “future-proofed”, the radical impact of newer forms of digital media has yet to be felt for many populations of sub-Saharan Africa that media development projects work with. The sample of media development organisations surveyed in this study reflects this.

This research has found that despite theoretical frameworks relating to digital technologies, such as the ICT4Accountability model, assuming increased participation by citizens of these countries, these technologies have not been shown to be necessarily more effective than traditional media for achieving goals such as

transparency, accountability and engagement. In the data from this research, this model was shown to be problematic.

Regardless of innovation and the growth of the tech-industry, the most popular mobile service currently is the money transfer service, *M-Pesa*. *M-Pesa* is a branchless banking service, designed to enable users to complete basic banking transactions without the need to visit a bank branch. Its success has been attributed to the fact that it is free, simple to use, and a practical means to address a critical, previously unfulfilled need in Kenya – banking without having to go to a bank.

This illustrates how the most successful application of technology in the region is one that can be used by the broad populace, is easy to use, does not require high standards of literacy and is accessible in both urban and rural areas. As key informant Kees De Graaf from Twaweza noted: “there's very little technology that, with all its promises, has made a real big difference in ... on top of just being able to talk to each other on the phone (*Graaf, 2015, in interview*).

Therefore, in spite of what is often reported about the proliferation of technology use in this region of Africa - and the possible advantages that it can offer for governance and development - in practice, digital technologies have limited success in achieving media development goals, according to the sample in this research.

Undoubtedly, mobile phones and the internet have had huge social and economic impact for the citizens of Kenya and Tanzania (and elsewhere) but the political impact has not been as significant. Tettey confirms that even though “a lot more people are getting a lot more information”, this does not translate into a “significant expansion in the numbers and categories of those who engage in, and hence influence, the direction of politics on the continent” (Tettey, 2001:153).

These findings need to be considered when approaching donor policy and development goals relating to good governance and accountability in this region.

Contribution to knowledge

This current work offers a new perspective and understanding of the field of media assistance. Geertsema-Singh (2019) notes that to date there has been little scholarly research in the area of media assistance and that there is “almost no research on NGOs and media assistance” (Geertsema-Singh, 2019:2440). This research thesis provides a critical review of media assistance’ evolution to date and contextualises it in the current ‘new’ media environment. The study presents evidence for the positive contribution that traditional media can continue make to development when digital tools are being viewed as an alternative. It provides a fresh appreciation for traditional media assistance methods in an environment where digital technologies are assumed to provide solutions to a range of development problems.

The significance of the findings in this research is that they counter the dominant techno-deterministic narrative with regards to ICTs in development. This will hopefully counteract some of the hype for technology and support an evidence-based approach that is grounded in the realities of how people use and assimilate technologies into their lives.

Whilst there are academic works which assess the impact of digital technologies on journalism, on media, on society and on development, this research reveals the impact of these technologies of media development *in practice*. It is a practitioner focused study with real world informants providing an industry perspective on the issues of media development assistance. This thesis adds to the body of literature in that it

reveals the crossover of Media Development Assistance and ICTs in its current, applied working environment.

The research builds on previous academic work in the fields of journalism, media, development and democracy, and brings a practical perspective to the role of media assistance in the current technological era. Despite the techno-optimistic view of development, this research has revealed the continuing importance of traditional methods of support for media interventions in development.

The events around the Arab Spring created excitement and optimism about social media and what it could do for political change but the subsequent events in the region show how complex this link is. The results of this research imply that theoretical frameworks such as the ICT for Accountability model are simplistic and the relationship is not linear.

Media Assistance operates in a complex ecosystem. As highlighted in the Media Development Theory of Change (Figure 2), media development operates on several levels of influence: populations and citizens; journalists and producers; media and academic organisations and the ultimate aim is to create change on a societal level and a political level. As Stremlau notes “media assistance is highly political and is, in itself, a form of political engineering” (Stremlau, 2019:69).

It has been difficult to agree a successful working model for media assistance for precisely this reason.

In Media Assistance the process of change is not linear, in particular when trying to create positive change on several levels. There are many challenges to creating independent, free and unfettered press for development ends. But there are also

complexities for using technologies to these ends. This thesis provides an evidence-based account that reflects this.

What was also noted in the research, and supported by the data, was the growth in the “hybrid model” of media assistance. This is the merging of ‘media sector support’ and ‘media *for* development’ approaches.

This is a noteworthy contribution to the story of media assistance, how it has evolved to take account of the local needs of media projects. The data from this research supports the case for Scotts’ “hybrid model” (Scott, 2014) and underscores how the model for media assistance changes to take account of local media needs, local audience habits, donor project objectives – what is known by practitioners as a ‘needs analysis’.

The data illustrated that in an East African context, media development practice often takes this hybrid form. Within the sample of NGOs which participated in this research, very few were focused solely on media sector support or reform. Within the sample, there were several projects which had media *for* development activities but which also contained elements of capacity building or training as captured in the notion of the ‘media development hybrid’ (Scott, 2014).

Kumar (2009) noted in his book *One Size does not fit all* that the international community should tailor media assistance to meet the unique needs of the societies being helped. He notes:

If one looks at the history of media assistance during the past two decades, one finds that policymakers and media practitioners have fashioned media interventions that take into

consideration the distinctive social and political structures of a country and its level of economic development, which affect the nature of political openings (Kumar, 2009).

This research study emphasises how the media assistance model is a responsive model, and the project data from this research reflects that model. Media Assistance continues to evolve in this complex technological infosystem. Perhaps that is why it has been difficult for the media assistance sector to agree on a final working model that fits all interventions.

Policy Implications

The outcomes of this investigation help frame the relevance of media assistance in the current information system. With the swift penetration of digital technologies such as mobile phones and social media as information sources, and with global citizens getting access to news and information at any time, the possibility that media assistance could become obsolete is a real one.

Public Service Media

The previous chapter discussed the problem of increasingly polarised and political media environments. The effect that these fractured and fragmented media environments have on politics is topical. This subject has risen up the agenda with the rise of populist governments, including the election to the presidency of Donald Trump in the USA. There is a growing awareness amongst global audiences of terms such as “fake news” (or “information disorder”) (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017), of

online hate speech, internet trolls and even the negative effect social media can have on mental health of users (Shakya and Christakis, 2017).

One media development practitioner notes “the tech optimism offered by the US West Coast digital giants and the democratic energy of the Arab Uprisings so quickly turn[ed] to information-powered factionalism, confusion and hate” (Deane, 2019).

As discussed throughout the study, there has been an expansion of the public sphere in developing countries in recent years. Most of this has been seen as positive for democracy. But due to media’s increasing fragmentation and polarisation and co-option of media in particular interests, there is now a need for more trusted, balanced sources of information.

A possible solution to these fragmented media environments and a possible response from the media development sector in Sub Saharan Africa is to focus on strengthening national broadcasters or Public Service Broadcasting. In a report called *Rethinking Public Service Broadcasting*, Abbott urged “international donors who support the development of free and independent media around the world would be well-served to pay attention to the role – and the potential – of public service broadcasting” (Abbott, 2016:1). She suggests that “PSB has a huge effect on social cohesion, democratic understanding and social development” (Abbott, 2016).

The lack of trusted sources of information that people consider to be credible and reliable, and the lack of platforms for public debate means the importance of national, as well as local, public service broadcasting has become important again.

Support for public service broadcasting has long been part of the range of Media Development interventions that donors can support. The review of literature noted that early examples of such support were led by Allied forces in Germany during the Marshall plan in the aftermath of the Second World War. Foreign aid was used to create what are now “arguably ... most successful examples of PSB in the world – Germany’s ARD and ZDF” (Abbott, 2016:10).

Lublinski argues that that media development should focus on transformation of state departments of information as well as state broadcasters into public broadcasters (Lublinski et al., 2014). However as noted by Harding (2015) “most state broadcasters are little more than government propaganda machines owned and controlled by the government. They are widely distrusted by large sections of the population” (Harding, 2015:8).

Nevertheless, Bussiek notes that in particular in Africa:

As things stand, only national, state-controlled broadcasters have the potential to provide news, education and entertainment to the broad majority of the population in most countries in Africa. They dominate radio and TV services in all aspects: with regard to technical reach, diversity of languages and popularity in terms of audience ratings (Bussiek, 2016)

And Simon Derry, Regional Director for Africa and the Middle East at BBC Media Action notes that the “behemoth state broadcaster... is becoming increasingly irrelevant, and unless they are reformed they are going to die” (Harding, 2015:8)

The implication is that donor support for public service broadcasting or public interest media could take a place higher up the agenda again. Deane refers to “public interest

institutions capable of generating journalism and other media content capable of underpinning informed public debate” (Deane, 2018).

Certainly, the need for reliable information and a public sphere where ‘rational debate’ can occur seems more important than ever. As Papacharissi argued, just because a virtual space has been created, this does not mean it is a democratic one - “a virtual space enhances discussion; a virtual sphere enhances democracy” (Papacharissi, 2002:11).

It may seem ironic that when public service broadcasting is on the retreat in western societies it is the subject of donor support. In some countries, governments have in fact cut funding for public broadcasters saying licence fees are too high and that they represent too great an interference in the operations of the free market. In 2018, the UK government insisted the BBC take over the funding of free licence fees for those over 75 years of age and the BBC has faced considerable unpopularity from making pensioners pay the licence fee. In the case of DK, the Danish public service broadcaster, a 20 per cent budget cut imposed by the Danish government led to the closure of three of the organisation’s six television stations plus three radio stations. The Irish broadcaster, RTE, has been forced to sell off land and cut some programming in an effort to remain viable.

However, the research suggests that in this current political environment, where information spaces are vulnerable to manipulation and distortion, and public debate is subject to polarisation and echo chamber effects, that this could be an important avenue of support for media assistance. Canadian academic, Mark Starowicz, argues “public broadcasting institutions are even more crucial today as we see the

disappearance of public space and the atomization of audiences into special interest constituencies” (Starowicz, 2000).

Harding (2015) argues that public service media have special characteristics relevant in particular to divided societies. These media can contribute to social cohesion and political stability where much of the rest of the media (both traditional and social) may be fragmented along factional, religious, ethnic or other lines. He maintains that public service media “can help people in divided societies to find common cause with each other, enabling them to transcend the politics of identity to rebuild their often fractured nations” (Harding, 2015).

For citizens of Kenya and Tanzania, access to information that people can trust, that supports informed democratic debate, and can hold power to account would be a valuable addition to the media landscape. But the survival of public interest media will need donor support. As Abbot argues “capture of the private media means that simple privatization is not a cure-all for creating a diverse media sector that promotes a variety of views and opinions” (Abbott, 2016:1).

This does not have to be done exclusive of newer technologies however. For example, some of the social media platforms that BBC Media Action have supported are playing the same role as a public service broadcaster: The long running *Al Mirbad* radio station in Iraq (which it helped to establish in 2005) now has almost 1.4 million followers on Facebook and 1.8 million subscribers on YouTube.

The process of reforming state broadcasters is not easy however, and requires the buy-in of the political class. There have been efforts in the past to transform the Tanzanian State broadcaster, TBC, but this programme was stopped after the 2010 elections,

when the government there interfered in the reform project. However, reforming state broadcasters is still seen as a worthwhile endeavour and in recent years there have been extensive reform projects launched in more than 25 countries (Harding, 2015).

Values

The research also has implications for the UN Sustainable Development Goals⁹⁰. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) suggest ways in which independent, professional, diverse and pluralist media can contribute to development. Key SDG targets that are relevant for media include:

- 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representation decision-making at all levels
- 16.8 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms

Goal 16 centres on peace, justice and strong institutions and the UN states that “without peace, stability, human rights, and effective governance based on the rule of law we cannot hope for sustainable development”. The UN suggests that independent and professional media sectors have the potential to be actors for peace and development through:

- avoiding and reducing the spread of hate speech and disinformation leading to violence;
- providing conflict-sensitive reporting, informing on root-causes of conflicts and peaceful solutions;

⁹⁰ The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030.

- offering a platform for dialogue and, as a trusted infomediary, supporting broad-based social cohesion, rather than being a vehicle for reinforcing identity politics.

These are themes that were noted throughout the thesis and this research suggests that traditional media assistance approaches have a role in contributing to these development goals. The implications for media development practice are that donor interventions should focus on strengthening communities against these threats.

This research noted the technological and financial forces that are creating difficult challenges to journalism's traditional values, and this impacts on media assistance. However, perhaps it is more important than ever to return to these values. Richard Sambrook, Professor of Journalism and Director of the Centre for Journalism at Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, maintains:

Over the past few years, traditional broadcasting and traditional newspapers looked rather old fashioned and tired compared to the energy, vibrancy and enthusiasm of social media. But after a few years, we have now reached the stage where people are actually saying that some of the ethics, the processes, the traditions and values of traditional journalism still do matter. (Sambrook, 2012)

The literature revealed the challenges with exporting a Western journalism model in Media Assistance programmes and how there may not be a universal model that can be imposed by western journalism trainers - this should be inculcated naturally and emerge organically.

But there are values, as opposed to practices, that are universal for journalism that could contribute to social-cohesion and reducing conflict that are core to the Sustainable Development Goals.

For instance, Kovach and Rosenthal argue in *The Elements of Journalism* that the purpose of journalism is “to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2014:12). They maintain that the essential elements of journalism are as follows: its first obligation is to tell the truth; its first loyalty is to citizens; its essence is a discipline of verification; its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover; it must serve as an independent monitor of power; and it must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2014).

The authors of course represent a western perspective of journalism, but media assistance was founded on these principles of the press as a trusted source information and a check on those in power. These core values must still be taught but could be done to reflect African or other cultures where it is carried out. In addition, media trainers could transfer an understanding of what media can do for communities and to strengthen communities.

This thesis investigates the uptake and relevance of digital technologies to media assistance. However, what is notable with regards to the environment in which media assistance currently takes place is not just the technological changes but political changes and especially polarisation of politics. Media has been fragmented and fractured but so have communities.

In his reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, Benedict Anderson referred to “imagined communities” in the sense of nations as a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. The media can perpetuate stereotypes through certain images and vernacular. He defined a nation as “an imagined political community” (Anderson, 2006). So, whereas media has had a role in the polarisation of communities (in the West and elsewhere), can it now serve a role as a unifying force? Journalism and media trainers could train in community, ethics, trustworthiness but on any platform, these values are platform neutral.

So, perhaps in this highly networked and connected and fragmented information ecosystem, media assistance and media development programmes need to revert to core values, irrespective of which medium, to serve as a unifying force. Colonial Africa created divided communities; indigenous tribes split by the drawing of borders by the empires. But, given direction and support and focus, media might serve as a facilitator in communities, as outlined in the SDGs: “offering a platform for dialogue and, as a trusted infomediary, supporting broad-based social cohesion, rather than being a vehicle for reinforcing identity politics” (UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 2019). Effective, balanced journalism could help calm public discourse.

As noted in Chapter 6 and as illustrated by the research data, traditional media assistance methods provide positive results for engagement and participation by citizens. Chapter 6 discussed the particular need for reliable news sources and a platform for a national debate in countries that are in conflict or transition. There are many African countries like Kenya and Tanzania (and elsewhere) that are home to a

number of ethnic groups, often with tension “bubbling just below the surface” (O'Neill, 2015), and in which identity politics plays a large role.

As was noted therefore, it is becoming especially important that there are trusted platforms for a national public conversation, which represents the views of the whole of society and reflects a range of views and political opinions. This was discussed in reference to some of the projects in this research data. The need for rational discussion and debate was noted, to assist peaceful resolution and combat conflict and violence. But this must be done in a balanced and measured manner, with skillful mediating. This is another core value that could be transferred in media development programmes – the capacity for journalists to preside and arbitrate debate and discussion without being inflammatory and incendiary.

Consequently, media has the potential to serve as a unifying, rather than fracturing, force in communities, but this would have to be done independent of the market and for that reason will need continued donor support.

Hate Speech

A further implication for policy and practice is in the area of hate speech and how to counter it. This issue was raised in the research, as during the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007 reports alleged that ethnically-based radio stations in Kenya were partly responsible for inflaming ethnic hatred (Allen and Gagliardone, 2011). But this is a growing problem globally both online and offline, and exacerbated by the rapid growth in mobile technologies and social media platforms.

The media assistance sector is starting to address this issue in Africa and other regions. In Myanmar, for instance, there are a number of organisations undertaking programmes to counter hate speech. There has been a sharp rise in hate speech in Myanmar, aggravating the ethnic and religious tensions in that country. In particular, anti-Muslim statements are widespread on social media, which has contributed to the escalation of violence across the country.

Myanmar is an interesting case study as it has seen massive growth in internet penetration, mobile phone adoption and social media usage in the past few years, spurred by the lifting of censorship and rapid opening up of its telecoms and media market. Experts have expressed concern that this sudden access to the internet is not being accompanied by discussions about how to critically read content. Myanmar has a “low media and information literacy rate”, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Myanmar office.

Clare Lyons of BBC Media Action in Myanmar concurs that “media literacy is not high here. You have a country that for decades has been fed the news ... they haven't been exposed to that much in the way of real, critical news” (Lyons, in interview, 2017).⁹¹ Htaike Htaike Aung, Executive Director of Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (MIDO) confirms “many Burmese with little education easily fall prey to fake news and propaganda. Some users believe whatever they see on Facebook and share it without first finding out if the post is true or false”³. There are also too few trained journalists and insufficient media infrastructure to facilitate quality coverage of the country’s most pressing issues (Foster, 2018).

91 This interview took place as part of a separate project

This is a problem that has been created by the rapid growth in digitisation but one that could be ameliorated by the media assistance sector. For instance, to counter hate speech in Myanmar, BBC Media Action are running a project called the Tea Cup Diaries (*La Pe' Ye Ta Kwe Ye Diari*), a radio drama that hopes to increase understanding and tolerance between different ethnic and religious communities. This is a format that could be replicated in other countries.

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) has also worked on hate speech in Myanmar, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, all countries emerging from autocratic rule or war which saw similar trends of hate speech. IWPR started the 'No Hate Speech Project' in Myanmar in 2016 to promote greater tolerance of ethnic, religious and marginalised groups. Alan Davis from IWPR insists "not all hate speech is deliberate and a lot of hate speech comes from a lack of understanding or awareness". Davis argues: "The way to beat hate speech is not through silencing people, but via education, information, debate and getting all points of views, listened to and engaged upon".

Social media can be criticised for being a medium for hateful speech, but is in reality a mirror of much deeper divides that exists in ethnically diverse countries. The rise in digitisation, mobile phones and internet access have created new and exciting ways for people to connect globally but there are also downsides as noted throughout this research. These are familiar trends and hate speech is a global phenomenon.

For instance, Internews Kenya reported that since 2016, observers have noted a resurgence of hate speech in community and local language media in Kenya. They argue that this is mainly due to lack of capacity of journalists, and political interference or ownership. This is particularly true for media houses based at the

county level, where media is under resourced and susceptible to control of local political interests (Internews, 2017). The area of most concern is the rise of hate speech on radio talk shows on local-language stations, a primary source of news and information for many citizens.

These are issues on which future media assistance projects might focus, returning to and reiterating the values, ethics and “elements of journalism” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2014). Aidan White, founder of the Ethical Journalism Network, argues that to combat hate speech journalists need “to tell the truth, to respect the facts, to be independent, to be responsible and, above all, to show humanity – oblige us to avoid becoming propagandists and foot soldiers in political campaigns that nourish hatred by feeding on the insecurities of people” (White, 2014).

This research suggests that media assistance should be confident in its core values which are still necessary throughout the developing world as elsewhere. As Nelson argues, “quality content is the ultimate goal of media assistance” (Nelson, 2009:22).

Thus, in summary, this research suggests that media assistance policy and programmes could:

- Serve as a unifying force for communities and be a facilitator in communities, by providing a trusted platform for communities, and journalists who can arbitrate over debates (in particular on-air radio discussion) in a balanced and impartial manner.
- Focus on its core values and ethics of journalism that can contribute to social cohesion and reducing conflict, in line with the SDGs

- Work to counter hate speech and disinformation through media and information literacy interventions, in addition to supporting the training of core values and balance in journalism
- Focus on reforming state broadcasters and strengthening public interest media, to provide independent spaces for national and cross-ethnic debate

Limitations of the research

The results reported here should be considered in the light of some limitations. The first is with regards to the long-term validity of the findings. With the speed of technological change, and uptake and affordability of technologies in the region and the wider world, what the current research found may not be applicable in five years' time. However, this research offers a picture of the practice of media development at a most interesting time.

Interview participants spoke of how Kenya and Tanzania may be at a "tipping point" of the potential of mobile phones and internet with regards to access to information for the broader population. Kharas and Rogerson reported that "by 2025 there could be near-universal mobile phone coverage" (Kharas and Rogerson, 2012:11). Smartphone penetration and access to the internet will certainly increase for Kenya and Tanzania in the next years and media development interventions may change.

However, this is still not a guarantee that audiences and citizens will engage more in politics. One reason offered for this is lack of agency. Another is the lack of belief in their governments to act on information that citizens have communicated.

Donor policies should support media development initiatives based on the realities of media use by audiences and citizens in this region. Donors should consider how citizens really engage and interact with these digital technologies and for what ends they use them. Therefore, the potential benefits for media development goals should to be continually assessed.

A second limitation is with regards to access to data. The researcher approached a selection of organisations, and representatives of those organisations, that were operating in the region and for the most part they were available and consented to participate. The research findings presented in Chapter 6 were based on interview data with stakeholders from 10 media organisations that were available to contribute to the study. However, not all interviewees who were approached were responsive and it is possible that data from other organisation may have produced different results.

The data from this research study provides a snapshot of media development activity taking place in Kenya and Tanzania, and as such represents the variety of media assistance in the region. Using a different sample of organisations may have produced different results. Additionally, a sample of projects from other regions, whether in Africa or elsewhere on the globe, might produce different outcomes with regards to assessing the relevance of digital technologies for achieving media development goals.

But as noted, media development is not linear, has many objectives and outcomes, and the Case Studies and projects examined here provide a view of the sector at a most fascinating time.

A third limitation could be in the data collection methodology. In this case face-to-face semi-structured interviews were chosen for the method of collecting details of the

stakeholder's media development projects and also their perspectives on the media landscape and the impact of digitisation in Kenya and Tanzania. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews could be considered a less scientific and less precise method of data collection, for instance, the researcher could have simply emailed the interview schedule to the participants. However, the researcher believes the rate of response was much higher, and faster, from the face to face interviews than would have been from an email or survey methodology. Research has shown that in-person methods get higher responses than other survey methods. Additionally, and as noted in Chapter 4, the semi-structured interview can lead to more open, honest and detailed responses than more structured or written surveys.

Lastly, a limitation might be in the timing of the primary data collection. The face to face interviews took place in Kenya and Tanzania in 2014 and 2015. Undoubtedly, diffusion of digital technologies and social media have changed since those participating projects were initiated, new projects have started and others have been completed. However, in a sense this timeframe has made the study more relevant. In the years since the explosion of mobile technologies and social media in the region there has been a shift in the narrative relating to these technologies, and this study reflects those changes. From initial exuberance about technologies and the potential for development, to more recent balance about what ICTs can do for social and political change, the time-frame means that the study has tracked the cycle of emerging technologies, excitement about their potential and then the move to a more evidence-based assessment of what technology can do for global citizens. As noted by O' Maley, initial cyber-optimism has "quickly given way to growing pessimism as the internet has also been used for mass surveillance and the political mobilization of non-democratic actors" (O' Maley, 2019).

In fact, the more harmful and disruptive aspects of social media and the internet, for journalism, news, information and democracy, have only become apparent in recent years which gives even more significance to the research.

Future Research Directions

This research investigates the impact of digital technologies on media development practice in East Africa. It examines whether the methods and approaches of this sector are still relevant in an increasingly connected technological global information system. As part of the investigation the research looked at changing information systems in Africa and the impact of new ICTs on the region. It was found that digital technologies have not impacted on media development practice to a great extent. However, other interesting aspects of the current media assistance landscape were noted which could provide opportunities for further research.

This focus of this thesis was the relevance of media development assistance in a changing media landscape. This is a question that the sector itself reflects on. There are many conferences, round-tables and blog posts on whether media assistance has the impact it intends to have and the difficulty of measuring its impact. Susman-Pena calls it “the existential crisis” of media development (Susman-Peña, 2019).

Furthermore, as media assistance is such a politically sensitive development intervention, it is susceptible to many external factors that can impact on programme success. As remarked by Stremlau (2019), “media assistance is highly political and is, in itself, a form of political engineering” (O’ Maley, 2019).

This research analysed a sample of programmes being undertaken in East Africa and the extent to which ICTs were in use in project activities. The research did not

evaluate whether these programmes were successful in their long-term objectives nor whether they were deemed successful on completion. This is a possible avenue for further research. More analysis of media development programmes which do use ICTs (possibly in other regions with higher mobile and internet diffusion) might produce interesting further research.

This research took a practice-based perspective to whether digital technologies are impacting on the media assistance sector and its work. The reason for this is that the researcher wanted the study to be grounded in the realities of working on the ground. This could be a research approach for other research into media assistance going forward. Often academic literature is theorised and written many miles away from whether the work actually takes place. Presenting practitioners' perspective on the tools they use, the approaches that work, and sometimes more importantly those do not work, gives a grounded view of work in the media development sector. Providing Case Studies brings the data alive and gives more context to the underlying data. This mixed methods approach could be replicated for research in other regions.

Another possible avenue for further research could be around the issue of fake news and hate speech. The fragmentation and polarisation of media and the growth in so-called fake news and disinformation was noted. This is one area of potential focus for media development practice to combat misperceptions, prejudices and hate speech. Media literacy programmes are being implemented to help develop a critical approach to news coverage by media consumers and to promote media awareness.

However, Bulger and Davison (2018) note that there is a lack of comprehensive evaluation data of media literacy efforts.

Media literacy has become a center of gravity for countering “fake news,” and a diverse array of stakeholders—from educators to legislators, philanthropists to technologists—have pushed significant resources toward media literacy programs. Media literacy, however, cannot be treated as a panacea”(Bulger and Davison, 2018:1)

This is one area that is a current focus for media assistance efforts and donor funds but it might be worthwhile to focus resources on researching evidence for its effectiveness and what actually works to counter hate speech. For instance, media literacy efforts are being focused on young people and school curricula, but recent research by Guess et al. (2019) shows that people aged over 65 are much more likely than younger people to share fake news on Facebook. That research found that just over 11% of people aged 65 or over shared links to fake stories. By contrast, only 3% of those aged 18-29 actively passed on similar links (Guess et al., 2019).

As diffusion of mobile technologies, internet access and smartphones become greater in these countries it is likely that these problems will become more widespread. What can Media Assistance do to address these problems? And have any interventions to date been successful? As hate speech and fake news are such topical and important subjects there is certainly value in further research on these issues in the context of media development assistance.

A final recommendation for future research relates to the political economy of the funding for development and ICT4D. As was noted throughout the research, media development activity is naturally tied to and shaped by the funding streams from which it originates. As a result, media development and its focus over the decades has

reflected the foreign policies of government donors and the ideological leanings of non-government donors. Miller (2009) noted that media development during the Cold War was “unavoidably influenced by the political self-interests of North America and Western Europe, which were then engaged in a ‘war of ideas’ with the USSR” (Miller, 2009:12).

Chapter One outlined how not all the donors have the same priorities and do not follow the same strategies. Europeans have a more rights-based reasons for supporting media development, the US follows a more liberal, free market-model. Both are different to the motivation behind Chinese media development activity in Africa, which has been called “soft-power” (Mano et al., 2016). The motivation and ideology of these donors, and the subsequent activities and programmes they fund, take different forms and produce different outcomes. Freedman and Obar refer to “donor-led initiatives” (Freedman et al., 2016).

As recorded, a trend in the media development sphere in recent years has been the emergence of donors emerging from technology firms from Silicon Valley, who often emphasise technological solutions for development. As Deane confirmed “if a proposal didn’t include some form of digital app it was unlikely to be supported” (Deane, 2018).

But as Manji (2008) asks regarding this widespread technological determinism: “Why are we not holding conferences about the role of the pencil in development? Or the role of paper? There is more evidence of social progress made by these humble instruments than all the information and communication technologies (ICTs) over the last 20 years” (Manji, 2008).

Just as McChesney (2008) suggested a decade ago that a process of global media mergers had concentrated control in the hands of a few multinational corporations (McChesney, 2008), the same process is happening today with the technology companies with regards to the grab for developing markets. Whether in Africa, Latin America or the Middle East, technology companies are funding development projects with an emphasis on digital solutions, to expand their “digital media empires” (Boyd Barrett, 2014).

This research questioned the focus on digital technologies for media development. Where did this techno-determinism originate? It was suggested that providing access to new technologies in the Third World as part of development Aid could be a mechanism of allowing corporations to establish new channels of market entry into these developing commercial markets. Susman-Pena (2019) calls these “technical solutions in search of problems” (Susman-Peña, 2019:252).

What is beginning to become apparent therefore is that these are not necessarily the correct solutions. As an avenue for further research, it could be worthwhile to undertake a more forensic analysis of ICT4 development activities and funding in developing countries, using a political economy lens. As Gumucio-Dagron (2008) claimed “in the name of the ‘digital divide’, great business is being made” (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008:77).

These themes are touched upon in this current research but could be interesting avenues for further research. These would be worthwhile and interesting studies in the area of media assistance donor support.

Conclusion

This research set out to ascertain the relevance of media assistance in today's increasingly connected and technological information environment. It explored the changes that digital technologies have brought to the field of Media Development Assistance in sub-Saharan Africa. Due to rapid changes in the amount and type of information available to citizens, and the fractured and fragmented media environment resulting from digital technologies and social media platforms, reliable and trustworthy journalism and news is more important than ever, especially for local populations. Media that provide this type of information, and supports "rational" dialogue across broad populations are more crucial than ever.

This research concludes that within the current 'post-truth' information ecosystem, Media Assistance is important and relevant. In a global environment of growing divisiveness, populism and extremism in politics, donor-funded media assistance could work to support the creation of reliable and trustworthy content and provide a space where cross-societal debate, discussion and deliberation can occur. It can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals of maintaining peace and reducing conflict and violence.

Hence, Media Assistance remains a significant and relevant part of the support that donors can give for enhancing transparency, accountability, and good governance.

This is because of its potential role in helping journalists produce reliable and trustworthy information, by providing platforms for citizens to discuss and debate important issues, for them to hold those in power to account, engage and participate and contribute to how they are governed.

What citizens of Kenya and Tanzania, and elsewhere, need is a trusted news source to turn to, to rely upon and with which to make sense of all the other sources of information available to them in the new fractured information ecosystem. A source of news that is balance, unbiased, fact based and independent of the editorial influence of owners, or the market, would appear to be increasingly necessary.

As noted by Tim Berners Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, “even though we have a new technology where information comes to us instantly over the wires... the art and science of journalism is still really important” (Parkinson, 2015:5).

Despite the speed of technological change, and perhaps because of it, media assistance remains a relevant tool for donors to use for democratic objectives. The research concludes that media assistance is not obsolete, and in fact, may be more important than ever.

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Appendix