5. Exploring Media Education as Civic Praxis in Africa

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ABSTRACT

This contribution argues that African media education must define a pedagogical agenda for citizenship. That task lies in a postcolonial revisionism of liberal modes of thought and practice about media. This neo-colonial dependence of African media education is evident in the pedagogical emphasis on professional-journalistic automation. However, Africans are increasingly becoming politically and civically apathetic. This article calls for an emancipatory vision of journalism that is embedded in civil society. It uses a case study of radio listening clubs to illustrate the civic influence of the media in Malawi and Zambia. It concludes by proposing a model of media education for citizenship. The key tenets of the model include enhancing critical analysis of the correlation between media, democracy and development; developing an emancipatory vision of journalism; cultivating an active citizenship; entrenching a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy; and promoting an informed adherence to human rights.

KEY WORDS

Citizenship, civil society, civic culture, emancipatory journalism, human rights, media education, ethics, Africa, identity, curriculum, development.

1. Introduction

Media education in Africa is carried on within the strictures of Western ontology and epistemology. More particularly, it is characterised by the liberal journalistic epistemic orientation which privileges dispassionate media work over civically active media practice. But not all is lost; it is becoming increasingly patent that there is a discursive pedagogical questioning of the received wisdom from Western academe. This marks the postcolonial project in which a cadre of African media scholars is beginning to invest its energy (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006).

But this postcolonial project is occurring on the fringes of established media education –in the trenches of civil society formations. Perhaps this is understandable: professional and academic programmes are established within the Western framework of liberal philosophical values and practices. There is, however, within the Western professional and academic establishment, a tendency towards civic journalism (Rosen, 1999). This movement is indicative of a post-objective journalism that inscribes a variety of journalistic subjectivities, including civic journalism, community journalism, peace journalism, etc. In Africa, discussions of media ethics, in particular, have resulted in an appropriation and reinterpretation of modes of civic and communitarian journalism within the context of African culture (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006; Christians, 2004).

Inter-governmental organisations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), are more actively embracing forms of media training and education that are aimed at cultivating engaged and engaging citizenship. Such a form of media training encapsulates aspects of journalism as a socially constructed practice that can be utilised in the service of civic education. This trend is evident in other sectors of national and international civil society. Clearly, such approaches to journalism are invoking human agency as an integral part of the practice of journalistic investigation. It is this human agency that fundamentally underpins the kind of media education for citizenship that is of interest to Africa.

This analysis, then, seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the context in which media education for citizenship could make its debut?
- What is the nature of such media education for citizenship?
- What case studies are there to demonstrate such a typology of media education?
- What model of media education for citizenship can be proposed for Africa?

A key assumption here is that it is possible to assert a postcolonial educational agenda that fundamentally rejects or revises Western liberal forms of media training and education and replaces them with a media education that is embedded within the concept of citizenship.

2. The Context of Media Education For Citizenship

African media education has a tripartite character. It owes some of its identity to its colonial interpenetration. It also identifies with the postcolonial character of African

society, characterised by the postcolonial state's indelible imprint of national unity and development on media curricula. A third, rather amorphous, identity of African media education is traceable to the age associated with the globalisation of communication, noticeable from the 1990s onwards. Here, media education seems to have lost its postcolonial historical-ideological encasing, increasingly linked to its economic value in the employment marketplace. This neo-liberal feature of media education has meant an even greater emphasis on technical skills, as opposed to critical engagement. This has had implications for the status and role of the citizen in the African body politic.

It is important at this point to trace the historical development of modern civic culture in Africa. We can pinpoint two historical phases. Firstly, the liberation struggle from colonialism could be seen as having contributed towards enhancing the civic culture of Africans, seeing themselves as politically competent to take over the reins of power from imperialistic colonisers. This is evident from the 1950s and 1960s, or even earlier in the case of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC).

Secondly, the renewed interest in citizenship rights and freedoms can also be traced to the 1990s. This is largely because of the democratic deficiencies of postcolonial one-party states in what was referred to as the «second liberation». The term «second liberation» is used by scholars to underscore the betrayed hopes surrounding the liberation from colonial rule in the 1960s (Diamond & Plattner, 1999). In South Africa, the end of the apartheid regime became a rallying point for vigorous debates about a renewal of citizenship in the aftermath of the democratic elections of April 1994.

For some, the 1990s presented an opportunity to celebrate «the rebirth of African liberalism», such as the rise of constitutionalism, the flourishing of civil society, the comeback of parliaments, and the trend toward liberalization, as examples of the institutionalisation of democracy on the continent (Gyimah-Boadi, 1999).

One outcome of the reintroduction of democratic politics was the emergence of a stronger civil society. According to Bratton, civic actors in Africa derived new-found energy from the climate of political liberalisation in the 1990s. There is considerable evidence that previously closed political space was occupied by genuine manifestations of civil society, namely by structures of associations, networks of communication, and norms of civic engagement (Bratton, 1994).

However, after the initial euphoria, there seems to be a decline in political participation across Africa. This is consistent with the Afrobarometer studies (2002). For example, while 69 percent of Africans interviewed say that democracy is «always preferable», only 58 percent say that they are satisfied with democracy's performance. An interesting finding for Africa is that about 89 percent of the people interviewed isolate «improvements in the socioeconomic sphere» as the most important feature of a democratic society, underscoring the importance of the socioeconomic base of citizenship.

This civic apathy calls for a questioning of the liberal-democratic notion of politics in general and the liberal-democratic underpinning of journalism and media.

Such a critical questioning can be politically justified in terms of postcolonial theory. It is clear that Africa's education in general continues to be dependent on Western systems of philosophy and knowledge, largely because of the imposition of colonialism and its postcolonial legacy. As Edward W. Said argued: «Europe reconstituted abroad, its 'multiplication space' successfully projected and managed. The result was a widely varied group of little Europes, scattered throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas, each reflecting the circumstances, the specific instrumentalities of the parent culture, its pioneers, its vanguard settlers» (Serequeberhan, 2002: 66).

One of the «instrumentalities» used by the imperial nations to «civilise» the natives was education. Its cultural foundations were those of the imperial nations, uprooting the natives from their own histories, epistemologies and ontologies. African media education thus reflects Western forms of media training and education. This form of neocolonial dependency, underpinned by the political economy of the existing political and economic relations between the former colonisers and the former colonies, had already been signalled by Kwame Nkrumah. The notion of «neocolonialism» emphasises the fact that the continuing relationships between the coloniser and the colonised resulted in the creation of client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power that is supposed to have given them independence. Nkrumah pointed out that «the independence of those states is in name only; for their liberty of action is gone» (Thomson, 1969: 273).

2.1. The Need for a Postcolonial Critique of Media Education in Africa

Although this analysis is not about postcolonial theory per se, it must be noted that postcolonial theory facilitates a process of deconstructing the Western, liberal moorings of contemporary African media education.

A key aim of postcolonial theory is to recover the lost historical and contemporary voices of the marginalized, the oppressed, and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production (McEwan, 2002: 128). In this way, the postcolonial project becomes what Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan novelist, refers to as «decolonizing the mind» (Banda, 2008: 83). For wa Thiong'o, then, recovering this history means bringing back to Africa «its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers» (Parker & Starkey, 1995: 4).

Postcolonial theory is increasingly being appropriated to advance a range of different intellectual and political projects (Banda, 2008: 83). Young puts it forcefully: «What makes a politics postcolonial is a broader shared political philosophy that guides its ethics and its practical aims. Postcolonialism as a political philosophy (…) stands for empowering the poor, the dispossessed, and the disadvantaged, for tolerance of difference and diversity, for the establishment of minorities' rights, women's rights, and cultural rights within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism that refuses to impose alienating Western ways of thinking on tricontinental societies» (as cited in Banda, 2008: 83-84).

The subversive nature of postcolonial theory lends itself to alternative ways of thinking and acting. As such, it allows for the emergence of an epistemological and

ontological politics (Banda, 2008: 84). Within the context of media and communication, then, it can be argued that postcolonial theory has «revitalized the space of communication and media studies by placing issues of race, gender, nation, citizenship and sexuality at theoretical centre-stage. Both in terms of theory and method, there is a conscious commitment to addressing the problematics of Western modernity together with the politics of knowledge production. In addition to its intellectual appeal, the pliability of postcolonial cultural studies lies in its refusal to adopt a language of universalization, a resolute insistence on local specificity and a self-conscious articulation of speaking positions» (Hegde, 2005: 60).

Postcolonial theory is relevant to African media education because, firstly, the institution of mass media is implicated in the colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial experiences of African countries. Secondly, whereas global theories of the media and international communication often emphasize the utopian and liberating effect of the media, these theories simultaneously obscure deep divisions and inequities brought about by slavery and colonialism. Postcolonial theory is thus concerned with explaining the historical impact of colonialism on, inter alia, knowledge production, power, and gender. It also seeks to lay bare the fact that African media are still embedded in the international media structure. Thirdly, postcolonial theory presents African media studies with an explicit intellectual and political injunction to «de-Westernize» media studies in favour of Afrocentric knowledge and understanding of African media. Postcolonial analysis thus serves to transgress Western analytical categories of African media cultures (Banda, 2008: 84).

Against this postcolonial background, then, it is possible to mount a critique of contemporary African media education and propose a normative framework that reflects the specific historico-cultural condition of the African continent.

2.1.1. «Banking Education»

The neocolonial context of media education is evident throughout Africa. A review of most media education curricula reflects the «circuit of culture» framework adopted for the teaching of journalism and media studies in most Western institutions of higher learning, especially British ones. The so-called «circuit of culture» embraces the cultural moments of «production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation» (DuGay, Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus, 1997) and how they articulate in the process of media-making.

While the circuit of culture provides a reasonably good framework for analysing the lived experiences and meanings associated with journalism and media across cultures, its analytical and contextual categories are generally alienating to some African media educators (Kasoma, 1996). Most such analytical categories exhibit Western cultural biases on a range of human-societal issues. For example, production is circumscribed within a hierarchical, regimented institutional structure that is founded on the libertarian commercialist and consumerist cultural values (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Herman & McChesney, 1997).

As a consequence, most African media education has borne the instrumentalist brunt of Western educational philosophy, stressing the speedy production of graduates to staff profit-seeking media conglomerates. In Zambia, for example, the Department of Mass Communication's programme seems to be mostly focused on «practical training, technical and professional performance», reflecting the programme's American professional-ideological leanings (Wimmer & Wolf, 2005: 11).

Largely as a result of the paucity of indigenised theoretical knowledge about media, most media education in Africa tends to emphasise the practical components of their curricula. The theory taught is Western-oriented, usually uncritically packaged together with the journalistic skills imparted. It is not contextualised theory that challenges the very Western-theoretical moorings of media education (Hochheimer, 2001). Very often, the theory that is embedded in this packaged media education is that of journalists as «watchdogs» over their governments.

The instrumentalism typical of most media courses means that there is greater emphasis on practical exercises. The emphasis is on fitting the students for industry specifications. As noted in the case of Zambia, this was a particularly American liberal influence, perpetuated through educational grants and scholarship schemes provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), especially at the height of political transformation in the early 1990s.

Regurgitating such received Western knowledge of media structures and practices amounts to the a-political and uncritical practice of «banking education» (Freire, 1985: 2). Freire's notion of «conscientisation», which stresses respect for local cultural identity, empowerment and participation, is generally appropriated in the context of participatory media education in Africa (Banda, 2003).

2.1.2 «Pedagogy of the Oppressed»

Amidst such a neo-liberal, free-market approach to media education via journalism schools, there are some dissenting voices both within Western and African academe. For example, the acknowledgement of African «ubuntuism» by Western scholars like Christians (2004) is indicative of a growing scholarly agenda, across the globe, for reconceptualising journalism within the «ethics of engagement», in which journalists are equipped to carry out their moral responsibilities (Plaisance, 2002: 213). Plaisance's article «The Journalist as Moral Witness» (Plaisance, 2002) is particularly illustrative of the moral agency imputed to the journalist.

It is for this reason that there have been calls for «de-Westernising» media studies (Fourie, 2007), so that its analytical content or categorisation can reflect the specificity of African cultures and invoke the moral agency of African journalists. Questions of production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation can be framed in terms of community-based notions of production, identity, representation, consumption and regulation. It is for this reason that Kasoma (1996) advocates for the much-criticised notion of «Afriethics», locating media within the traditional cultures of African societies (Banda, 2008; Wasserman, 2006).

This «pedagogy of the oppressed», a postcolonial project, is clearly signposted by Paulo Freire (1985: 14-15) when he asserts that: «Literacy then becomes a global task involving illiterate learners in their relationships with the world and with others. But in understanding this global task and based on their experience, learners contribute to their own ability to take charge as actors of the task –the praxis. And significantly, as actors they transform the world with their work and create their own world. This world, created by the transformation of another world they did not create and that now restrains them, is the cultured world that stretches out into the world of history. Similarly, they understand the creative and regenerative meaning of their transformative work. They discover a new meaning as well… Thus they come to appreciate that this new thing, a product of their efforts, is a cultural object».

Clearly, by engaging in a postcolonial critique of the kind of Western pedagogy that emphasises the dispassionate role of the journalist, African media educators will be generating their own words and language for describing and analysing the media condition in Africa. This is an act of culture, liberating and empowering. It requires an analysis of the nature of media education for citizenship both within and beyond the boundaries of journalism schools.

3. The Nature of Media Education for Citizenship: From «Mediaship» to Citizenship

African media education continues to look to the West for its legitimation (Banda, Beukes-Amiss, Bosch, Mano, McLean and Steenveld, 2007). In part, this issue is implicated in the politics and economics of knowledge production. African media educators have few or no resources to generate indigenised knowledge. Whenever such knowledge is produced, it has to be legitimised by Western institutions through funding, peer review, and other similar academic validation processes. While there is a case to be made about the globality of knowledge production, distribution and consumption, Africa does not seem to have attained the levels of economic self-sufficiency that are needed to assert its own epistemic and ontological independence and identity on the world stage.

As such, African media educators continue to reproduce Western systems of philosophy and classification, including the basic conceptual and practical categories of media studies. Here, it is perhaps worth mentioning that such Western received knowledge seems to elevate the media over and above the citizen. This corresponds to a process of «mediaship» –a process whereby African knowledge of the concepts and practices of media is governed by the dominance of worldviews generated by the media themselves, as opposed to those of the citizens.

It is becoming evident, nevertheless, that civil society formations are asserting an epistemic and ontological revolt. This is evident in the non-formal educational offerings by those non-governmental media-support organisations that recognise the potential role of media in promoting specific goals of democracy and development. These include gender equity advocates like the Federation of African Media Women

in Southern African Development Community (FAMW-SADC) and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) projects; media watchdogs like the Media Monitoring Project (MMP); as well as development-communication promoters like the Panos Institute.

What, then, is the nature of media education for citizenship? Fundamentally, it is located in the concept of citizenship. Here, a distinction needs to be made between what can be described as «liberal journalistic automation» and «communitarian civic autonomy».

3.1. Journalistic Automation

Locating media education within the framework of citizenship entails a post-colonial deconstruction of the liberal ontology of journalistic objectivity and replacing it with a communitarian epistemology of journalistic subjectivity. It calls for unmasking the journalistic automation that underpins most Western structural analyses of media. For example, in the context of alternative journalism, focus has shifted to rethinking the epistemology of news production within the classroom. As Atton (2003: 271) observes: «In their insightful and necessary challenge to journalism educators, Skinner et al… argue that the rote learning of news values by students has led to recognition of news that is craft-based and 'denies any relation to epistemology'. Instead they propose methods of journalism education that foreground questions of epistemology, emphasize the social construction of 'facts' and knowledge and develop critical thinking and reflexivity». Conventional journalism, trapped in the net of objectivity, cannot effectively counter tendencies towards the simplification of the otherwise complex modern-day body politic. An indictment against such automated journalism is cited by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 204): «Journalism's criteria of newsworthiness and factuality, and its routines of newsgathering anchored in bureaucratic institutions with designated spokespeople and prescheduled routines, are mutually constitutive. Taken together, they tend to ensure routine and privileged access for bureaucrats and agency officials, who provide the 'hard facts', credible claims and background information for Objective reporting».

3.2. Civic Autonomy

Media education for citizenship must promote journalistic civic autonomy. Journalistic autonomy can be understood in the expanded sense of personal and institutional freedom to practise journalism. In this way, it shifts responsibility to both individual journalists and media executives for decision-making. But, more importantly, while «practitioners clearly want to preserve their autonomy… The form and consequences of this professional orientation are not fixed» (McDevitt, 2003: 161). As such, journalistic (civic) autonomy affirms human and moral agency. Three key arguments can be made here.

Firstly, the kind of freedom envisioned by journalistic autonomy can be reconceptualised within the context of African media education. Hochheimer (2001:

110-111), reflecting on African journalism in particular, stretches this point in his conceptualisation of «journalism of meaning». According to him, such an approach would embed journalism curricula within the students' own historical, cultural and social experiences. The latter point agrees with Ali Mazrui's concern that Western based curricula, built on rationalist-scientific detachment, tend to uproot African students from their history and culture, making it difficult for them to engage in reflexivity and criticize their own governments from the vantage point of engaged and constructive citizenry (Murphy & Scotton, 1987: 18-20).

Secondly, the tendency towards resurrecting human agency in journalistic practice was indicative of the need, at least in the US, to reinvigorate journalists as conscious contributors to the health of public life and citizenship. As such, from the perspective of media practitioners themselves, the effect of media education for citizenship becomes one that emboldens students to seek actively the engagement of citizens in the process of public problem-solving. This critical tendency has opened up avenues for imagining «alternative» journalisms. As such, Atton (2003: 271) suggests that the study of alternative journalism can encapsulate: 1) a critique through praxis of institutionalised and routinised forms of journalism, 2) other ways of practising journalism, 3) skills and possibilities to those who might want to work in «citizens' media».

In this way, African media education would need to equip students with the existential and constructivist insights as to why journalistic autonomy should be directed towards civic activation. McDevitt notes that such a theoretical reformulation would need to contemplate three interrelated distinctions about news production, namely «journalism and the news media industry; autonomy versus objectivity; and autonomy as a resource for, or a barrier to, civic activation» (McDevitt, 2003: 161). Related to this could be an explicit acceptance of subjectivity as an important part of the practice of civic journalism.

Thirdly, the concept of «autonomy» needs to be clearly distinguished from that of «objectivity». The word autonomy seems to harbour three meanings, namely: 1) the quality or state of being self-governing, especially the right of self-government; 2) self-directing freedom and especially moral independence; 3) a self-governing state (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). In a sense, claiming professional autonomy would include acknowledging the subject position of the journalist.

All the above definitions are applicable to an Afrocentric re-conceptualisation of journalistic (civic) autonomy. Journalists must be imbued with a degree of self-governance or self-directing freedom. As human beings, they must be allowed to be morally independent. In the African context of «ubuntu», the quality of «moral independence» would be a key feature of journalistic independence. But one cannot be morally «independent» without being morally dependent on one's social relationships. One reason why objectivity, in the Western libertarian sense, has been attacked is because it seems to absolve journalists from moral responsibility (Bell, 1997).

The notion of an «interdependent morality» needs to be stressed as «the fundamental ontological and epistemological category in the African thought of the Bantu-speaking people» (Ramose, 2002: 230; Christians, 2004: 245). It is within this framework that African media education as a collective civic praxis can be considered. This view of journalistic autonomy allows for the exercise of personal freedom to analyse societal moral values and political choices in the context of the journalist's sense of politico-community belonging. As such, it is possible to conceive of civic activation as a collective moral value worthy of personal journalistic attachment.

However, this personal moral attachment does not mean that the journalist loses all sense of professional discipline. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001: 70-93) remind us about «the essence of journalism as a discipline of verification». They argue that the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art. To paraphrase Kovach and Rosenstiel, such discipline is based on accuracy, honesty, transparency, originality, and humility.

It is possible, given the above understanding of media education for citizenship, to isolate a case study which exemplifies some of the fundamental tenets of citizenship-enhancing media literacy.

4. Media Education as Civic Praxis: A Case Study

This case study is based on the radio listening clubs communication model piloted by Panos Southern Africa in Malawi and Zambia. The idea of listening groups goes back to a time when group listening was tried out as a method of adult education by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in order to overcome the «one-way limitation of broadcasting». Group listening and «teleclubs» were also experimented with in France, Japan, Italy and India. In India, listening groups were first introduced to enhance the diffusion of messages from an All India Radio (AIR), a UNESCO sponsored experimental programme broadcast in rural areas. These groups played an important role in disseminating information by «transforming a passive audience into an active participant» and the improvements in awareness and knowledge were striking (Banda, 2007: 131).

This approach to engaging audiences in media production and consumption was replicated by the Lusaka-based Panos Southern Africa. The concept of «listening groups» is perhaps misleading. It suggests audience passivity –the clubs' role is merely to listen, within the context of organised groupings, to the programmes transmitted by the broadcasters. It masks audience participation in producing the programmes as well as in producing meaning and communicating it to other societal actors –the policymakers, ordinary citizens, etc. The clubs actually play a dual role, technically producing their own programmes and socially producing their own definitions or meanings of development. So while «listening» is, in itself, an objective of the clubs, there is a much more involved process of programme production. The label «radio listening clubs» was thus used in the extended sense of active audience engagement in the processes of media production, consumption and meaning-making.

The idea was based upon a basic philosophy of equipping the participants with technical and critical-analytical skills to enable them to both produce radio programmes and make sense of the context of media production. This was a more ideological-political objective of the project and could only happen through a process of critical media literacy. More specifically, the process of media literacy involved the following:

• Social mobilisation of rural women to set up radio listening clubs as platforms for political, economic and social transformation within their geographic locales;

• Training of the participants in technical aspects of radio production, such as placement of the audio-cassette recorder for maximum sound recording; voice projection, etc.; and

• Skills in social analysis, including how to analyse gender roles as opposed to sex roles. Arguably, this acted as a process of political conscientisation, introducing the participants to questions of political representation, gender, equity, justice, sustainable development, etc. (Banda, 2007: 132).

The more technical aspects of the project involved the participants doing audio-recordings of issues of community concern as initiated and discussed by the women themselves (e.g. agriculture, nutrition and balanced diets, gender equality, protection against HIV / AIDS, political rights and processes, the law of inheritance, traditional customs, care of children, care of orphans, education and its cost). They would then arrange for such recorded tapes to be transported to a central studio, in Lusaka (Zambia) or Blantyre (Malawi), to be used by the producers assigned to the Development-Through-Radio (DTR) project, as it came to be known. In some instances, the women arranged to have these recordings transported by long-distance bus drivers, whereupon the producer would collect them from the bus driver at an agreed place. This ingenuity was part of what had become a process of life-long learning and problem-solving –an ability to beat all the odds given the problems of under-development in Malawi and Zambia (Banda, 2007: 132).

In turn, the DTR producers at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) would record responses to the women's concerns from relevant urban-based policy-makers and / or NGO leaders. The producers would then edit both the women's recordings and the policy-makers' recordings into one 15-minute programme. The editing was of a technical nature, preserving the authenticity and integrity of the rural women's voices. Then the 15-minute programme would be transmitted on the two participating stations. The broadcast would engender more discussion, and hence more audiotape recordings for rebroadcast. This resulted in a form of cyclical dialogue (Banda, 2007: 132).

The project aimed to test the hypothesis that participatory broadcasting was more efficacious in promoting citizen engagement. While conventional radio broadcasting is generally seen as unidirectional, top-down and paternalistic, the introduction of radio listening clubs into the equation seemed to domesticate it into a participatory mode, particularly if the production of radio programmes became embedded, through media literacy, in the daily lived experiences of the citizens (Banda, 2007: 133).

The findings, reported in Banda (2007: 130-148), can be summarised in terms of the following conclusions:

• Participatory communication, as evidenced by the radio listening clubs, can be used as a process of social mobilisation to organise citizens into broad-based, multipurpose community structures aimed at enhancing their capacities to effectively plan and manage participatory and sustainable local development.

• The process of acquiring technical skills and critical knowledge became an act of empowerment for the rural women, building confidence in them to become active participants in their own development.

• The act of communal participation in the clubs motivated the members to listen to the radio, with the result that they became interested in other programmes of a developmental nature.

• Interpersonal influence became heightened as a consequence of the dynamics of social action within the groups.

• The clubs imputed organisational power to the participants such that they became a force for economic, political and other transformation both within their communities and nationally.

• The prospect of the mass audience was catalytic in the social cohesion characteristic of the club members, enabling them to envision themselves as citizens in the wider politics of the nation.

• The clubs promoted a dialogic exchange between the clubs and policymaking elites, enabling the rural women to converse, from a position of collective power, with those they would otherwise not meet in person.

The case study demonstrates three fundamental points. Firstly, media can be agents of socio-political transformation, whatever the pattern of ownership. In both cases, the broadcasting stations concerned are owned by the state. Secondly, media can enable people to envision what is possible beyond their geographical locality and sociological locale. By providing a platform for them to engage with one another, media empower people with the analytical tools and the practical skills to interact more successfully with their environment and extend their civic competence beyond their immediate environs. Thirdly, social movements can use media in the service of citizenship. Media educators can learn from this tripartite alliance by embedding media education within the context of the «interactions» between «social movements», «media» and «citizens».

5. Towards a Model of Media Education for Citizenship

At the core of media education for citizenship is an acceptance of the political, normative and visionary nature of media education. This takes into account the fact that media do not operate in a vacuum; they are implicated in the geographies, histories, politics and economics of cultural production. To politicise media education is to acknowledge its potential for autocratic repression and democratic liberation. As such, locating media education within the framework of citizenship lends it the potential for emancipation. As Henry Giroux (1980: 357-358) observes: «If citizenship education is to be emancipatory, it must begin with the assumption that its aim is not «to fit» students into existing society; instead, its primary purpose must be to stimulate their passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the

social, political, and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives. In other words, students should be educated to display civic courage, i.e., the willingness to act as if they were living in a democratic society. At its core, this form of education is political, and its goal is a genuine democratic society, one that is responsive to the needs of all and not just of a privileged few».

Africa is crafting its own democratic experience. This must be viewed as a postcolonial cultural exercise as much as it is an articulation of democracy on Africa's terms. Part of this exercise involves an articulation of what citizenship means. The public life of a democracy is centred in the citizen (Centre for Civic Education [CCE], 2006: 41). A postcolonial envisioning of citizenship must go beyond the instrumentalist-procedural approaches towards defining citizenship.

A useful way of framing the debate about citizenship is given by the CCE (2006: 39-46). The framework includes: 1) the status of the person in a political context; 2) the role of the person in various forms of political system; 3) the role of the citizen in a democracy; 4) the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy; 5) opportunities for citizen participation in civic life, politics and government.

UNESCO, in its «Civic Education For Media Professionals: A Training Manual» (Banda, [forthcoming]), appropriates this framework. For such a model of media education for citizenship in Africa, the UNESCO manual is structured around:

- Critical analysis of the correlation between media, democracy and development.

- Development of an emancipatory vision of journalism.

- Cultivation of an active citizenship.

- Entrenchment of a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy.

- Promotion of an informed adherence to human rights.

5.1. Media, Democracy and Development

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 has called for examining the role of the media in the achievement of the goals, including assessing the conditions under which media influence can be at its maximum. Although the role of the media in development has always been assumed, it is important to adduce evidence of the link between media performance and societal development (Norris, 2006). Adducing such evidence needs to be placed within a conceptual framework that links the attainment of development to the expansion of people's democratic entitlements, and the capabilities that these entitlements generate (Sen, 1999a). Such entitlements transcend income and include the totality of rights and opportunities that people face. Sen sees the expansion of freedom both as the primary end and primary means of development. He calls for social development –enhanced literacy, accessible and affordable health care, the empowerment of women, and the free flow of information– as necessary precursors of the kind of development most economists are concerned about, namely: increase in gross national product, rise in personal incomes, industrialisation, and technological advance (Sen, 1999a).

This perspective of democracy and development as inseparable informs many projects implemented around media and development. It sees the media as an enabler and catalyst of the kind of civic participation and empowerment that promotes human development. Its reference to media is implied by Amatya Sen: «In that context, we have to look at the connection between political and civil rights, on the one hand, and the prevention of major economic disasters, on the other. Political and civil rights give people the opportunity to draw attention forcefully to general needs and to demand appropriate public action. The response of a government to the acute suffering of its people often depends on the pressure that is put on it. The exercise of political rights (such as voting, criticizing, protesting, and the like) can make a real difference to the political incentives that operate on a government» (1999b: 6).

The work of Norris (2006) on the statistical correlation between a free press and democratisation, good governance and human development, although its focus is fundamentally on liberal conceptions of media, democracy and development, must be noted as contributory to evidentiary arguments for linking media to the realisation of democracy and development.

5.2. Emancipatory Vision of Journalism

This analysis has already demonstrated how contemporary media education seems to be held captive to instrumentalist definitions of what constitutes journalism. It has also shown the need for a more critical-paradigmatic perspective of journalism, rooted in the geographies, histories, politics and economics of the African continent. Yet, at the same time, it has cautioned against unnecessary statist and other encroachments on the practice of journalism, by underscoring journalistic civic autonomy as opposed to professional «automation».

African media educators need to debunk received understandings of how media ought to be structured and operated. Such a postcolonial re-conceptualisation is certainly relevant to the role of African media in civic life. In general, then, African media educators need to ponder journalism in terms of its contributions to realising what Peter Dahlgren (2000) refers to as the «empirical dimensions» of civic culture. To paraphrase Dahlgren (2000: 321-322), the media could:

- Provide an inclusive, pluralistic public sphere for imparting relevant knowledge and competencies to citizens.

- Inculcate loyalty to democratic values and procedures and thus cultivate civic virtue (participation, solidarity, tolerance, courage, etc.).

- Personify the practices, routines, traditions associated with democratic citizenship.

- Foster the construction of the kinds of identities associated with democratic citizenship.

5.3. Active Citizenship

Citizenship in Africa must be historicised in order to allow for a contextual analysis of it. This entails understanding how citizenship has been used as a basis for

regulating politics in Africa. The struggles for political liberation in Africa were largely because the colonised peoples laid claim to their «natural» citizenship of the colonised societies. Along with that claim was another claim –to demand political, economic, and socio-cultural rights as accruals of their citizenship. This implies the connection between legal-political citizenship and socio-economic citizenship. «Legal-political citizenship» refers to the legal conferment by the post-colonial state of the rights and freedoms associated with citizenship. «Socio-economic citizenship» refers to the fact that the post-colonial state was expected to create an enabling environment in which citizens could live up to their cultural identities and sustain that through engagement in meaningful economic activities.

It must be acknowledged, however, that most postcolonial states have largely continued the colonial practice of treating their populations as «subjects» whose participation in the body politic is no more than just voting at election time to legitimise the ruling elite's hold on political power (Mamdani, 1996). This should bring us to analyse the nature of democratic governance in such postcolonial states, and determine how the bounds of citizenship are expanded. Another argument has been advanced that so-called citizenship rights are enjoyed more by the ruling classes than by the general population (Mamdani, 1996), resulting in an elitist democracy. This observation generally leads to the critique of individual-centred types of democracy, such as may result in an environment of excessive liberalism. What type of democracy promotes genuine citizenship? The concept of citizenship thus becomes embroiled in debates about media policy and regulation. How can we use the concept of citizenship to craft the kinds of media policies and regulations that promote inclusive and participative citizenship?

5.4. Viable Institutional Infrastructure of Democracy

The media do not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, their civic influence cannot be isolated from other pillars of democracy, such as effectively representative parliaments, independent courts, critical civil society bodies, etc. For example, if the media are going to fight corruption, there is need for strong investigative agencies as well as robust courts. There is also need for strong civil society bodies that can sustain pressure on corrupt public officials and other entities. It is important, therefore, for media education for citizenship to include a component that highlights the media's interconnectedness with other social institutions in the body politic.

5.5. Adherence to Human Rights

Human rights are an integral component of any media education for citizenship. This is borne out by the fact that there are illustrations of situations in which media not only failed in educating and reporting about human rights, but also were themselves among perpetrators of human rights violations. In 1994, some 500,000 to one million Tutsi were killed. Radio Television Mille (RTML) played an essential role in this genocide (Hamelink, 1998).

Essential to any debate on human rights and the media is the fact that the media are also often a victim of the violation of the basic human right to freedom of information (Hamelink, 1998). Such a perspective is in tune with the right to freedom of expression. This right is recognised as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Norris, 2006). As such, it lends itself to universal recognition and application.

6. Conclusion

The core argument of this analysis is that African media education needs to define a pedagogical agenda for citizenship. But that task lies in a postcolonial revisionism of Africa's inherited modes of thought and practice about media. The neo-colonial dependence of African media education is still evident in the liberal pedagogical emphasis on professional-journalistic automation. It is clear, however, that African populations have, in the aftermath of the «second liberation» in the 1990s (Diamond & Plattner, 1999), become politically and civically apathetic. As such, this analysis calls for an emancipatory journalism that is embedded in civil society, as illustrated by the Panos radio listening clubs to demonstrate the civic influence of the media in Malawi and Zambia. Although the evidence is anecdotal, it demonstrates the normative, political and visionary possibilities of media education.

To this end, this analysis proposes a model of media education for citizenship which places citizens at the centre of its ontological and epistemological preoccupation. The model foregrounds a critical-paradigmatic pedagogy that focuses on the following core competencies:

- Critically analysing the correlation between media, democracy and development.
- Developing an emancipatory vision of journalism.
- Cultivating an active citizenship.
- Entrenching a viable institutional infrastructure of democracy.
- Promoting an informed adherence to human rights.

At the epicentre of this model is the realisation that the structures and functions of the media are not fixed –they are implicated in the socio-political process. This model represents a postcolonial emancipation from the liberal philosophical strictures that seem to enslave African media education.

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