



**THE ROLE OF PUBLIC TELEVISION IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**COMMUNICATION IN A POST-COLONIAL DEVELOPING**  
**COUNTRY:**

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PUBLIC TELEVISION SERVICE IN THE REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
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## **ABSTRACTS**

*Ghana Television shares many of the post-colonial historical features that public broadcasting systems in African countries inherited at independence. The television producers' perceptions of role and job function, politics and organisational structures impact the role of Ghana Television and its contribution to contemporary Ghanaian society. Through a consideration of national post-colonial history and theories of media, communication, culture and development communication, this thesis considers the agency of Ghana Television in social development by analysing producers' perceptions of their production system and broadcast outcomes. Ghanaian public television service faces many challenges that are primarily political and historical. Producers struggle to straddle a line between instinctively championing ideals within content creation processes and maintaining a ill-functioning system and politicised culture of production. The research finds that there are difficulties inherent in delivering a truly public service remit, within the historicised post-colonial context, and highlights the challenges as well as opportunities for improving the delivery of public television service. It draws conclusions that have lessons for similar countries in the post-colonial South.*

Albert-James Sarpey Tayman

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Maame Efua Ata and Kwodwo

## **PREFACE**

The challenge of social development in African countries has been marred by two major misunderstandings – European invaders disregarded African history and culture, and also plundered the continent and its peoples; the vicissitude of which has been a tangled incoherence of social problems and opportunities; all was not evil but neither was all good. Secondly, too many African leaders have lacked visionary and moral integrity. In misunderstanding their role, they have done as much, if not more, damage to Africa's image as the European invaders did.

There is little to be gained from looking back, yet history serves an orientating purpose. The challenge facing Africa and the developing South is simply a need to become orientated to the realities of present social conditions and, from there, to envision a way forward.

Having worked in television and film, this thesis forms a crystallising of my thoughts, experiences and frustrations, as well as my realisation of opportunities. The education I have received in the United Kingdom, through the aid of Her Majesty's government and many excellent lecturers, has given me the opportunity to understand what development roles and opportunities are possible. I cannot claim to have all the answers, but to have some answers is better than to have none.

And this much is true: the media have a role to play in the social development of every nation, yet understanding the nature of that role is a perilous journey. However, there are guiding theories that serve as useful handles, and every piece of incremental knowledge facilitates a better understanding of how its usefulness can be enhanced.

***DECLARATION***

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged

Signature: .....

Date: .....

# **Chapter I: INTRODUCTION**

## **Background to Research**

Every society is placed in nature. And it seeks to influence nature, to impose such transformations upon nature as will develop the environment of its society for its better fulfilment” (Nkrumah 1964, pg. 71 - 72).

The need to exert some control over the destiny of humankind can be said to be the most fundamental motivation for knowledge quests. When knowledge is acquired its distribution and application does not come about automatically. The social context of a people; their cultural life, acts as an information processing and filtering mechanism that produces belief systems which define their world views and attributions of cause and effect, and their own agency as humans or ascriptions to the intervention of metaphysical forces. Knowledge, therefore, is enlivened within a culturally determined context that has consequences for its application to the problems of a society; acquiring knowledge directly results in human “competence”, subject familiarity and perceptions of ‘truth’ (Lehrer 2002, pg. 5). This diegesis therefore locates humankind at the core of a social elaboration of development that is shaped by location, history and aspiration, as alluded to by Nkrumah in the quotation above.

The sources of information, and the mechanisms for transferring knowledge, therefore, have been historically critical for shaping the attributions of knowledge - its veracity and the viability of application of its edicts to problem solving. The perceptions of quality and character of the mediator of information and knowledge plays a significant role in the acceptance of the mediated content; ‘trust’ in the source of a message directly impacts its ability to influence attitudes and behaviours, as well as its continued acceptance as a source of truth.

Thus, the media have become an important part of the daily routine of life for a lot of people the world over. As a vehicle, it delivers into varieties of social settings the news, information, entertainment, and distanced events; connecting people from disparate communities into a virtual social community able to witness, in real-time or through time-shifted programming, media content that impacts social impressions,

beliefs and knowledge systems about a plethora of social and physical realities (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 1999).

While there are cultural and socially structured relationships which affect the salience of the media, any attempt to understand the roles of the media in a society requires a historicised location of the media within the society and in relation to its dominant social uses. Undoubtedly, television has become very important in this work of information and knowledge distribution. In the case of television, beyond serving as a socialising utility, the usefulness of television as an apparatus for social engineering has been part of a wide ranging debate since its inception as a broadcasting service in the 1930's (Schramm 1964; Katz and Wedell 1977; Schramm 1979; Noelle-Neumann 1981; Raboy 1996; McPhail 2009). Within the last century, especially since the birth of twenty-four hour television and the rolling news, most national governments have become dependent on an engagement with media to prompt citizens to their changing environments; to communicate urgency and responsibility, and to redefine ideologies about national values, cohesion and inter-dependencies, both internal and external (Osabuohien P. Amienyi 2004). In the West this mode of broadening governance exists as a necessary evolution of the general media and the public broadcasting service, and serves to refine the efficiency of communication between society and government, with television playing an essential role (Smith 1978 in Ursell 2003).

In the current era of modernisation and globalisation, the media, especially through televised content, is also increasingly being used to promote Western concepts of modernity that governments in developing countries find unsuited for their development goals but accede to in order to be accepted as progressive (Arat 2003). The advance of the liberal market argument, and its impositions on governments of developing countries (Raboy 1996; Heath 2001), is competing with a nationalist agenda and may be contributing to the fragmenting of governments' attitudes towards the media; governments in the post-colonial South, and similarly developing countries, are trying to reconcile to another institution, presumably powerful, which they often see as having a competing role within society. The results are the emergence of evidences of tensions in the relationship between governments and the media (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Street 2005).

However, the media are seen as critical to broadening the communication processes between society and government in developing countries, and the publicly owned media is situated at the nexus of interactions between government and society. A recent indication is in the fallouts of the infectious phenomenon branded “Arab Spring” which started in North Africa (Bowen 2011). Nile TV, the state broadcaster in Egypt was partially shut down and its coverage of Tahrir Square events were compromised (Reuters 2011). An internet shutdown in Egypt, as well as attempts to disrupt Al Jazeera’s coverage of the social revolution as it happened (Anon. 2011; wtyw7newschannel 2011), were all media gagging strategies used to try to control the social effects of the media in the process of social change as it spread across the affected Mediterranean countries, from inception in Tunisia via social media to Syria and the Gulf Emirate of Bahrain, and Yemen. In its aftermath, media companies are warning of a possible backlash in new and stricter forms of media regulation from governments that would want to control the media’s role in facilitating political change (BBC 2011 (b)).

These tensions, seen as antecedent to social growths in polity, are often a consequence of promotions of new, Western, ideas about modernity and progress; governance and democracy, society and government, the ‘public sphere’ and the ‘public interest’, as well as the agency of the media in facilitating social discussions on urgent social matters that include the directions for a nation’s economic, political and social policies; a mediated debate on national social development. To enable such social discussion, the media have to both present a platform for the debate and also perform a social education function that equips the society with knowledge that is believed to be true. Thus, television, especially, becomes a contested site for such tensions in developing countries because of the power of the moving image and televised ‘real-life’ events to carry loaded convictions of authenticity and veracity for largely illiterate populations. The urge has been for governments to control society, especially through the public media, in manipulating the amount of knowledge, the fairness and balance of such knowledge and the perceptions of canons in order to enable a social engineering process that is implicitly politically ideological. This raises further tensions within society as it struggles against the political machine in order to realise emancipation from subversive politics through the acquisition of knowledge that enables it to hold governments and other social institutions accountable at

representing its interests and executing functions on the basis of a full and balanced weighting of ‘truths’; ‘truths’ since these are facets of reality variously constructed by the social segments that exist in any nation. Hence, there are also tensions within the broad society, as the general mass population, and the media that serves it. Society looks to its media to present a fair and balanced representation of social facts and to provide it with some of the knowledge that would enable it judge the actions of the politicians who serve it, as well as other kinds of knowledge that would contribute to social emancipation.

Thus, on the basis of the understanding that there is an obvious contribution of the processes of knowledge distribution to the growth and development of societies in whatever location they reside in, this thesis offers a contributory understanding of television by considering what its potential contributions have been to on-going social change processes within the context of national social development in a typical African context; a post-colonial, post-independence and African society. It focuses on studying Ghana Television as a public broadcasting service, and utilises a critical cultural theory approach to understanding the impact of public service broadcasting in a typical post-colonial environment. Utilising a cultural theory approach makes it possible to account for the localised historical and cultural factors that were often ignored in development communication literature, and to situate them within current social realities. In Africa, a real challenge for the media role has been the question ‘what should governments in developing countries do’ with the public service broadcasting institutions they more or less control? Are these economic liabilities that should be divested to private interests (Heath 2001; Alhassan 2005), or are they to be maintained as a critical part of national social development policy for use as vehicles in promoting vital social change programmes necessary for public education, democratisation and social development?

## **Research Context I: The Post-colonial Context of Development in Africa**

While there are several social conditions and economic factors impinging on current under-development in the developing and ‘transitional economy’ countries, the



condition is perhaps exacerbated by the impact of media images and messages exchanged between the developing and developed economies concerning social conditions: democracy, wealth/poverty and the opportunities for individual advancement. The persistence of under-development in these countries has led to various efforts to catalyse the social change processes required to create optimum conditions for social development. Some of these efforts have been through the use of communication and technology-based media; using development communication strategies championed by Western donor agencies and Non-governmental organisations to help bridge gaps in literacy and knowledge-sharing among communities where poverty-reduction programmes and other social intervention programmes have been implemented. The media projects started within the post-colonial, self-governance, efforts of these countries and their communication strategies are embedded in the service deliveries of the public service broadcasting organisations that operate in these countries.

Characteristically, the post-colonial developing world features in global news media as places of economic and political under-development (Dimbleby 2005; Mukhongo 2010). The condition of under-development in these parts of the world are almost never reported as the direct effects of a history of colonisation that worked to extract resources, disrupt social structures and cultures, create states where none existed before, re-configure traditional trade practices and establish new trade links that, still persist today (Adu-Boahen 1990; Martin and O'Meara 1995). However argued, the legacy of the colonial period is perpetuated by conditions in world trade arrangements that work to impose conditions for trading, and access to the capital needed to invest in development projects, in the global market place. The World Bank has been criticised for enabling the continuance of such a global *status quo* (Arat 2003; Bretton Woods Project 2005).

Furthermore, in most of these countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, a historical dominance of local manufacturing, export/import business and extraction industries by foreign firms, and the repatriation of profits made in these countries have contributed to an impoverished and deteriorating state of economic achievement. Rodney (1982) suggests that CFAO, SCOA, Barclays Bank Plc and Unilever Plc are especially guilty of profiting from historic links to the trade systems that supported

African slavery and the resulting economic disadvantaging. However, there are also problems of leadership and ability to perform at social enterprise that have also militated against national development. In the wake of the independence struggles that gave birth to the post-colonial era in Africa, historical accounts show that some national governments nationalised industries and firms owned by foreigners, yet, the competence of the inheritors was much to be desired (Fanon 1963; Coleman and Sklar 1994; Kimenyi, Mbaku et al. 2003). Fanon puts forward that the inheriting native elites knew little more than how to be trade brokers, in no small way due to the structures of colonial trade relationships that had prevailed in the era before independence. Consequently, the colonial structures that were established were emulated and followed by the new administrators and led rapidly to the degradation of environments as the extraction industries maintained position as key earners, and communities lost not only farmlands and lifestyles but also young people to the commercial and capital cities of the new states (Martin and O'Meara 1995).

In the decades after the Second World War, with the entrenchment of neo-liberal trade policies in the nineteen-eighties, as part of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and later, World Trade Organisation's world trade arrangements, the impact of global trends on social change in Africa (and the developing world) becomes easy to catalogue (Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997):

- Age-old social traditions and moral values are questioned.
- Societies face a breakdown of the old collectivist social order, and consumerism is increasing individualism.
- The imposition of liberal trade policies dilutes nationalist efforts towards development.
- The spread of global media influences, through the News especially, is breeding what most totalitarian governments have feared – a socially active media championing liberal democracy values, and
- lately, with increasing access and imitation of Western television, a shift is occurring around culturally taboo subjects, politics and social discussion, and portrayals of “Western” behaviours that in many places is creating divisions in society (Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997; Rinnawi 2006).

The genesis of these changes has not solely been because of changes to trade structures, it is reasonable to assume that the resulting cultural changes were as a result of the exposure to the cultures of trade partners; colonialism having been essentially a trade phenomenon. Accordingly, Frantz Fanon (Fanon 1963), in his writing, draws strongly on the Algerian struggle with France, yet he is also quite aware of the rest of Africa, and articulates some of the problems of national culture and nationalism that have defined post-colonial national social development. He broadly sketches the relevance of culture to the development of a national consciousness that, he suggests, must necessarily occur in order for a nationalist agenda to be pursued. He wrote, on nationalism, of a need to ‘destroy’ imperial modes of thought within the social elites of a colonised people as part of the process of reforming natives into newly conscious citizens of self-determining nations. The problem, as he saw it, was that these upper classes were rooted in a thought and dialogue process that had very little resonance with the general population.

However, if, as he suggests, the colonial period forced African natives to accept that their history and cultures were barbaric, and the colonial system was complete in its denigration of the native history, then it is fair to assume that not only the elites needed re-orientation, to regain a historic sense of national consciousness and culture, but also the broad masses who would have assimilated the western influences, from the forceful and coercive constraints of colonial administration, and the mode of thought that would root their thinking in terms that would be fundamentally different from that of the pre-colonial native. It was the need to overturn these negative outcomes of colonial history and identity that became fuel for post-independence culture projects in Africa and its Diaspora, such as the Pan-African Movement and the “Negritude” emancipatory project (Ahluwalia and Ahluwalia 2001, pg 26). In Ghana, the first Black African President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, formed his governing ideas on “consciencism” (Nkrumah 1964), as a response to the post-colonial struggle for social and political development that would overturn the historical antecedents previously mentioned. In Ghana, as in many other post-colonial countries, the state-making projects of the immediate post-colonial era were many and led to problems of prioritisation. African states were amalgams of different tribes and therefore the prime project was the forging of a national identity (Fanon 1963; Hyden, Leslie et al. 2003; McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003; Alhassan 2005).

For Dr. Nkrumah, the forging of a national identity had to be linked to an emancipatory project that would yield results in both human and social development. Many of the fraternity of political leaders struggling with colonial regimes had turned to Eastern Bloc countries with which they formed natural allies against the West, even though many of these had gained their education from the West. A history of Western oppression may have played a part in this preference, but for Nkrumah the affiliation with socialism was more ideological. In *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-colonisation*, he elaborates a philosophical approach to an Afro-centric emancipatory project and suggests that the post-colonial heritage needed to be part of the accounting of the efforts to socially and economically develop African nations. His philosophical approach understands that the traditional African society was socially egalitarian and imbued with moral values concerning the centrality of humankind towards itself, the spirit world and the natural environment from which it borrows resources. He asserted that community, was at the heart of the pre-colonial African conception of society, and “communalism” (Nkrumah 1964, pg. 98) was a breed of African political socialism that pre-dated the formal offerings of contemporary socialism. He suggested that communalism was expressed in the social groupings that existed at the base of traditional societies and it held that the welfare of the whole community was more important than an individual’s, in as much as the whole community was responsible for the individual. Nkrumah, thus, held colonialism responsible for introducing elitist social hierarchies into Africa; in its peculiar needs for administrative forms of power recognisable to it. This alien form of power relationships came on the back of education and trades that created social elites through modern professionalised employment – “doctors, lawyers” (*ibid.* pg. 69), etc, as well as “individualism” in “conscience” and social “accountability” through Christianity (*ibid.* pg. 70). These Western influences, together with Islam, therefore had become part of the psychological heritage of the post-colonial African.

In his view, “consciencism” would allow the factoring of these new influences to be accepted as part of the contemporary African existence and its new “conscience” (*ibid.* pg. 79). Its objective would be the development of the community through the development of the individual. This he felt was not contradictory to African-ness, in that so long as rules for emancipation are ethical they can embrace methods that are

dialectically oppositional if they hold true to an original purpose; such as the development of a society. The social purpose of all societies, as he saw it, was to achieve “development” through the creation of social institutions and “logistic mobilisation” of “social forces” (*ibid.* pg. 98). For him, the difference between capitalism and socialism was in the matter of egalitarian values. Capitalism was merely an extension of the principles underlying “slavery” and “feudalism” (*ibid.* pg. 71) which worked in an exploitative manner to serve the interest of a social margin, and thus biased social development towards elites, with whom power also resided. In socialism, therefore, he found “social justice” (*ibid.* pg. 72) values that were in consonance with African communalism; socialism being the more commendable alternative in that it proposed a socio-political system that was also applicable in a “technologically advanced” (*ibid.* pg. 73) contemporary society.

It is salient to note that these postulations of Nkrumah still find resonance in contemporary social studies research about Ghana. Assimeng (2009) concluded that modern Ghanaian society broadly functions, within its traditional belief settings, on an understanding of an all-encompassing cosmological interplay between the spiritual and the physical; that existence is meta-physical, and the course of destiny follows an action-reaction path not entirely designed by the human but dependent on the observances and consequences of moral or amoral acts. Assimeng (*ibid.*) argued, much as Nkrumah did, that environment and metaphysical beliefs shape and produce societies and affords them the underlying motivations for evolving solutions to existential problems. Most Ghanaian cultures, as identified in the various tribes, believe that the world and its affairs are a product of meta-physical actions beyond personal or individual control. Thus the tendency to impute causative action and ‘aggressive’ will to personal development or social advancement is viewed as ‘witchcraft’ because it is dislodged from communal efforts at progress through collaboration with peers and the spirit world.

Nkrumah’s ideologies also coincided with Fanon’s, in that they both agreed that post-colonial Africans were psychologically different, changed by ‘imperial’ influences. Nkrumah suggested that African countries were now tied through capitalism and “neo-colonialism” to a mode of society that did not fit with the traditional past of its societies, and therefore a “revolution” was needed to totally change the post-colonial

society into one that was in consonance with its “communalist past” (*ibid.* pg. 74.), and thus advocated the same militant approaches as Fanon, in the desire to urge African liberation, but the thrust of their philosophies were substantively different. Nkrumah did not oppose militarism, but for Fanon that was fundamental to liberation (Fanon 1963). For Nkrumah, the psycho-philosophical approach was more salient, and he assumed that his philosophy would sit naturally with Africans as they accepted a “material reality” (*ibid.* pg. 79); which was to say that in the African philosophical context all things, physical and spiritual, are in existence, are dynamic and therefore transmutable. Hence material change and social change are not inimical to African thinking, and development is merely a changing of social forms in order to achieve emancipation which is the goal of all societies, as set out in the quote introducing this chapter.

Thus in the post-independence era, Nkrumah would call on all ‘social forces’, including the media, to be marshalled into the national development project. In socialism he believed he had found a means to attempt a recreation of the collective social enterprise and cohesion spirit of age-old ‘togetherness’ in a typical African community, which was Ghana. However, to understand the role of the media in Ghana’s social development, and its peculiarities, it is necessary to locate its history within the larger trajectory of post-colonial media development on the continent.

### **Post-colonial Africa: A Media Overview**

Generally, African media has seen tremendous growth and is permuted in many varied ways across the continent. Print, radio, television and the internet has found both local and trans-national modes within which to operate and present product offerings (Middleton and Njogu 2009). The broadcast media, however, present a different historical trajectory to the print and ICT-based media; print being a much older medium and the internet gaining a limited, but growing, presence from the nineteen-nineties. This overview looks at the development of the broadcast media.

## **Historical Development**

“The single most important factor in that has influenced the development of broadcasting in Africa is the continent’s diverse colonial heritage”

(Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg. 175).

Historically, the development of public service broadcasting in Europe was promoted by conservative intentions regarding electro-magnetic spectrum access and nationalist debates on preserving cultural values and giving public information and education, but in the colonies it was mainly a tool for imperialist control bundled with ‘education’ programmes intended to assimilate natives into the imperial cultures (Hodson 1939 cited in Bourgault 1995; Alhassan 2005). The British Empire, especially, developed replica BBC institutions in the colonies as a means of providing connections between commonwealth natives and settlers with the imperial country (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003). Hyden et al (2003) argued that the genesis of public broadcasting in Africa was motivated more by the desire of colonial powers to use propaganda communication to maintain the status quo in the structured relationships between White settlers and natives in the colonies, although in the mother countries the need for broadcasting services in the colonies had been sold to governments as a means to provide “upliftment” (*ibid.* pg. 83) to the backward cultures of natives. Much of the content was devoid of any programming useful to natives and what was done was offered as privileged state-provision on the basis of governance targets; funding was withdrawn when such goals were not met (*ibid.*). It was mainly during the Second World War that the broadcasts took on propaganda functions aimed to get Africans to back the colonialists, to disseminate government messages and spread Christianity (Briggs 1979, Williams 1950 and Amour 1984 cited in Hyden *et al.* 2003).

Public service media in Africa, thus, developed as an extension of the political communication processes of new states; post-independence governments carrying on much of the communication modes and tactics of colonial administrations by assuming the “monopolistic traditions” that existed (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Peterson et al. 2003, pg. 175) The suppression and limitation of the rights to own broadcast media to the State was also a significant carryover of colonial attitudes

towards the nationalist press institutions. The press had been started by private individuals associated with the independence struggles across the continent and had been subject to strangle-hold tactics by colonial governments afraid that media would be used to destabilise governments (Hyden, Leslie et al. 2003). Thus, latter public media, under political control of governing parties, would often be used to delineate different political sides in post-independence countries; with governments' seeking prolonged "legitimacy" (Arat 2003, pg. 79; Heath, 2001) as representatives of the people, versus an opposition usually maligned as usurpers of stable government. Consequently, over the years, state-owned media in Africa became analogous to the 'regime voice' (Heath 2001).

The private media that existed suffered in the post-independence era under the one-party state systems and military juntas which only tolerated an upper-handed relationship with society (Gros 1998), and used restrictive media laws (such as criminal libel laws), and resorted to extra-judicial infringements on journalists to oppress the press in much of the post-colonial era; non-public media were seen as enemies of post-independence governments when they sought to exercise civic rights of expression (Karikari 1994; Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997; Hyden, Leslie et al. 2003).

In line with aspirations in the new African dawn, moves were made to change content characteristics on the electronic media taken-over from colonialists. An African voice and representation was desired and programmes were done by experimenting with the modes of production and formats copied from the Western service models in existence (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, citing Mazuri 1996 and Hassan 1996), especially the two dominant modular forms of the public service media: the British Broadcasting Corporation in British territories, and various permutations of the French system through the specially formed Société de Rediffusion de la France d'Outremer (reformed as the Organisation de la Radio et Télévision Française) in the French African colonies (Heath 2001). All models re-diffused programming from the imperial countries across the continent.

Africa, thus, has a very diverse mediascape for types of models of public service broadcasting (Lycombe Eko in Hyden, Leslie et al. 2003; McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003). These models of public broadcasting also differed in their structural



underpinnings; while some were wholly state-subsidised most of the operations inherited from British, French, Portuguese and Spanish administrations operated part-commercially using advertisements to fund some operations even though these were marginal in relation to overall operational costs, and also the French systems tended to be more centrally-controlled, and functioned as integrated parts of the colonial administration (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003).

Thus, over the half-century of post-colonial self-rule, the public service broadcasters of African countries have incrementally found ways to collaborate and share resources and ideas on the development of an 'Africanised' public media system as well as to integrate and encourage private commercial media. Those efforts have served as antecedents to a modernising and strengthening of the media in Africa, outlined below.

## **Developments in Continental Policy**

The fragmentation in media systems, that was largely the result of colonisation, and an uneven access to global information<sup>1</sup> caused African broadcasters to begin an exploration of means to collaborate and to share content. Furthermore, during the early post-colonial period of the nineteen-sixties, emerging independence, pan-Africanism and "a need for regional identity" (Sesinyi 2005) created a need to plug the gap of dependence on imported content. The effort resulted in the formation of the Union des Radiodiffusions et Televisions Nationales d'Afrique (URTNA) "in 1962" (URTNA 2002) from among the member nations of the Organisation of African Unity (Mensah 1994). For many years, until the turn of the millennium, URTNA gave African public service broadcasters access to continentally produced content, technical assistance and training (URTNA 2002).

However, towards the end of the last century the growth of information and communications technologies, deepening democratisation processes, and belief in the potential of public service broadcasting was leading African media practitioners and governments to begin an active consideration of policy directives to better enable public media. Human rights activists campaigned for a levelling of the playing field

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<sup>1</sup> See discussion on Dependency Theory, pg. 77 - 78

that would see existing public service broadcasters made more independent in order to better represent plural society (Heath 2001, citing Ansah 1991, Karikari 1994 and Koomson 1995). The URTNA scheme covered much of the continent, with at least forty-two member countries, yet there were now increasing numbers of private broadcasters. This stretched and challenged the original organisation's purposes. In 2001, an African Charter on Broadcasting was adopted (Article 19 2003) to provide a starting framework that recognised the changes in technology, governance and the need for media development and public interests protection through the use of public media. In 2006 URTNA was renamed African Union of Broadcasters and opened membership to private broadcasters both on and off the continent.

However, much of the effort to improve the performance and roles of the media in Africa is supported by international aid and agencies from the West. For example, in 2006, the BBC World Service Trust published its African Media Development Initiative report that emphasised the enabling role of media in continental development efforts, covering seventeen sub-Saharan countries in its study (BBC World Service Trust 2006). Since 2008, the EU and African Commissions have engaged in a partnership to deliberate the structuring and implementation of a "road map" (Africa-EU in Partnership 2012) for democratic and socially integrated roles for the media in promoting development agendas as well as critical perspectives in African media content. Of course, such efforts only gain the neo-colonialist arguments about Africa's Western dependencies more currency.

**These development, however, indicate that contextually localised policies are needed to foster social development across Africa, using the media as a tool. Such a development has been limited by the history of African media ownership. Ownership and Trends**

In terms of the ownership of electronic media in Africa, it had for many decades remained state-owned and national governments brutally restricted private-ownership (Nkotto 2005). This state of affairs was against the background, in the development decades after the Second World War, of significant optimism that media would be a beneficial accessory to the development agendas in the developing parts of the world. In Africa, particularly regarding the 'traditional' broadcasting media, it was assumed

that governments would use these in national interests and there was the implicit assumption that they “would always be controlled by the state” (Tettey 2003, pg. 83; Karikari, 1994). Much of that optimism was to degenerate as expectations failed to materialise (McPhail 2009).

Since the mid-1980’s, and particularly during the early years of the 1990’s, the democratisation of many African states has also led to the emergence of plural media in both radio and television (Article 19 2003; Middleton and Njogu 2009). Eko speaks of a “wave of democratisation” that has transformed the continent’s electro-magnetic mediascape as both “surrogate” and “re-broadcasters” have joined with privately-owned companies to offer a more diverse choice of output (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg 185). This development has manifested differently across the continent but can generally be catalogued thus:

### ***Radio***

Private FM radio stations and community media, to a lesser degree, have opened up the airwaves to greater freedom in media expression:

“In West Africa, radio stations number has gone from around 40, in 1993, to 426 in January 2001. But what seems more interesting is their diversity. The number of company radios is now higher than that of community radios, and the number of radios outside capitals is higher than that of urban radios. The main characteristic of those new radio stations is their being local and their closeness to people” (Nkotto 2005).

A survey of developments in radio across Africa from 2000 – 5 shows that it is still the electronic medium of choice across the continent and dominates electronic media growth and plurality due to low-cost capital market entry and low-cost of receiver acquisition (BBC World Service Trust 2006). The Trust’s report shows that most radio stations are regional and non-state, private and commercial, being advertising-funded, with huge plurality figures ranging from a hundred and fifty regional commercial radio stations in DR Congo, eighty-four in Ghana, fifty-six in Mozambique, to as little as five and six in Sierra Leone and Angola, and Zambia,

being the exceptions. During the time of the survey, nine out of the seventeen countries surveyed had shown huge growth changes in radio station numbers. Some of these are community radio stations funded either by the State (Mozambique) or by non-governmental organisations.

Also, in the seventeen African countries surveyed statistics available showed that by 2005, most countries were reporting over seventy per cent radio listening per week, with a bias towards “heavy listening” in countries including Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda, which reported over ninety per cent radio listening per week. “Light listening” figures were those reporting under seventy percentage points and included DR Congo, Senegal, Ethiopia and Cameroon (*ibid*, pg. 23). The high percentages in listening figures can be linked directly with increased access to radio sets. It is suggested that by the beginning of the millennia there might well have been over a hundred million radio sets on the continent, having grown over a hundred million per cent from the middle of the last millennia (Fardon and Furniss 2000). Middleton and Njogu (2009) estimate that beyond 2002 more than a fifth of Africans had access to a radio.

The strength of plurality and diversity in radio is also substantial as broadcasts are often in local languages, with direct global trans-national broadcasters such as the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and RFI, offering both African and world news bulletins in dominant local languages across the continent, such Swahili, Hausa and Arabic, giving illiterate and remote rural dwellers as much knowledge and connection to global and national events as literate urban dwellers (Fardon and Furniss 2000; Lycombe Eko in Mccauley 2003; Middleton and Njogu 2009). Milton and Njogu (*ibid*) show that the initial directions taken by commercial radio stations was to provide music-driven programming, some marginal news (local) and partnering with trans-national broadcasters for news content that they could not produce. Of course, it cannot be far-fetched to deduce that this was strategically to distance them from political heavy-handedness, in the initial wave of de-regulation. Currently, talk-radio or the “*palaver tree*” (Lycombe Eko in Mccauley 2003, pg. 188) has seen tremendous growth as both commercial and public service operators use the format to bring local participation into programming, and in conjunction with the licensing of FM technology, has made it much easier to get stations on air and connect them to local

audiences and issues than was the case with short-wave radio (Middleton and Njogu 2009), which was the technology inherited post-independence.

### *Television*

The academic effort to understand and document the presence of television in the current African milieu is poor, with most analytic works having been done before 1995, though newer material better attempts to engage with empirical data as difficulties to obtain these are diminishing (BBC World Service Trust 2006). Most other efforts are tangential in studies or commentaries from other social science areas, typically development communication, journalism and politics, and economic studies. However, the little that exists provides some background:

Many countries in Africa, until much recently, typically have had a single television channel service, provided through a monopoly public service broadcaster. These have traditionally enjoyed dependent nationwide audiences even though the extent of reach is not as great as radio due to the higher cost of box television acquisition (Bourgault 1995; Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997; Middleton and Njogu 2009).

Since the mid-nineteen eighties, with external pressures to democratise and deepen participation in governance (Rudra 2005), public policy has changed to accommodate both private-owned radio and television services, which closely replicate public television services (Karikari 1994). There are, also available, in many countries, multi-channel services from digital satellite broadcast service providers, but these services have a high access barrier, due to cost, for most people and are only available to an urban and affluent few (Bourgault 1995; Middleton and Njogu 2009). In Western and Southern Africa the Intelsat service provides a platform for DStv which has about 1.4 million subscribers to its 144 channels (Mahajan 2009), compared to the about one billion people that inhabit the continent.

While good statistics are much more difficult to collate, all attempts suggest that there has been strong growth in television stations and viewership though the statistics lag far behind comparatives to radio. There are also comparative differences between radio and television with regards to access; television is accessible via community

viewing centres, in Niger for example (Bourgault 1995), or is shared with neighbours. Thus in the World Service Trust's survey (BBC World Service Trust 2006), Mozambique and Senegal reported high access rates of over eighty-eight per cent with slightly lower ownership rates.

However, in spite of challenges, the last two decades have seen tremendous changes to the electronic broadcasting mediascape. Article 19 (2003) reported that “[b]y 2002, direct to home satellite TV had reached 41 countries in Africa”. Within countries that are allowing private television ownerships – South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria, for example – Multi-channel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) as well as Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) broadcast technologies have been increasingly adopted as a way forward to providing multi-channel programming from a single station. Typically such stations give over a channel or more to the transmission of local programming, while the other channels provide broadcasts of satellite-received content from global media broadcasters, usually news and entertainment shows. Notably the Voice of America (VOA) got a Congressionally approved Independent Broadcasting in Africa Act 1998 passed on the premise of the invaluable agency of ‘independent’ broadcasting in promoting democracy, and thus specially targets broadcasts into Africa, along with the BBC and Cable News Network (Lycombe Eko in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003). However, many local broadcasters still face structural problems that relate to governing media laws, finance and the ability to attract competent staff and they typically produce low-quality programming, but are no less ambitious (Mahajan 2009).

## **Structural Deficits**

Local media institutions in post-colonial Africa are, therefore, grossly under-developed and may be overlooking the full range of potential roles within national communities (BBC World Service Trust 2006). Their organisational ability to perform is often hampered by under-resourcing and inadequately-trained personnel, and their programming continues to be dominated by representations of the government voice. Thus they often fail to approach a nationalist role in delivering a plural and diverse array of programming for citizens (BBC World Service Trust 2006). Their under-resourcing makes them also unable to perform as programme originators

for other non-continental and global media organisations, in which role they could have served as windows to the rest of the world about African experiences. Unfortunately, governments have also either been unwilling to relinquish control of these institutions or have adopted attitudes that make it difficult for these organisations to be anything other than sycophant. Public broadcasters have not been able to develop internal cultures that would allow them to challenge restraints or transform them into impartial agents within society in order that journalists, producers and citizens can freely engage in the democracy and governance debate (Heath 2001; Alhassan 2005).

In the current era, however, there are structural changes evolving and Galloway (*undated*) writes that television, for example, in the developing world is changing mostly because the utilisation of modern broadcast technology has given the opportunity to leap-frog most of the developmental phases that advanced countries have gone through. Yet, the regulation of television is particularly weak and institutions suffer from a lack of enabling engagement with the governments that own, virtually, the public service broadcasters (*ibid*).

## **Research Context II: Ghana's Political History**

Gaining independence on the 6 March 1957 the British colony formerly known as the Gold Coast was joined with the Trans-Volta Togoland British Protectorate and the new state, named Ghana after an old African empire to the north-west of the present country, became the first country to gain independence from British colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa.

Independence was led by Dr. Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP), which was a breakaway section of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) which was headed by J. B. Danquah (Anagwonye 2009; Asante 1996). Nkrumah had been Secretary of the UGCC, but felt that its 'considered' approach to 'demanding' independence from the British was much too slow and broke way in 1949, demanding "Positive Action" (Gocking 2005)<sup>2</sup>. Nkrumah had been educated in the United States, where he studied

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<sup>2</sup> A concise history of Ghana, examining its economic and political controversies is given in Gocking, R. (2005). The history of Ghana, Greenwood Press..

theology, education and philosophy, in which he also lectured. Under transitional arrangements under the colonial administration, he had become Leader of Government Business, amended later to Prime Minister, and also became President, after winning the elections when Ghana became a Republic in 1960 (Gifford 2004). He was titled *Osagyefo*, ‘liberator’, in *Akan*. Under Nkrumah, a programme of funding for the independence struggles of other African nations was organised, as well as for the African National Congress, and many African nations would become independent in the nineteen-sixties (Gocking 2005). The Organisation of African Unity was formed to galvanise sovereignty in the new African states, and Nkrumah used it as a platform to canvass an agenda for continental unity. He instituted many community development projects, built the Akosombo Dam, a hydroelectric project that created the world’s largest man-made lake, and instituted a planned economy along with several state-owned corporations to transform and accelerate national development along socialist lines. He also spearheaded a referendum that voted to make Ghana a one-party State in 1964 (Gocking).

However, the national economy suffered and Nkrumah was overthrown by a Central Intelligence Agency-assisted military junta (Gifford 2004), the National Liberation Council (NLC), on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1966. They accused Nkrumah of totalitarianism and despotism (Asante 1996), and Nkrumah, who was on his way to China, exiled himself to Guinea, where he later died from cancer. He, however, had left an indelible mark on Ghana’s political ideologies and party politics; “big man rule”, “disregard for the rule of law” and “neo-patrimonialism” (Gifford 2004, pg. 1-7). The NLC was a combined rule of both Army and Police, and led by Generals Afrifa, Ankrah and Kotoka (Asante 1996), which had taken over at a time when the country was struggling economically, and would hand over to a civilian government after mismanaging the economy.

The new government of the Progress Party, headed by Dr. Kofi Busia in 1969, was diametrically opposed to Nkrumah’s ideologies (Asante 1996). The Progress Party was an amalgam of old elements of the UGCC (Gocking 2005), and thus were natural enemies of the CPP, which had usurped their role in the independence struggle when Nkrumah spilt from their camp. Thus, Busia’s regime would institute a neo-liberal economic policy, and reverse many of the development strategies formed under



Nkrumah. Busia himself had also been educated abroad, with degrees in Philosophy, Economics and Politics, as well as Social Anthropology, from Oxford and University of London. Yet, he fared no better.

In 1972, the National Redemption Council (NRC), led by Gen. Ignatius Acheampong, overthrew Busia's government, citing "economic mismanagement", "corruption" and "arbitrary dismissals", and an undermining of the work of the Army and Police (Asante 1996, pg. 59). Nkrumahists were hopeful that the coup d'état would enable them to return to power, but this did not materialise immediately although the next civilian government would be a pro-CPP one (Asante 1996). Acheampong's ideology though was pro-Nkrumah, in that he voiced the mantra of "one people, one nation, one destiny" (*ibid.* pg. 59). The NRC suffered from internal political wrangling in its attempts to legitimise its rule through a plebiscite on an idea called "Union Government" or Unigov, which it won. However, a worsening economic crisis<sup>3</sup>, labour agitations and student protest led to a 'palace coup' that replaced Acheampong with Gen. Fredrick Akuffo, in 1978. The NRC was transformed into the Supreme Military Council (SMC). Under the NRC, Ghana returned once more to socialist economic planning, though more tempered than the ideals of Nkrumah (Asante 1996).

In 1979, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), led by Fl. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, ousted the SMC from power and summarily executed, by firing squad, Generals Akuffo, Acheampong and Afrifa, and five other senior Army officers. Ordinary people, who had supported the 'revolution', suffered severely under the regime, both from the harsh economic situation as well as the street justice and 'kangaroo' courts or 'people's tribunals' as they were called, that used brutality to mete out punishments. It also 'nationalised' private enterprises deemed to have been acquired through corruption<sup>4</sup> (Asante 1996, citing Shillington 1992; Gifford 2004). The AFRC handed over power to Dr. Hilla Limann of the Peoples National Party, an Nkrumahist incarnation that won the general elections of the Third Republic in 1979.

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<sup>3</sup> A popular political legend of the time was that Acheampong had a penchant for generously pear-shaped consorts, to whom he would give VW Golfs as gifts.

<sup>4</sup> Spiraling inflation and scarcity of basic goods prompted the introduction of a "controlled price" regime. Those suspected of selling above this were publicly stripped and flogged, and had their goods confiscated. A lot of these instances were spurred by social jealousy (see Gifford 2004; Gocking 2005)

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1981, Rawlings led a second coup-d'etat against the civilian government he had installed barely a year before, and inherited a plethora of economic difficulties and a drought that left the economy on the brinks of severe hardship (Gifford 2004; Asante 1996). Again, the brutalities that had been the characteristic of the AFRC continued in the immediate era of Rawlings' new government, the People's National Defence Council (PNDC). There were 'killings and disappearances of some three hundred people, and at its height, the murder of three judges, "one of whom was as pregnant woman" (Gifford 2004, pg. 2). The bloody regime was responding also to a populist demand for rough justice; students were shouting the slogan "let the blood flow" (Asante 1996, pg. 73). The PNDC by the mid-eighties was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) for assistance, despite its espoused socialist political ideologies, and embraced a raft of neo-liberal economic policies under a Structural Adjustment Programmes of the IMF, in the nineteen-eighties (Asante 1996; Bofo-Arthur 2007). Democratisation pressures from the international community finally led to the writing of a new Constitution in 1991, and elections in 1992, which was won by Rawlings and his PNDC, now legitimised as the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

"Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorest countries in West Africa. Even so, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance. Gold and cocoa productions, and individual remittances, are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around agriculture, which accounts for about 35% of GDP and employs about 55% of the work force, mainly small landholders. Ghana opted for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) program in 2002, and is also benefiting from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative that took effect in 2006. Thematic priorities under its current Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, ... are: macroeconomic stability; private sector competitiveness; human resource development; and good governance and civic responsibility. Sound macro-economic management along with high prices for gold and cocoa helped sustain GDP growth in 2008" (Central Intelligence Agency 2009).

The current social context of Ghana is very much a product of the Western and Eastern influences Nkrumah had noted. Christianity and Islam hold great salience for major sections of the population. The burden of post-independence social and economic transformation, still remains a burden; Ghana has been out-stripped in economic performance by countries such as Malaysia, with which it shared per capita statistics at the time of independence (Gifford 2004), although recent oil finds may provide new economic impetus; it has already, significantly, helped the country to achieve middle-income status. Political activity is still dominated by the progeny of the UGCC, the socialist Nkrumah and the liberal Danquah traditions. National politics and social debate remains fractious across the lines politics and religion, as they have been intertwined over the many years of political history (Gifford 2004).

Within the society, two types of hegemony dominate Ghana: Christianity and *Akan* culture (Gifford 2004; Gocking 2005). Christianity in Ghana started with the “orthodox” Catholic and Anglican, and Protestant churches (Gifford 2004, pg. 23), and a synthesis with traditional religions also produced ‘spiritual’ churches, also known as the “African Independent Church” (ibid. pg. 21). Christianity is very much embedded in the social fabric, even on occasions where Moslems are present. Its significance is immeasurable, having contributed to the social fabric of the nation through shaping the socialisation of young adults in its educational institutions for over a hundred years, through local development work, political and social justice activism (Gifford 2004). Biblical symbolism and idioms are applied to every sphere of life, from enterprise names and on-vehicle scribblings of public transport, to political and social activists’ slogans (Gifford 2004). These strong religious affiliations have produced a traditionally conservative society, and in the orthodox Christian, still rooted in the European church approach to worship, an African culture incorporation has been slow to develop.

On the other hand a huge growth, since “1979” in the “charismatic” strand of evangelical Christian doctrine and practices has spawned hundreds of churches across the country that preach modernist ideologies, and theologically-mediated Americanisms embedded in faith messages – “faith/prosperity/health-and-wealth”, “demonic causality” or angelic mitigation of well-being, and “financial success” (Gifford 2004, pg. 23 – 26) among others. Thus, the type of humanist philosophy that

was the cornerstone of the Enlightenment and Western ideologies of human agency is not found in the Ghanaian socio-psychological perception of progress and human agency; '*fa ma nyame*', to wit 'leave it in the hands of God', is the popular *Akan* saying that best illustrates this. The charismatic movement is dynamic in borrowing extensively from its home-grown roots, in both language use and worship style, and the Americanisms are additional constructs that define the social status' of congregations (Gifford 2004). These churches are on an up-surge, being very young and very much on the pulse of emotive national and social justice perceptions (Gifford 2004).

The *Akan* culture has also contributed extensively to the social forms of Ghana's ethic and cultural institutions; "Akanisation" (Gocking 2005, pg. 10) has affected language forms, social practices and traditions, and passed on through centuries-old *Ashanti*<sup>5</sup>, conquests of neighbouring tribes, marriage and migration (Gocking 2005). *Akan* dialects are widely spoken and understood from north to south and the modes of communication and power relationships, between subjects and traditional, as well and national political, authorities is very much influenced by *Akan* cultural practice. However, this also causes some friction in the inter-tribal relationships and politicians have found it expedient to exploit the tensions, creating lines of fracture between the tribal groupings which tend to dominate in specific regional sectors of the country. These social groups are often linked with specific political traditions; the most evidence of this politicisation was in the eras of Nkrumah and Rawlings (Gifford 2004; Gocking 2005).

Thus while there are many factors to consider in a careful historiography of Ghana, it is immediately identifiable that culture, politics and religion have been factors that have defined the social realities of Ghanaians and have had roles to play in the social development of Ghana from the colonial to post-independence eras. These very factors have also contributed to the nature of the development of the media, although politics has had the greatest effect on the national media through the attitudes of various governments over time. The nature of that course is explored below:

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<sup>5</sup> The largest *Akan* ethnic group

## Media Development in Ghana

Throughout the turbulence in its political history, Ghana's post-independence media, especially the State-owned, had played a central role in the propagation of both nationalist and sectional ideologies; the State media working to "legitimise" the socio-economic agendas of all ruling regimes and showing unwillingness to be a politically conscious entity (Asante 1996, pg. ix). Yet, this unwillingness was not merely due to blind sycophancy. History had taught the media institutions that 'authority' (Asante 1996, citing Wilcox 1977) was to be respected in the interests of personal and institutional self-preservation:

K. B. Jones-Quartey (1974) wrote, that the earliest press in the, then, Gold Coast was started by the Crown Governor Sir Charles McCarthy, from 1822-25, ceasing when the governor was killed in a war with Ashanti. In 1857, Charles and Edmund Bannermann started the Accra Herald. Charles was jailed in 1862 on contempt of court charges for an editorial. Asante (1996) continues that post-1893, many newspapers were started in the crown colony which expressed nationalist sentiments. In 1893 the Newspaper Registration Ordinance would become the first in a long-line of media-muzzling efforts and starting a long history of media suppression by governments in the colony and, later independent country. They included the Book and Newspaper Registration Ordinance 1897, and Sedition Ordinance/Criminal Code Amendment Bill 1934. During the colonial administration several newspapers flourished, starting from the hand-written copies of Charles and Edmund Bannermann; they included James Hutton-Brew's Gold Coast Times and Western Echo (1874), and the first daily newspaper, Gold Coast Express (1897). There were also missionary installations that were often nationalist in sentiments (Asante 1996, citing Ekwelie and Edoju-Ugwuoju 1985). Thus, in 1921, the colonial government set up the Gold Coast Pioneer as a counter-publication to the nationalism in the private press (Asante 1996).

In these pre-independence days the liberation leaders on the continent were allying themselves to the private press and using their channels to help in their anti-colonisation project. Also in the Gold Coast, the Nigerian Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was editor-in-chief of the African Morning Post. He would be jailed for six months and

fined sixty pounds, along with his Sierra-Leonean Managing Director, I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson for publishing an article titled “Has the African a God?” which was brazen in framing the colonial government as deceitful and violent towards Africans (Asante 1996, pg 4). The two men would win an overturn of their judgement at Appellate Court against the colonial government but they were conveniently expelled separately from the Gold Coast (Asante 1996; Gocking 2005). Nkrumah was also involved in the press. He started the Guinea Press that would publish three instalments including the Accra Evening News in 1948, the Morning Telegraph in 1949 and the Daily Mail, distributed in the key towns of the colony (Asante 1996). Nkrumah took the initiative to publish The Evening News also in local languages, including *Fanti*, *Ewe*, *Ga*, *Hausa* and *Twi*. In 1950, Nkrumah was handed a three-year sentence for sedition but would serve fourteen months only – his Convention Peoples Party (CPP) won the Parliamentary elections, hence he would be released to become Leader of Government Business in the colonial Legislative Assembly (Asante 1996).

Under Nkrumah, the press suffered both repression and consolidation; his Guinea Press would annex most of the existing presses, as well as acquire negotiated control of British publisher Cecil King’s Mirror Group’s installations, the Daily Graphic and Sunday Mirror, through the CPP. These papers would be held as a nationalised press, to which the CPP would add the Ghanaian Times and Weekly Spectator (Asante 1996). These papers are still in circulation today. The CPP would not tolerate a plural media, as Nkrumah

“believed that the mass media should be completely under government control to assure their full utilisation and commitment to the urgent aims of national interpretation and modernisation” (Asante 1996, citing Udofia 1982 pg. 389).

The role of the amalgamated press was to play a “revolutionary” function in “consolidating .... freedom”, “sovereignty” and “independence” (Asante 1996, pg. 13), but they were viewed as a “government propaganda tool” by Western governments (*ibid.* citing Ainslie 1966, Hatchen 1971 and Zeff 1983). The CPP’s press policy was described as “neo-communist” (*ibid.* pg. 13) and integrated most of the existing press into the government information service. Nkrumah saw the press as perfect tools for promoting cohesion and development and advocated a dogmatic

(Asante 1996, citing Ainslie 1966) and ideological press system that advocated African independence and nationalism (Asante 1996, citing *The Spark* 1965 pg. 3). Thus, the Ministry of Information and Broadcast dictated media output, and media personnel were government functionaries or party activists, or if not so, still expected to tow the government's official position (Asante 1996). The system was elaborate in using State information vans, decorated in party colours and symbols, to reach across the country and, effectively, giving the CPP a dominant position in national discourse outside urban centres. It used a "publicity secretariat" to determine and control content published by the "national media" (*ibid.* pg. 18).

In 1958, Nkrumah would pass the Preventive Detention Act which allowed the government to jail for up to five years, without trial, anyone whose actions were deemed to be treasonable, ruinous to foreign relations or destabilising. By 1964, the jail term would reach up to ten years (Asante 1996). Citing Howell and Rajoosria (1972), Asante states that anyone failing to prove Ghanaian ancestry could be deported on the grounds of being a foreigner. In 1959, the "False Reports Act" and "Sedition Act" were passed (*ibid.* pg. 20) which allowed fifteen year and five year jail terms, respectively, to be imposed on persons whose publications were deemed to be ruinous of the State, government functionaries or government itself (*ibid.* citing Rivers 1970). A Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill was added in 1960, which limited the actions of "a persistent element" dealing in media materials and content not in consonance with the government's communication agenda, and a censorship and inspection committee was set up to investigate and remove publications that were publicly available but contained "undesirable" content (*ibid.* pg. 38, citing Afrifa 1967). All these were in direct disregard to the 1<sup>st</sup> Republican Constitution, and Asante suggests that these measures were thought to be necessary to counter the influence of "Western media" (*ibid.* pg. 29) and to ensure the maintenance of the government's socialist ideology in the media.

Thus, Nkrumah's ruthless press tactics would be inherited by the NLC and continued to be in operation very much as the CPP had designed it, unchanged, apart from a rescinding of the censorship rules (Asante 1996). The State press regime remained as before but the editors were sacked and replaced by appointees. The press responded by instantly changing allegiances to the junta, and proclaimed them "liberators and

true democrats” (*ibid.* citing Daily Graphic, February 28, 1966, pg. 1). The press was continuing a sycophantic relationship, but now in support of Constitution usurpers. Persons detained by the CPP were released and CPP functionaries were held in “protective custody” (*ibid.* pg. 38), including CPP journalists. Those deported by the CPP were allowed to return, and General Ankrah proclaimed a “new press” (*ibid.* pg. 41) that could be assured of full press freedom with a ‘constructive’ and ‘responsibility’ publishing caveat. The NLC also set up an advisory ‘publicity office’, similar to Nkrumah’s, but with a function to massage the image of the junta out-going messages to the public. Its effect was to control the publications of the State-media, especially after General Ankrah lambasted the press for sensationalist reporting of the “Arab-Israeli conflict” (*ibid.* pg. 41), and warned that government as pay-master could with-hold salaries and wages of journalists. Thus even though the regime attempted to encourage critical journalism in reporting on government performance, the press resorted routinely to “self-censorship” as a strategy to stay in favour with the government (*ibid.* pg. 42). Also, the NLC repealed the Preventive Detention Act 1958, but replaced this with the Prohibition of Rumours Decree 1966 [NLCD 92] that acted as a censoring stick, in that it prevented the publication of material that might cause “disaffection” (*ibid.* pg. 43) against it, and also reviewed the Criminal Code Bill to allow detentions for up to twenty-eight days, without trial. Under its Rumours decree, offenders would pay hefty fines or serve three years in jail, or both (Asante 1996). It passed decrees to make it impossible to sue the State-owned media or their editors for injurious publications. It sacked its own editors appointed to the State-media for unfavourable publications, and deported an East German correspondent of the ADN news agency (*ibid.*). They passed a television licensing decree and in 1968 established the GBC as a public corporation, wresting it from the Nkrumahist tradition of direct Presidential control and stating that it should be “impartial and independent” (Appendices 2).

The NLC scrapped its press control laws and allowed multi-party activities prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic of Kofi Busia’s United Party, in 1968. Busia maintained the NLC’s press controls, however, the administration was more tolerant and was credited with having enabled the most plural and free press environment in the immediate post-independence era by repealing Nkrumah’s Newspaper Registration Act. However, it



also fired Camron Duodu as editor of the Daily Graphic and sued Kofi Badu, editor of the Spokesman (Asante 1996).

When General Acheampong's NRC overthrew the Busia government, an immediate act was the arrest and detention of three editors of the State press, whom he subsequently released, but he put in place the Defamation by Newspapers Decree 1972, personally took charge of the Information Ministry, made it impossible for law courts to hear cases against newspapers that maligned previous government functionaries (Asante 1996, citing Udofia 1982), and favoured the State-media over the private press. Under the NRC, newspapers were once again required to obtain licenses, at pains of a fine or a year in jail. There was direct interference in the running of the State press, which proved too much for the normally acquiescent press and there were agitations for the formation of a Press Trust, which the government refused to accede to (Asante 1996). The NRC, however, encouraged the mass media to back Acheampong's "self-reliance and patriotic nationalism" ideology, although press repression machinations were re-instituted, with a recap of the Prohibition of Rumours Decree 1977. The press, by now, had learned from experience and fell in line, and were rewarded with "cash" and drinks at press soirees<sup>6</sup> (Asante 1996, pg. 65). The press, thus, lost credibility with the public. Yet, some State journalists went on strikes and protests over a "lack of recognition" (ibid.) and poor salaries and working conditions. Asante writes that, these were the reasons for the Essah Commission of 1978, which amongst other things noted that some journalists would write inflammatory articles without regard to journalistic standards if their core presentation would flatter the government, knowing that such actions would curry high favours. The report suggested that the public's poor perceptions of journalists had led to low morale in those within the profession who were desirous of good standards yet felt incapable of leaving the profession. The loss of face the press suffered came at a bad time; for this was the time the nation needed its media to stand between it and government in asking for public accountability. Yet, the reality was that the press, especially the state-owned, had never really practiced reputedly to strict ethical journalist's standards (Asante 1996).

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<sup>6</sup> It has become common practice for media personnel at State functions to be given brown envelopes, "solicitation fees" or "soli" in the industry's slang. Doubtless, the intention is counter 'subversive PR' and ensure good and favorable media coverage.

It is into this incendiary situation that the AFRC junta inserted itself, and exploited its volatility to mete out its brand of justice. However, it did not show much interest in controlling the press; it stayed in power for only a few months, and the press, now knew what not to do, and therefore what it had to do.

Under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Dr. Limann, however, a Press Commission was provided for in the Constitution; to manage the State media and its relationship with political authority. It would be directly responsible for appointing the heads of state media, and had this been implemented would have provided a turning point for press freedom in Ghana. However, Limann decided to appoint heads to the state press before the Commission could be inaugurated. This led to an ink war between the President and his appointee to the Daily Graphic, Mdm. Elizabeth Ohene, who had rejected the appointment as “mischievous” (Asante 1996, citing Daily Graphic, February 18 1980). Together with five other journalists she went to the Supreme Court for a constitutional ruling, and the State was fined one thousand cedis (Asante 1996).

On 25<sup>th</sup> July 1980, the Press Commission (PC) was inaugurated. A month later it dismissed the Boards of state-owned media, ostensibly, to re-appoint them under its mandate and therefore nullify the President’s appointments, and on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1981, a Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was set up, which would become a battle ground for confrontations between the government and journalists (Asante 1996). Although, there was now some degree of insularity, the Boards of state media still had government sympathisers on them, thus the Boards also became battle grounds for editors who opposed pro-government inclined Boards; the Daily Graphic, being the most influential medium of the era would see several legal actions between its Board and editors (Asante 1996). And, thus, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic era saw the beginning of a “new political and social climate” (*ibid.* pg. 89) within the press institutions as a meshing between the interests of press personnel and their social environment, the national public, began to form.

The 31<sup>st</sup> December 1981 second coup of JJ Rawlings and the PNDC, truncated the growth of the Ghanaian press, and in many ways ended professional media practice. All editors of state-owned media, including the GBC, were asked to proceed on

“indefinite” (*ibid.* pg. 94) leave, and were replaced. Such a dense culture of self-censorship pervaded the press to the extent that when “university students ... beat up editors, painted graffiti on walls of national press houses....and damaged property”, even these protest actions were not reported in the media (Asante 1996, pg. 95). The news media was no longer considered reliable as a source of truth and acquired a reputation as not only being self-seeking and self-preserving, but also serving the government just as it had done under Nkrumah (Asante 1996). Gifford (2004) states that the state media were “transparently biased” and that the Daily Graphic’s “columnists could be mindlessly sycophantic” (pg. 8). Asante continues that the PNDC directly censored some media content, including Western music (citing Pellow and Chazan 1986), and carried out brutalities against journalists critical of its governance. These included the detention and physical harassment of Gariba Bawa of the GBC; Tommy Thompson, John Kugblenu – who died in jail, and Mike Adjei of the Free Press (Asante 1996); Kweku Baako Jr of the Crusading Guide was arbitrarily detained, Kwesi Pratt of Insight served fourteen years, and Gershon Dompseh served twenty (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998; Asante 1996); while Eben Quarcoo of Free Press and Kofi Coomson of The Ghanaian Chronicle were put on trial but saved by the advent of a 4<sup>th</sup> Republic, but many journalists left the country for fear of their safety (Gifford 2004).

The judiciary could not be trusted and many social institutions, including chieftaincy were co-opted into the PNDC machinery, such that social justice no longer had currency in Ghana (Gifford 2004). Asante (1996), notes that in its media policy the PNDC revived the Newspaper Licensing Law, introduced the Law on Defamation 1984 that banned caricaturing, and also banned pornographic films; all commercial media activities were proscribed by strict licensing regimes to the extent that it was literally impossible “to publish a newspaper that will at least offer an alternative view” (*ibid.* pg. 96, citing Kabral Blay Amihere in Index on Censorship 1987).

Thus, more than in any other era before it, the PNDC’s extreme socialist leanings and revival of Nkrumah-style governance had the most significant influence on the social psyche and the media professions, due to its immediate contemporaneous context. The PNDC would not even favour its own functionaries who stepped out of line; its Secretary of Information, Kwesi Yankah, would discover this when he published the

last words of one of the killers of the judges, Lance Corporal Amartey-Kwei, whom Rawlings had executed by firing squad (Asante 1996).

Asante sums up the techniques of media control as observed in a Ghana to have been:

1. Censorship, either self-imposed or made so by law,
2. Physical harassment or coercion that closed down publications; beating up journalists and detaining media persons,
3. Legal prosecutions for libel and sedition,
4. Withholding information in the respect that government officials did not provide answers to questions,
5. Press licensing,
6. Appointments and dismissals of editors,
7. Rewards – promotions, cars and luxury gifts to journalists who towed the government’s line (citing Hatchen 1971),
8. Reduction in government advertising to starve media houses of funds, and
9. Newsprint allocations to media houses.

The historical journey of Ghana’s media is not lodged in a distant past, many journalists are alive today who can testify to the events of the post-independence era, and the PNDC and its NDC re-incarnation would rule the country for nineteen years till the very turn of the millennium. Yet, the PNDC would be forced to abandon its press restrictions, in 1991, as a new constitution was approved and the country prepared for multi-party elections (Asante 1996).

Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998) confirm Asante’s analysis of Ghana’s media development history and its key events, and include that professionalism in the media always improved under constitutional regimes, and that the state’s monopolising of the media in the nineteen-sixties was the direct result of a national social control policy, while the seventies and eighties were the worst times for press freedom in Ghana as they engendered a of “culture of silence” in the press, and did not allow the media to “grow, mature and develop” (pg. 3). The authors further suggest that the repressive press regimes did not allow editors of the state press to be “critical and creative” in improving “standards of the profession” (pg. 3). Along with poor

remuneration and working conditions, the history of coercion had the effect of making state media enterprises unattractive to well-qualified and educated professionals (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998). The authors opine that just as it was in the case of Governor McCarthy's newspaper, the introduction of radio was designed to serve the interests of the "political and educated elites who consisted of European settlers, colonial administrators and small groups of educated Africans" by re-diffusing "BBC news and programmes" (citing PAV Ansah 1985, GBC Golden Anniversary Lectures).

Thus, in Ghana, as elsewhere in Africa, the prime media institutions – press and radio, were founded by the British colonial administration. It is important to clarify that the trajectory for press and electronic media were different. Newspapers were much easier to set up and were quickly latched onto by native elites and in many ways these became fundamental instruments in independence struggles (Jones-Quartey 1974). However, electronic media was nationalised and state-controlled and used in the nationalist project that sought to foster allegiance to the new state (Asante 1996). The effort, in Ghana, was to create a nation-state on the basis of a common colonial experience among the tribes, and to contain the former colony's geographic boundaries as the new state; pre-colonial tribal structures and patterns of life had been disrupted and allegiances coerced to make the colony possible (Fanon, 1963; CFA, 2005; Alhassan, 2003). In this way the public service media did not initially develop as a social institution professionally reflecting on social, political and economic issues as was the case in Europe (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003).

However, currently, there is an observed vibrancy and integration of the 'new' media freedom, under the 4<sup>th</sup> Republican Constitution, into normal life routines in Ghana. Hastings (2005) writes this and states further that radio and television gossip, along with inter-personal information and opinion exchanges, are punctuating and defining life routines, and forming and framing political perceptions; a "collective exercise of interpretation" that draws in "local, national and global events" (*ibid.* pg. 1). She states further that the dominant discourse is what is in the news; blending a variety of "formal", broadcast and print or journalistic sources, with "informal", social imaginations and personal, first-hand, accounts and sources. The state-media have regained some composure and remain the "most provocative and influential news"

(*ibid.* pg. 1) sources; in a clear dichotomy, state-media emphasis the government agenda, are conservative and manifest political propaganda techniques, while the private media focus on scandalous and oppositional rhetoric. Intense, confrontational and heavily politicised, the Ghanaian “public sphere is ...crucial to the cohesion of the nation-state in the new dispensation of democracy” (*ibid.* pg. 1). However, “Ghanaian journalism” represents “a broader historical and cultural context as an apparatus for the production and reconfiguration of distinctive forms of African modernity, post-colonial nationalism and global articulation” that is underpinned by a notional approximation of “liberal modernity” that is rooted in “historicised cultural understandings of political authority and resistance as well as notions of African sociality and discursive propriety” (*ibid.* pg. 5). Hastings agrees with Gifford in citing that Ghanaian media practice, especially of journalists’, works within the ‘neo-patrimonial’ culture, which she refers to as “notions of authority and patronage” (*ibid.* pg. 5) that frames journalistic media productions. In essence, state journalists “reproduce” a “hegemonic project of the state”, as they notionally believe this to be the ethos of their position, although on a personal level they may experience conflicts between reproducing this ideal with their personal “contradicting experiences” as social members (pg. 33).

## **Broadcasting Policy**

The government of Ghana has, after many years of neglect, decided that public media in Ghana needs a sound footing to enable it play a part in socio-economic development. To this end the current President, Professor John Atta Mills of the NDC, commissioned a sector policy review on public broadcasting intended to safeguard GBC’s on-going and future role. The mass media in Ghana is regulated by the National Media Commission (NMC), a constitutionally mandated and independent body, which differentiates between public, commercial and community media (Ministry of Communication 2004). Among other things it states a mission to “promote a free, independent and public-spirited media that provides access to all” (*ibid.* pg. 3), and has oversight of appointments to the state-owned public media in order to safeguard their independence. The President’s action, in 2009, had been predicated on advocacy within the industry and concessions by the previous liberal government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP):

1. In 2006, the mission of the NMC was integrated with the aims of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II). The Minister of Finance at the time, commenting on an increased allocation of funding to the Commission, said the objective was to enable the monitoring of “how much development content” was reflected in media output, and to also monitor “negative” reportage that would undermine public confidence in elected officials, adding that the overall strategy was to enable the media to contribute to the objectives of the GPRS (GNA, 2006).
2. In 2007 non-state media, led by the Ghana Journalists Association, signed a communiqué urging the broadening of the public service remit to obligate all media houses to a minimum quota of public service broadcasting (GNA, 2007). Crucially, the communiqué also called for government to enable the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) to ‘transform into a true public broadcaster’.
3. Again, in 2007, the National Communication Authority (NCA), which is charged with the regulation of communications and administration of broadcast frequencies, received applications for fifty television licenses from private broadcasters. Importantly, the NCA issued a directive for all broadcasters to switch to digital terrestrial transmission in order to better utilise the national frequency spectrum (The Stateman 2007).
4. In May 2009, a “stakeholders’ dialogue” made recommendations to the government urging re-structuring of the GBC to enable it function as a public broadcaster in a competitive environment that, at the time, included ten commercial television stations and over a hundred and thirty public and private radio stations. The meeting further suggested a license fee (already in existence but poorly collected) as a special tax to fund the GBC (GNA, 2009).

It was thus, that in August 2009, the Minister of Communications announced the formation of a cabinet sub-committee to review and recommend a re-structuring of the GBC with a view to creating a “true public service broadcaster”, which would

among other things “give voice to the voiceless” and “be more accountable to the people”. The review would propose new license fees, review the law establishing the GBC and make it more independent of government (GNA 2009b; GBC 2009).

The process to migrate to digital terrestrial broadcasting became policy in 2010 (NCA 2010). It was suggested by the Minister of Communication, Hon. Haruna Iddrisu, that the move was necessary for the country to embrace new media technologies, as well as to free up the electronic spectrum for additional services and contribute to a bridging of the global north-south digital divide (Government of Ghana 2010). It was a move also prompted by an agreement of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to implement digital broadcasting in its member countries by 2015 (APC and Balancing Act 2011). The project implementation uses the GBC as the custodian of the new broadcasting platform and this has raised concerns with private broadcasters about possible government interference. The government’s control of GBC, it is feared, would make it possible for government to switch off the broadcast signals of a station it was unhappy with. The private broadcasters recommended, as an alternative, the pooling of all broadcast equipment into an independently managed entity (Ghana B&F 2010). However, that is not the only controversy: GBC has pioneered a digital television service with a Swedish company, Next Generation Broadcasting (NBC) called Smart TV. It effectively jump-started on the competition without the authorisation of the NCA. However, despite the protests of the competition, and the NCA’s admission that GBC has no authorisation to pilot or begin a digital service, the broadcaster has not desisted, lending suspicion to the presence of political engineering by well-connected interests (Ghana B&F 2010).

Thus, the public service broadcaster has an influential role in affecting industrial developments, as well as sharing a close history with the development of media in the country. However in order to assess its social contributions, it needs to be understood as an institution that operates within the context of the devolution of electronic media into the territories of colonial Africa, and therefore shares a remarkably similar evolutionary history with similar institutions on the continent.



## **Ghana Broadcasting Corporation**

In 1935 the British colonial government established Station 'ZOY' to aid cultural 'educational' communication between the Crown colony and the Home Office and this became the basis of the Gold Coast Broadcasting System in 1954. After independence, the unit became the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and was made a public corporation under the National Liberation Council, (NLCD 226) in 1968. Television broadcasting had been added to radio services in 1965, broadcasting in black and white till colour was enabled twenty years later in 1985 (Alhassan). Broadcasting infrastructure had been affected during the years of economic mismanagement but the return to free market policy saw aid flows into the economy and Japan and, the former, West Germany would instrumentally equip GBC in that same year with short-wave radio transmitters, colour television equipment and a modernised television studio among other assistances. However, a liberalised broadcast environment would only emerge in the middle of the next decade as the NDC initially entrenched itself in the early days of the new democratic process urged by 'donors', and assured itself of implicit control of the most media outlets through the GBC's national network of radio and television coverage (Heath 2001; Panford 2001).

Currently, GBC operates one free-to-air television service, Ghana Television, and also owns fifty-per cent commercial interests in Metro TV, and minority shares in Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation, although it has not received any revenues from these ventures. It also operates three short-wave national radio services and ten Regional FM radio stations (one each in ten Regional capitals) and held a broadcasting monopoly for some six decades till the liberalisation of broadcasting in 1994 although it is still dominant in the local industry (Buckley, Apenteng et al. 2005).

The efforts at nation building incorporated the GBC into the government development agenda, and in reflection of the popular 'dominant paradigm', the belief that development through electronic mass communication use could inject by 'hypodermic effect' a catalysis on social and national development. It was therefore required to produce programming that reflected this – education programming, as well as

information, entertainment and cultural programming (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003; Buckley, Apenteng et al. 2005).

The GBC is still funded through a state-sponsored subsidy that in 2004 amounted to ₵ 42 billion (about £1.9million) and pays basic salaries for one and half thousand employees, and although there is a licence fee charged all viewers (at about 15p per year) it's worth less than the cost of collection due to inflation (Buckley, Apenteng et al. 2005) and failures to adjustment the levy.

### **Ghana Television**

“Ghana’s Television...will not cater for cheap entertainment, sensationalism and commercialism. Its paramount objective will be education in the broadest purest sense. It will supplement our educational programme and foster a lively interest in the world around us. Television must assist in our social transformation” (Ghartey-Tagoe 2010, pg 78).

The above quote is taken from the address given by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, at the inauguration of Ghana Television and sets forward, succinctly, his vision for that service, expressing the optimism that the communication system would engage with and enable social change and development. Ghartey-Tagoe also accounts for the genesis of an historic problem alluded to in this research, the tension between the television wing and other departments of the GBC, in stating that because the television wing was his contribution to the GBC organisation, the department received the President’s attention, and he appointed as Director of Television, Shirley Du Bois, the wife of the Pan-Africanist writer W. E. B. Du Bois, who was a close friend of Nkrumah, and the first woman to hold such a position in the world (Horne 2002). Ghartey-Tagoe, suggests that at the time, when there were just the two wings of Radio and Television, the new staff for Television had a higher base ranking than for Radio, and this led to a “fierce” (ibid. pg. 79) and fractious relationship between the two departments though they managed to work together.

At inception, GTv's new offices and studios cost about twelve million pounds in current money (Horne 2002), produced at least seventy-five per cent of its programming (Horne suggests that eighty-five per cent was intended), more than anywhere else on the continent, and it broadcast thirty-five hours of programming per week. Censoring of imported programmes with scenes deemed unsuitable for children was done, routinely, by fading to black over scenes with "kissing, excessive shooting and other forms of violence" (Ghartey-Tagoe 2010, pg. 80). It would in particular emphasize on "traditions, culture values, and the way of life of the people" (Asante 1996, pg. 125), and there was the definite intention to create a television system to rival any in the world at the time; one that would also be less dependent on foreign programming, although imported educational documentaries would be shown, with both radio and television being used to disseminate information for agriculture, health and education (Asante 1996, citing Head and Kugblenu 1978). Television would specify an intense programming schedule with a wide-audience appeal, gender sensitive programming that was informative and educative, and was made available to viewers all over the country at village centres where local language translators were used to explain content (Horne 2002). Initially, television broadcast was limited to the southern half of the country, due to transmission challenges; the northern half would receive broadcast programmes a day later; the taped programmes would have to be carried up north by government transport (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1998).

The country was not only ethnically differentiated, it was also linguistically diverse. The language problem in merging disparate linguistic ethnic communities into a nation had been tackled head-on at the inception of GBC:

"The language factor becomes a sensitive issue because it is one of the most evident characteristics that define a given ethnic group and gives it identity and character as a distinct, homogenous body" (P. A. V. Ansah cited in Wedell 1986, pg. 47).

English and six local languages (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003; Buckley, Apenteng et al. 2005); *Akan*, *Dagbani*, *Ewe*, *Ga*, *Nzema* and *Hausa*, were chosen as national broadcast languages on the basis that all communities would at least understand one of these. Together they represent just seven and a half per cent of the

seventy-nine spoken Ghanaian languages (Lewis 2009), and, with Akan being the most widely-spoken, are understood by at least “eighty-five per cent of the population” (*ibid.* pg. 53).

However, “studies conducted on broadcasting in Ghana would reveal that limited airtime was being given to programmes orientated towards local communities” (Asante 1996, pg. 126, citing Ansah 1979 and Boafo 1985). Boafo’s study, for example found that only about six hours of programming, about 5.8% of weekly airtime, was given to local language programmes that reflected local life situations, including programming on development issues (Asante 1996).

Under the CPP, television sets were made locally by Ghana Sanyo Ltd, a joint partnership with Sanyo of Japan (Horne 2002), producing the ‘*Akasanoma*’, ‘talking bird’ in *Akan Twi*, brand of radio and television sets, as well as refrigerators (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998). Then, as now, a lack of solid television ownership data leaves room for assumptive estimates about the extent of television reach and audience figures. It is impossible to gauge accurately who has access: it is therefore a socio-economic assumption that there would be a clear bias of ownership of television equipment towards urban and ultra-urban settlements, but this logic may be flawed as electricity and money are both available in rural areas, especially in the districts with cash crop farming that have been reached by the national electrification grid (Naylor 2000; VRA 2007; GridCo 2009).

## **Research Problem**

Currently, in Ghana, a diverse media landscape has led to an undercurrent of tension regarding press freedoms as the media fights for greater press freedom and recognition as a mouthpiece of the public (Ghanaweb, 2007a; 2007b). While the development of private broadcasting is welcomed as positive change that is increasing engagement between communities, the government and the media, it may be failing to give social development direction as output is largely entertainment, which attracts audiences but does not sufficiently engage with issues of social development. Also non-public media are often perceived to be situated in specific political camps or orientated towards Western political ideologies (Hastings 2005). There also tends to

be a huge disparity in the issues focused on by the media between urban and rural audiences. In rural communities, media issues are often focused around local cultural values, agriculture and religious programmes. In the urban centres however, programming revolves largely around music formats, sports and politics, and is also biased towards political scandals and controversies. The burden of public education and information, a critical part of the public service concern, is relegated to a small number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working directly with specific communities and focusing on specific social interventions and behaviour change projects (Ghana-NET, 2011; Bob-Milliar 2005) and the GBC. Overall, the general result is that current media roles may effectively be contributing to the stagnant or worsening conditions of under-development by increasing the factors that fuel 'brain drain', consumerism and disengagement from civic and political interests in-between elections dominated by social elites (Nyamnjoh 2005).

While much of the indicative literature presented discusses media and society from the macro-social perspective, the critical work of the media is carried out by persons who attempt to imbue media products with personal idiosyncrasies, actively or passively assert organisational and/or political control mechanisms on media products, and thus affect society either intentionally or un-intentionally. Thus, while the literature suggests the catalytic ability of television to quicken the processes that could transform traditional forms of social organisation, relationships and taboo subject discussion in the third world (Yong 2000; Johnson 2001; Adams 2004), each of these writings, alongside others looking at media and social change in developing countries, point to a growing need to understand the place of media in the social contexts of rapidly changing communities.

Following the argument that the media have a central role in social development and emancipation aspirations, this research attempts to locate the agency of a typical post-colonial public television service, Ghana Television (GTV), to consider its contribution to social development. Institutional agency, as an essential factor of development communication is an ignored area in research into Ghana's media development. This research therefore located its problematic to be within the scope and attributes of media's 'agency'. The investigation also considered the intersection of GTv's production methods and economics' with producers' understandings and

interpretations of the public service remit against the tableaux of post-colonial media history, cultural values and national social development needs. Critically, the nuanced problem is reflected in the end note of Alhassan (2005), which poses the question that is at the heart of this research project: in post-colonial countries today is public service broadcasting not fundamental to national social development?

However, an answer to the question is not easy to arrive at (Rosengren 1981), and any attempt would be conditioned by conceptions about the *place* and *role* of media and the *function* of public service broadcasting within the context of governance, democracy, development and social change. Yet, such attempts are essential for evolving knowledge contributions to build better understandings of the interactions between media and society. Thus the following research questions were formed to contextualise this research problem into a suitable investigation for adequate answers.

## **Research Question**

The aim of this research project therefore was to answer the question:

*“How does Ghana Television affect social development through the work of its producers in making programmes for the national audience?”*

The question implies the assumption of a dependent relationship between social development, on one hand, and media and communication, on the other. It therefore frames a relationship as existing between social development and television programme-making, and the consequent output as a broadcast service, in an affective way. The assumption was that systemic processes and relationships exist between broadcaster, and its producers, and the consuming public that can be understood through appropriate social research methods in order to understand the contribution of the public television service to the nation through programme production and broadcast.

Thus the research constructs frameworks for achieving such an evaluation by considering the different parts that make up the media system and its relationship to

society within the context of this research<sup>7</sup>. The frameworks therefore borrow from critical culture theories and media studies texts that explain these relationships under investigation; essentially, theories and texts on communication and its contributions to understanding broadcasting practices, as well as public service broadcasting. To achieve the research aim, the following objectives were essential to be met:

1. Gaining an understanding of the contextual **placement** of Ghana Television as defined by legal and statutory documents that define its role, functions and relationships? This will define the public service role of GTv:
  - a. reviewing the legal provisions that govern the GBC, and hence GTv's remit, as well as GTv's Mission Statement, and
  - b. understanding conceptual ideas about 'public service' and 'public value' that may be contained in these and other documents to evaluate possible evolutions in these concepts over time. Crucially, have these concepts changed to accommodate a liberalised media market?
  - c. Reviewing the structural dependencies that impact GTv operational control. This includes its direct dependence on government, statutory funding sources and relationships with the National Media Commission (media regulator) and the National Communications Authority (broadcast spectrum administrator).
  
2. Gaining an understanding of GTv's **functioning** through the programming role of the television producer at GTv; as content makers, their perceptions of their work roles and the television service, in general, is fundamental to the realisation of GTv's role in the society and for development communication:
  - a. questioning concepts of 'public value' and 'public service' as understood by programme producers in order to understand how producers situate their work and that of their organisation within notions of the 'public' and the service intentions for it,

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<sup>7</sup> See Justification for Research on pg. 57

- b. questioning the ideological foundations of programmes from the point of view of the producer to discover their notional relationships with the achieving of the public service mandate, and
- c. sampling the broadcast schedule to understand airtime use in terms of programme types, genres, language use, origination of content and content values that can be inferred, in order to discover the degree to which the structural modes of content creation are reflected in the intended ‘public service broadcasting’ output.

## **Justification for the Research**

“Why television? It’s true that radio is the medium to which most Africans have access, but that is changing rapidly. There are an estimated 25 million tv sets in Nigeria and more than 5 million sets in South Africa. Television ownership is growing quickly... Television will play an increasingly important role in African societies in the next 10 years and will become a powerful tool for influencing government and society” (Galloway, undated).

Given that television combines both aural and video signals to form its communication, and that communication is implicit in the passing of ideas that could promote social development (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997), it had been assumed by social theorists, in the middle of the last century, that the public broadcasting services of under-developed countries were well-positioned to contribute extensively to the social development efforts required to modernise developing countries (Katz and Wedell 1977; Bourgault 1995). The focus on the use of public service broadcasters as aids to social development was because in many parts of the developing world they were, and continue to be, the only media institutions in existence, and they often have the widest geographical reach (BBC World Service Trust 2006), even though this may be rapidly changing. The full consequences of the media impact for post-colonial communities can only be understood in an examination of the history of development and social development, as it has occurred in these nations in relation to the disruption of the colonisation process (Rodney 1982). This research project contributes to the national debate, and academic discussions, about the interaction between government,



national/state media and audiences. Its focus being on the dynamics of this inter-relationship as it has occurred within post-colonial history of Ghana.

Much of the literature already cited suggests a strong co-relation between social development and the media; that development is only really possible under conditions of true democracy, reiterated by free media institutions – good democracy makes free media, and free media makes good democracy (Berrigan 1979; Coleman and Sklar 1994; Bourgault 1995; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997; Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997; Arat 2003; Article 19 2003; BBC World Service Trust 2006). The conversion of inherited broadcasting institutions to aid national social development through programming, especially when states inaugurated television systems, has further deepened the need to understand the role that these media systems play in social development (Wedell 1986; Eribo and Jong-Ebot 1997; Fardon and Furniss 2000; Hyden, Leslie et al. 2003; McPhail 2009; Middleton and Njogu 2009; Gharthey-Tagoe 2010).

Thus the underlying rationale for this study was that it would essentially be an attempt to understand how a typical post-colonial media system, represented by the Ghana Television service, could be involved in development as a social emancipation project, understood as not only the social development agenda of government but also the emancipatory aspirations of Ghanaians as expressed in their engagement within a nationalised ‘public sphere’. The use of the term here manifests an essentially African rendition of a mediated arena in which citizens receive education and information, to which they respond in passive learning, debate or civic action (Nyamjoh 2005, citing Rowland 2004). It is ‘communal’, in being interpersonal, and public due to mediation. Yet, it is different from the Western practice of publicising both what was traditionally private and what are State, governance or civic interests; a situation that has been fuelled by the meshing of sectarian and mass interests in sensationalised media content (McKee 2005) and the growth of a technologically mediated, instant, information society. There is therefore a close relationship between the public sphere and the ‘public interest’, which is the construction of what media consumers want that runs along a continuum from individual interests to grouped/communal interests (Nyamjoh 2005).

Central to the mediated social development agenda is a government agenda that seeks to urge an emancipatory ‘project of the state’, which has in recent years changed from

the self-reliance struggle, post-independence, to reflect contemporary national cultural, political and economic realities reflected in the various policy documents published by the sitting government (Government of Ghana 2012). That agenda can be categorised as: democratisation; public accountability (economic performance and governance); the modernisation of institutions, infrastructure and systems of labour employment, and the reiteration of the nation-state. These categories of social development concerns, however, may not fully capture the full latitude of the ‘public interest’ when that term is understood to mean ‘the over-riding concerns of private citizens for their own welfare’, nor would it reflect the various interests of sectional social groups. Simply, it is empirically impossible to assemble a full representation of the public interest at any given time and to achieve a comprehensive servicing of this. It, however, remains the challenge of the media to represent the interests of the public, to serve and give voice to these, in order to facilitate a construction of a national ‘public sphere’. Thus GTv, as a public broadcaster, is charged with reflecting the national ‘public sphere’; constructed in the National Media Policy (Appendices 4) as the reflection of plurality in debates, cultures, social sustenance, social diversity and governments’ development agenda in broadcast output, in a manner that also presents a Ghanaian character in the media product. Thus, the achievement of representations of ‘public interest’ and social development communication in the form of public education in a mediated and national ‘public sphere’ depends on the agency of the public media system and its content producers. The facilitation of the public sphere must also occur within the context of an African “communal” society, whose priorities, social forms of organisation and ways of debating issues, especially in politics and power relationships, are markedly different from Western conceptions of “subject” and “citizen” due to the dual acceptance of these states of being (Nyamnjoh 2005, pg. 32 – 35).

## **Definition of Terms**

In writing a body of work such as this, it becomes necessary to set out a definition of key referential terms that are important for a correct reading of content:

**Consciencism:** used to mean “philosophical consciencism” as proposed by Kwame Nkrumah (1964)<sup>8</sup>.

**Conscientization:** means the enablement of praxis (the application of learning) resulting from establishing critical pedagogy within learning programmes. Within television programming, this refers to the embedding of producer–audience co-creation of education and information content to enable evocative referencing in problem-solving that also affects social behaviour.

**Development** – the term is employed as a short-hand for *social and economic development* (see Chapter II, pg. 60).

**Modernity, modernization:** the ideas pertaining to social organisation and lifestyle suggestive of cultural and technological progress; aspirational towards contemporary industrialised social forms as typified by ‘the West’ (Barker 2005).

**Nationalism:** the existence of an “*imagined*” “*community*” that is a “*limited*” affiliation of peoples who can make a claim to a certain fraternal relationship deemed to be “*sovereign*” (Anderson 1991,pg. 3 – 7). It further produces the adjectives ‘national’ and ‘nationalist’.

**Post-colonialism:** the term’s usage associates closely with the imports of the terms ‘neo-colonial’, ‘neo-liberal’ and ‘neo-imperial’. Its implications are stated in critical theories and arguments advanced by several writers referenced in this work, such as Nkrumah, Rodney and Fanon, whose views are anchored in a socialist paradigm. It also embraces other contemporary critical cultural theory writers such as Toyin Falola<sup>9</sup>. The term also denotes the political fact, chronologic and geographic spaces of post- independence nationhood and sovereignty of erstwhile colonies.

**Public Broadcasting System (PBS):** a broadcast media system that is ‘public-owned’ in accountability and ethos.

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter I, pg. 20

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter I

***Social change***: transformations in the structural form of a society, especially in its power relations and ideology, in a way that progresses a realisation of aspirations, either towards liberal modernisation, social development, or conservatism. A lack of change establishes stasis<sup>10</sup>.

***Social development***: intentional transformations of society through social agents and praxis; a purposed instigation of social change<sup>11</sup>. *Social development communication*, thus, is the form of communication practice that engages with society-wide development through communication processes that present opportunities for social and cognitive elaboration of ideas to inform praxis.

## **Outline of Thesis**

While this first chapter of this thesis has elaborated on the common factors existing in the historiographies of media and post-colonial Ghanaian society, indeed in most parts of Africa as a whole, the following chapters deal with the carriage of the research exercise and its outcomes:

Chapter II, firstly, considers social change and offers a post-colonial location of context in order to facilitate a relevant juxtapositioning of media theories for considering macro and micro levels of interactions between media and society. Its focus is to illustrate current paradigms on media's influence on society. The chapter then offers a theoretical framework to guide the development of research strategies for this study. Chapter III then offers up the methodological operationalisations for the study, aligning philosophical and epistemological rationalisations with methods that were implemented, as well as a description of the research process. Chapter IV presents key findings and illustrative data and organises this according to the operationalised concepts within the guiding framework. Chapter V discusses the implications of the data findings in an integrated analysis with the core concepts and reviewed literature. Finally, a rationalised synthesis is offered to conclude the implications of the study, and to recommend future areas of research.

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter II, pg. 70 – 72

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter II

## **Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Modernity and Development: a post-colonial analysis**

The theoretical conclusion to discussing social transformations in the context of Western theory's dominant worldview is to assume that all societies, apart from the "uncontacted" (Survival International 2009), should be progressing towards post-industrial, 'modern' or 'post-modern' social forms, depending on terminological preference, that are information-based and catalysed. This is the analytical trajectory of anthropological studies concerning social evolution that established the stereotyping of African peoples and cultures and set them in a primordial context (Davidson 1969). The narrative established Africa as a continent lacking and lagging, in developmental terms, the quality of humanity, enterprise and culture that a human "race" should possess (Davidson 1969, pg. 24), and its effects continue to persist in narratives of African culture to date (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997). Some modern African academics also continue to discuss modernity in Africa in Western socio-economic and political constructs and find Africa wanting. Lushaba (2009) categorically states that Africa is under-developed when examined under any set of development "socio-economic indicators", and further states:

"Despite the diversity of debate about development in Africa, one fact remains indisputable: the continent remains underdeveloped after five decades of development efforts" (Lushaba 2009, pg. 1).

The error in such an argument is that it fails to concede historical factors, nor does it propose an evaluation on the basis of local determinations and goals; it achieves its outcome from a rigid comparative framework. However, it becomes necessary for the purposes of this thesis, therefore, to understand the correlative issues that are salient in framing development, and how media and television, specifically, may contribute to such a process.

Modernity is understood to be a reference to the time-frame signified by the Enlightenment project; beginning in the dynamic era of the eighteenth century in which advances in industrial technology, the extension and export of capitalism,

significant changes in social relations, primarily changes in European societies, interacted to create a contraction in time-space to the extent that events in geographically dispersed places had trans-national effect (Giddens 1991; Lushaba 2009). Giddens, states further that the interlocking of global industry and the use of capital created trans-national capitalist institutions and organisations, which driven by the profit motive, rationalised trade into the promotion of consumerism. He also points to significant shifts in the network of political relations between states, globally, that produced degradations in the political ability of states to wholly self-determine national purposes; States became inter-dependent. The Enlightenment project created a body of knowledge to address the changing relations between man and his environment, promoting rationality and science over theological explanations for existence that were a product of Europe, yet deemed universal and “homogenous” (Lushaba 2009, pg. 12).

In contemporary terms, modernity is described by Robertson as “the standard of “civilisation”” (Robertson 1992, citing Gong 1984 in Sreberny-Mohammadi et al, 1997). He positions communism and democratic capitalism (citing Parsons 1964) as opposing sides seeking resolution to the problem of ‘emancipation’ (Garnham 2000), or simply, human social development. The term modernity, itself, further carries with it the concept of globalisation; in so far as that concept refers to the ability for communication to happen between spatially distanced parts of the world and to create a unity of commune, or the inter-locking of world trading and resources and the inter-dependence of sovereign States on governing treaties that bind and constrain their unilateral actions, although some academics argue that this is an overly-simplistic conception (Milward 2003). The crumbling of communism in the last twenty years; the joining into the system of world trade of erstwhile communist social systems, appears to validate ‘democratic capitalism’ (Parsons, 1964) or ‘capitalist modernity’ (Barker 1997; Garnham 2000) as the more progressive and modern paradigm. Thus, communism accedes to capitalism not only the economic war but the war for cultural and ideological domination in global geo-politics (Jayyusi 2005), as neo-liberal arguments dominate the ideologies backing the structuring of international relations, and all counter-points are dismissed (Milward 2003).

In an historic sense, modernity is seen as an unfolding progress of ‘civilization’ from east to west and hence locates the contemporary energy of ‘civilization’ and its avant-garde manifestations in western economies (Morley 2007, citing Sakai 1988). Consequently, the icons of ‘modernity’ are given as the cultural products of the West, and are strongly cast in a “specifically American character” (Morley 2007 pg. 136, citing Huysen 1986). Other academics are therefore calling for a location-based contextualisation of modernity (Morley 2007, citing Beverley and Oviedo 1993).

The converse is that in a region of the world such as Africa, outside of the nexus of the neo-liberal exchange, yet no less affected by it, modernity has been constructed as being largely absent in contemporary times, any forms of its existence being in the Western “African Diaspora”, which exhibits a cultural-hybridity, since “modernity” is essentially “an European project” in “timescale” and “geography”, and Africa is constructed as “traditional, dysfunctional” and “pre-Newtonian” (Uduku and Zack-Williams 2004, pg. 20 - 21). Within Africa, also, modernity appears to be constructed in terms in similar opposition to traditional cultures, and referenced in terms reflective of its European encounter (Falola 2004).

Thus, it becomes important to locate a theoretical understanding of ‘modernity’ in the terms that relate to its influence on a society, and from there to develop theoretical tangents that explain its dominant ideological manifestations in the cultural and communicative workings of media systems, in order to understand their impact on society. And further, to locate a post-colonial historicity that accounts for African social change and social development in relation to the role of the media in its history.

## **Social Change and Social Development**

Nisbet (1969) argues that, in essence, the concept of change has been with us from even before the Enlightenment, from the times of the ancient Greeks and Romans, cir. 750 to 100 BC. His historical analysis shows that ancient philosophy and language from that region reflected concepts of progression. It developed definitive uses of “metaphor” that alluded to change seen in society, social change, as to those in organic “life-cycle”; “death”, “decay”, etc., and though these were not empirically evidenced facts were seen to be realities all the same. Even more importantly, he

suggests that “growth” and “development” are phenomena that were attributable to discrete entities – human society, a nation, a person, or a plant (pg. 3 – 29).

In later writing, Nisbet (1972) addressed the concept further. He pointed to three principles that must come together in any attempt to evaluate and describe a change process – evidence of ‘*differences*’ that can be measured or observed, and that has occurred over ‘*time*’. These first two elements, he argued, must coincide and happen to a singular ‘*identity*’ / ‘*entity*’ / ‘*social structure*’ in order for ‘*change*’ as a concept of marking difference to be empirically valid (pg. 1 – 4; 15). His argument was that change is the result of both intrinsic and extrinsic tensions causing a transformation of the state of being.

Thus societies ‘*change*’ or ‘*develop*’ from one state to another; since ‘*underdevelopment*’ is not a term that denotes negative change but comparatively retarded change. Haferkamp and Smelser (1992) therefore, sets out three key points that theories of social change must account for: change to the “*structural*” composition of a given society that cause imbalances or tensions that trigger change, “*processes*” or “*mechanisms*” by which change occurs, and the “*consequences*” or resultants of change. They agree with Nisbet, critically, that social change, as taxonomy, is applicable to *change in condition over a period*. Its attributes are that it is *directional*; “*cumulative*” of previous achievements or “*growths*” (Nisbet 1969, pg. 1 – 11); is *purposeful*, for example, shifting states of existence from a lower to a higher order; and should happen through *instigating mechanics*. This essay will argue that the media, as a channel of communication, plays a part in both the ‘trigger’ and ‘process mechanisms’ of social change, and effectually plays a part in the determination of the directional results of social change; anarchy, order, democracy, authoritarianism, etc. Media, also, plays a part in maintaining the social status quo, and is therefore also a structural element of modern society (Demers and Viswanath 1999).

Hans Haferkamp and Neil Smelser (1992), further, lay out some key contributions to the debate on causes and trends in studying social change. The editors suggest that change has emerged as a significant part of social reality and has grown from being regarded, in the modern era, as the “exceptional” to becoming “continual” in post-modern theory (pg. 2) and, more importantly, they opine that *change* has become a



lens for re-interpreting ancient and historical social development. They explain that the term ‘social change’ encapsulates, and is therefore much more preferred to, other terms such as “*progress*” and “*development*” in that it overlooks the constraints those terms impose due to their implicit links with “mechanisms, processes and directions of change” (pg. 1). This analysis contravenes Nisbet’s argument that ‘*change*’, as a social phenomenon, has always been recognised historically.

Haferkamp and Smelser (*ibid.*) trace social change theory to the Enlightenment years and suggest that the theories proposed then were founded on hopefulness for greater social achievements. The Enlightenment spawned a growth in Libertarian political ideologies and fuelled the “optimism” (*ibid.*, pg. 2) that, with advancements in industrialisation and modernisation, humanity would achieve a fulfilment of greatness in potential and social order. Key theories of the time were concerned with questions of human determinism vis-à-vis the control of society by theo-political institutions; these debates running through the writings of Luhmann (1984)<sup>12</sup>, Habermas (1976, 1981)<sup>13</sup> and Locke (1689)<sup>14</sup>. They further argue that the term *social change* is all encompassing of various aspects that transform the human and social condition, whereas “*social development*” refers to a more mechanistic change in the fundamental relationships governing power, money, education and aspiration within a given society. Within the context of change that affects the structural forms of a society, therefore, the term ‘*social development*’ becomes a more adequate and specific utilisation of social change analysis due to its links with mechanisms, processes and directions. It can be understood that development is a social phenomenon that can be observed in terms relating to an ‘*intentional*’ transformation of a society, community, nation or country, that achieves aspirational and emancipatory ends, and that can affect social attributes such as wealth, material goods, well-being, and cultural and/or civic activity. Utilised from such a perspective, the terminology of *social development* becomes interchangeable with the term “*national development*”, when the unit of society under consideration becomes the nation, or more appropriately, the nation-state (Gupta 1999, pg. 120-124).

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<sup>12</sup> Social Systems (1984).

<sup>13</sup> Communication and the Evolution of Society (1976); The Theory of Communicative Action (1981).

<sup>14</sup> A Letter Concerning Toleration.

Often defined in economic terms (Rodney 1982), social development therefore refers to the transforming of a society with a view to making better the lives of its under-privileged population, preserving its ecology, strengthening its social systems, governance and participation in governance (World Bank 2009).

Current understandings of the term *social development* now reflect Rodney's critique above. It now recognises an integration of social welfare principles with planned economic emancipation (Midgley 1986; Midgley 1995) and emphasises the integration of community participation in an emancipatory process (Gupta 1999). *National development*, as a term, also recognises these new indices of measurement but emphasises more the role of the State in a planned process to achieve the material and social-wellness of its citizens; the expressed 'political will' (Gupta 1999). Thus 'national development' is the term favoured by government planners, and 'social development' is preferred by social scientists and community-based non-governmental agencies. National development is specifically defined as:

“the process of social change resulting in an increase in the capacity for a social system to fulfil its own perceived needs at progressively higher levels of material and cultural well-being” (Osabuohien P. Amienyi 2004, citing Tehranian 1994. pg. 105).

This definition considers the nation-state as a self-regulating, self-emancipating, system with aspirational end goals requiring the application of resources and forms of enterprise and skill by which to fulfil such end goals.

Similarly, Madzingira (2001, pg. 5) presents a conceptual definition for development:

“Todaro (1992) noted that development implies the multidimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty”.

Todaro's interjection connects a definite interdependence of two kinds of social realities: the empirically measureable facets of economic progress and non-empirical psycho-social phenomena. There is thus an interlocking of these mutual dependencies

such that changes in one affect the other. Psycho-social phenomena are products of community and culture and thus infer the importance of culture-reflective social processes in the resultants of social changes that are implicated in measures of development. As such, the media are a product of psycho-social phenomena; events, experiences, history, culture, etc., and thus infer a participatory role in society, being at once a product and reflection of social psychologies. It is thus understandable that media theory is concerned with the affective role of media on society and socio-psychological phenomena, and examines ways in which media is affective of social developments.

### **Macro-social Theories: Media, Society and Social Change**

“By altering the spatial and temporal conditions of communication, the use of technical media also alters the spatial and temporal conditions under which individuals exercise power...allowing them to intervene in and influence the course of events” (Thompson 1995, pg. 22).

The relationship between media and society is primarily analysed, in the literature, from an affective point of view, and questions of power and influence, both cultural and behavioural, dominate analyses. The presence of copy-cat American-format entertainment and newsreel around the world, and the consequent emulations of hip-hop culture and Americanisms, is often suggested as evidence of not only the cultural effects of media, but also both its negative and positive social change effects (Price 2006). Media, it is suggested, does not only affect culture but also sways identity choices, consumer choice and behaviour, language development, and information selection (Noelle-Neumann 1981; Kellner 1995). While there are dissenting positions, there is some consensus that the manipulative mechanisms afforded television content programming gives it the capability to carry culture opposing or affirming messages that could affect a population’s cultural development direction (Rosengren 1981; Barker 1997). The American cultural industry, especially film and television, is highly organised and produces and exports at a scale that makes foreign governments wary. For example, Korea and China have particularly instituted policies to limit the import of American films, but China’s more aggressive stance is seen as anti-liberal and the

World Trade Organisation has ruled that the policy be changed to conform with membership rules (Wang 2003; Gateward 2007; Keith Bradsher 2009). The cultural protectionist point of view is a suspicious reaction to what the implications could be for communities, with essentially collective communal values and fundamentally different cultural and social structures, when subjected to the individualist and liberal ideologies of American culture, and the key argument is outlined by the enquiry of the Frankfurt School, which was essentially, ‘who owns the media and how do the media organisations play a role in shaping our world views, and to what extent do those ideas and ideologies affect social perceptions in the cultural exchange process, and does mass media concentration in the media conglomerates that emerged post-World War II narrow, distort, select and ultimately decide what issues are and how and what the world is’ (Louw 2001)?

Time Warner, Viacom, Vivendi, Walt Disney and News Corporation are only five of the world’s media conglomerates, yet together they totally dominate the world’s production of cultural goods (Gripsrud 2002). The dominance of American texts on discussions of the subject also means that mediated social change is often analysed from this liberal ideological standpoint – the preferred direction of social transformation/social change being towards modernisation, i.e., an industrial or advanced agrarian community, with democratic governance and modern production methods and labour management naturally develops from a rural and feudal society. Noticeably, regressions towards traditional cultural values are hardly ever studied as a consequence of media influence; the few excursions into the subject often having more of the form of being critical commentaries, as exemplified by Susan Faludi’s *The Terror Dream* (Faludi 2008).

In answering questions regarding the place and role of media in society, Garnham (2000, pg. 25 - 29) puts forward an argument that first locates the placement of media organisations within the exercise of power, and he posits that there are traditionally three centres of power identified in most historical accounts of media development; the economic - “the means of production”, the political - “the means of coercion” and the “means of persuasion”. These forms of power overlap in complex ways (Thompson 1995). Garnham (*ibid.*) suggests that historically, the media has undermined both economic and political powers by providing a generalised means of

mass education for societies, and yet, from its earliest days, there has been a close alignment between the mass media, government and social elites. Political and social elites are the prime social entities whose funding or direct ownerships have aided the existence of media institutions and it is from this historical linkage that the media has borrowed its power, and allows the media to act in the middle-ground between elites, who hold power, and mass society, and thereby providing a means by which the powerful can 'persuade' the masses. It is such connections between media institutions and the 'traditional' centres of power that makes the media a *structural* element interfacing between sources of power and the rest of society. Those who control media institutions, like the State when in control of media institutions, are able to imbue them with the rules by which they function and, through this control, affect the consumers of media products and order or alter the balance of power in society (Thompson 1995). Such connections between media institutions and power-centres contribute to positioning the media in a dominant role in society, but how does media theory explain media's role in the society?

“The mass media ..... refer to the organised means of communicating openly, at a distance, to many in a short space of time” (McQuail 2000, pg 4).

This definition of the mass media allows an encompassing inclusion of the many varieties of technology-enabled distance communication. The mass media include print, radio, cinema, television, and the internet. Mass media theories have been postulated to help understand the relationships that exist between society and the media. These theories begin from the premise that 'mass' media are, by their very definition, far “reaching and involving [of] everyone in society to a greater or lesser degree” (McQuail, 2000, pg. 4).

This suggests several things, but importantly:

- That mass media have wide *penetration*, everywhere they exist,
- they are accessible to *a large and dependent audience*, who may or may not have much control over the content they receive, and
- in places where *multiple media channels* (or sources) exist, there will invariably be tensions in *competition for audience* and *choice*, and

- there would be some form of control or *regulation* that would affect the *organisational/institutional structure* that produces the content.

These are primarily the factors at the centre of debates about the power and influence of media on society. Broadcast television, now almost a hundred years old, commercially starting in the mid 1930's, has, arguably, had the most unprecedented impact on social life and spurred studies on the restructuring of daily lives and social behaviours that still unfold today. The influences of media also depend on inherent social variants such as cultural values, religious beliefs, economic power and access (Demers and Viswanath 1999). Evaluating these factors within a given social context provides a basis for understanding the degree of influence the media is able to exert on a given population, but these factors also need to be understood within contexts of political “power”, “social integration or disintegration” and “public enlightenment” (McQuail 2010, pg. 52).

## **Change and Stasis**

While there is evidence to suggest some correlation between media content and social change (Demers and Viswanath 1999), theories of the media in relation to social change and media's ability to transform culture(s) – ‘culture’ being the aggregate of mankind's actions and relations that are built around social structures that govern living – are largely concerned with categorising content forms and working towards a predictive model for media effects; the belief springing from the observation that “schools”, “religious institutions”, “advertising companies” and “movements” all affect society through a mediation of ideas (Gripsrud 2002).

Beginning with the “Russian formalists” (pg. 32), as initial proponents, view that media content is shaped as a ‘language’ form and that it is embedded with meaning and representations of the world, Gripsrud (2002) provides an account of the major media influence theories with the qualification that the influence theories are debatable even though they have defined media research for almost a hundred years. The theories are premised on the notion that media have a socialisation capability in much the same way as social institutions and normative social structures, and thus could be influential in socialising perceptions and thought processes. Media, thus,

could communicate critical and ideologically tensioned issues to audiences by connecting with cognitive processes. However, The Frankfurt School from 1930, and particularly through the work of Adorno and Horkheimer (1947, cited in Gripsrud 2002), and also in the works of Levi-Strauss (1966) and Barthes (1957), led evolutionary thinking by suggesting that media texts are often based on already existing, dominant, hegemonic, social perceptions, and thus media serves not to challenge world views but confirms and promotes “conformity” (*ibid.* pg. 33) to existing social structures; rationalising the status quo.

Gripsrud further posits that myths are reformed in popular films and, in Marxist political communication theory, become sites of ‘ideology’. This produces collaborative theory to the Frankfurt School that media performs a structural social maintenance function, holding in place power-class constructions of society. Thus together with the desire in the psychoanalytic field to understand ‘motive’ in human actions, which also becomes popular around this time in the middle of the last century, there develops a supportive theoretical conclusion that the media has social affectation potential that works through messages becoming buried in the sub-consciousness of an audience. The emergent theory, “the critique of ideology”, thus holds that the media adds to the structuring of the social world, and this theoretical field underlies much of social debate about the possible “effects” of popular culture products, especially film and television (*ibid.* pg. 35 – 37).

In an earlier publication on the subject, Chomsky and Herman (2010)<sup>15</sup> analyse the workings of the American news media as fostering hegemonies in the reproduction of conservative views, and suggest that most people, including practitioners themselves, do not recognise this systemic culture. In opposition to the unfettered analysis of Hindman (in Demers and Viswanath 1999), that is shown below, Chomsky and Herman propose a “propaganda model” analysis, their basic theory being that media systems under state-control essentially reproduce the official voice of government. However, American media systems, believed to be free and diversely representational, also produce hegemonic work that supports the officialdom that is represented by government, big enterprise and social elites. Thus the rest of society is

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<sup>15</sup> First published 1994

socialised into pre-set discourses that are structured to protect special interest groups, even when the “discourse” is launched on competitive, private platforms (*ibid.* pg. 2). While government-controlled media often exercise forms of censorship, private media present limited dialogic opportunities and constrain the range and breadth of discourses. The model analyses that the constraints to free dialogue works to achieve a propaganda, or hegemonic communication agenda, through a “set...of filters” (*ibid.*) that, in America particularly, includes:

1. market-dominance, “ownership and wealth, and profit-orientation”, that works in favour of the views of the media entrepreneurs;
2. reliance on “advertising” for revenue, that works to avoid conflict with the companies which as sources of funding provide direct support to the media;
3. “reliance” on ‘official’ sources for news, making sound-bites and “experts” opinion leaders and narrowing opportunities for alternative opinions;
4. veiled threats of possible media sanction, when regulatory agencies become the sites of coercion towards consensus; and
5. “anticommunism as a control mechanism”, in that it suggests that alternatives to liberalism are necessarily non-American and communist.

The analysis agrees with Jacque Ellul’s (1965, cited in Jowett and O’Donnell 2011) proposition that propaganda is both a “technique” of communicating specific ideologies and a subconscious reproduction of hegemonic ideals (pg. 4). In this analysis, the propaganda model fits into the same theoretical mould as the ‘dominant’ paradigm in suggesting that socialisation of modernist hegemonic ideologies is possible through intentional media output (Sparks 2007; McPhail 2009) in order to provoke specific types of behaviour in message recipients (Jowett and O’Donnell 2011 citing Bogart 1995).

Hindman (in Demers and Viswanath 1999), citing Demers’ (1996) work in analysing newspaper ownership and social effects, however, sets out that media under corporate



ownership is more likely to affect social change through the publication of alternative opinions. Constructing an analysis of current society as an “information society” (pg. 109), largely in terms of new media, Hindman suggests that media now has the potential to act as social change agent since it now possesses the ability to overcome censorship and control barriers that existed in earlier media-society configurations. Now, “instantaneous” (*ibid.* pg. 110) message exchange processes offer a multiplicity of opinion sources and “stimulate discussion”. He, however, suggests that broadcast media are only able to offer alternative menus that provide for individual choice but do not build inclusive “publics” (pg. 110, citing Rheingold 1993), suggesting that the creation of an all-inclusive public sphere remains a problem.

Thus, intentional or not, the media works through content structuring mechanisms or purposeful communication techniques to affect society with hegemonic ideals, and preserve static social conditions. However, it can also offer alternative culture-opposing messages. This paradoxical contest is resolved when the dominant social mood is for change in the status quo; the social urge for emancipation exerts no pressures on the ‘trigger’ mechanisms of the media in the absence of threat or perceptions of social repression. Thus, the social change agency of the media is very much sited in its participation in a popular class struggle, mass resistance to power abuses or social crisis (Martin-Barbero 1993), and its agency will be dependent on its control, either by government or oppositional factions. Thus media is never truly critical but responsive to the balance of power within a society from which it draws relevance and justification of its content ideologies, depending on the degree of social acquiescence to structural forms and institutions. Thus, the media in any society, generally, either reflect the social interests of the mass society or the leadings of its elites, both government and corporate, although within this there has historically been found alternative and oppositional media , even in the absence of free press provisions.

However, the lack of evidence to support notions of *hypodermic* effects of the media on society has led to a greater reliance on time-longitudinal effects theories; this has been important in studies on the changes in social relationships regarding social groups, and their minority and excluded groups (Burton 2005, Adams, 2004). This also makes it more convenient to evaluate social and media history using a

longitudinal approach and to draw correlations between media and social transitions in a broader scope that looks at social development in relation to media influences. Burton (2002, cited in Gripsrud 2002; Burton 2005) lists nine changes that could result from media influence on a society and includes 'reality formation', 'socialisation', 'social control', 'agenda setting' and 'attitude change', while noting that these effects could be at variance with what programme makers may originally intend. His position, however, is that the notion of media influence is best understood in terms of the broad contextual factors that may be present during any reading of media texts, and in summary, the most noteworthy aspects of media influences are that:

- they are as much benign as malignant,
- are the result of collective and concerted functioning of the media,
- are conditioned by the individual and social factors,
- are conditioned by the context of reception, and
- are more likely to be affective if reflecting an already existing social attitudinal preference (Burton 2005).

## **Theories of Development Communication**

Over the course of several decades there have been several paradigms of theory regarding the interconnectedness of global media and its influences on society. That field of discourse has gone through shifts from Schramm's seminal publication (Schramm 1964) that put forward the 'dominant' paradigm or 'modernisation theory', through 'cultural imperialism' to the current 'globalisation' theories, in explaining the nature of media's influence and contribution to national, community and social development (Sparks 2007):

### **'Modernity Theory'**

The 'dominant' paradigm was the post-World War II theory leading off from Schramm's paper that essentially advocated the direct benefits of transforming society through linking economics and politics to mass media communication processes, and emphasised an application of Western ideas about society, politics and economics to developing "lesser" developed nations by making them more western. Championed

by academics who styled themselves as ‘social scientists’<sup>16</sup> the belief was that a propaganda communication model could be used to encourage aspirations to a ‘Western’, or conceived as ‘modern attitudes and beliefs’, life-style in order to bring about social change in less-developed countries (Sparks 2007; McPhail 2009). Chiefly fronted by the United States Foreign Office, donor monies were used to initiate mass media, usually in radio broadcasting, projects in Third World countries (McPhail 2009 pg. 4). Key theorists of the developed ‘paradigm’ included Daniel Lerner (1958) and Everett Rogers (1969). Rogers had stated that:

“...development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and organisation” (cited in Sparks 2007 pg. 21).

Such new ideas, it was believed, could be spread by mass media agencies. Before Schramm’s seminal work others had built foundational work for this world view. McPhail catalogues that Lipset (1959) had argued that economic and political development was important to the formation of modern democracies, and Lucien Pye (1963) had also set forward the idea that communication was important in the forming of democracies through enabling participation (McPhail 2009). The mass media was seen as a vehicle for socialising developing societies into modern ones by specifically transforming the members of the society through exposition to “new”, “strange situations” and “opinions” to which they would later become familiar (Lerner 1958 cited in Sparks 2007, pg 23). The transformations would end older traditions, social structures and economic production methods that were believed to be symptomatic of under-development. ‘Modern’ was western and the ideas that formed western societies could be transplanted to develop under-developed countries. Also, ‘modern’ was bound up with technological advancement and a “state of mind” (Sparks 2007 pg. 24; McPhail 2009).

The ‘dominant’ theory was very influential and was applied to both academic work and field agencies’ practices in development aid in Third World countries. The net

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<sup>16</sup> Including Walter Lipmann, Harold Laswell, Edward Bernays and Jacques Ellul

effect of this theoretical trajectory was the funding of aid programmes geared towards the development of poorer countries by Europe and especially America, but these aid programmes did not deliver the promised results as the donor funds were misappropriated by despotic governments (McPhail 2009). Also, in the belief that the development work would require human agents to ‘diffuse’ Western ideas, the paradigm also became linked with the process known as the “diffusion of innovations” (Lycombe Eko 2003, pg. 176). It proposed the use of local elites, who were considered to be more in favour of Western innovations and ideas, to become centres for the spread of new ideas into local populations, and hence the operational model of the theory worked on a “two-step flow....centre-periphery” arrangement (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997, pg. 14) that organised “a coherent programme...of...propaganda, the sociology of elites, the effects of mass communication, and the science of diffusion” (Sparks 2007 pg. 26).

And thus, even before critics from both the West and developing countries would later point out, the ‘dominant paradigm’ theories influenced the work of aid agencies and national governments that formulated social agendas. It was driving Western-values that were discordant with local cultures, and critics argued that the operationalisation of the theory was imperialist, or neo-colonialist, in nature and was likely to provoke social discord from being a non-national orchestration. By the late nineteen-eighties and early nineteen-nineties, academic research linking “communication to national development” was being criticised for being unchallenging of the paradigm as the “linear” fit and prescriptive nature of the theory was in doubt (Sparks 2007 pg 28 - 30; McPhail 2009 pg 9, 22).

### **‘Dependency Theory’**

Thus, an alternative analysis of the structure of global information flows emerged which posited that the form of structuring was a culturally imperialist conditioning of developing countries by advanced nations. The theory proposed that the way information flow worked was to create a domination, culturally, of communities by elite nations to leverage “capital interests” through a structuring of global trade policies that advocated neo-liberalism as the way to development. The underlying socio-political reasons was claimed to be an attempt by Western superpowers to

create a bulwark against the advance of Eastern socialist ideology, which was becoming attractive to developing countries that had been disappointed by the development promises of the ‘dominant’ paradigm (McPhail, pg 22). McPhail argues that the “cultural imperialism” theory stemmed essentially from Marxist philosophy and social theory, and highlighted the transmission of Western-values within aid work and world trade relations within the knowledge transmission enterprises of development and development communication. These tended to emphasise neo-liberalism in order to create, or influence the creation of, western-style social systems to challenge communist/socialist ideas. McPhail identifies Herbert Schiller<sup>17</sup> as a key theorist of this alternate analysis, and suggests that the theory is based on Antonio Gramsci’s<sup>18</sup> theory of social development in Europe, which suggested that social benefits from planned capitalist economies had created cultural and media hegemonies and mitigated the social unrest that would have naturally occurred according to the trajectory of Marxist social development theory. Neo-liberalism, thus, gave western corporations economic rewards for their products in new and developing markets while satisfying the interests of their national governments in gaining geo-political strength by replacing previously “blatant” methods of “empire-building” (Boyd-Barrett 1981 - 2; McPhail 2009: pg 25, citing Schiller 1970).

If the state of the world’s information flow was inimical to catalysing development, as had been hoped, then in what other ways could this development process be advanced?

The UNESCO, as the body concerned with global cultural inter-play, therefore became the site for the debate about the net flow and effects of the exchange of information between nations in the nineteen-seventies (Pendakur 1983). Dependency theorists, the critics of the ‘dominant’ paradigm, who supported the neo-imperialist argument, forced the debate during the New World Information Order talks, which spanned several years of the late-seventies, to the dissatisfaction of America and its supporting European powers. At the heart of the debate were the uses and access to global information and communication equipment as well as the net flows of information between Western states and the states of the Non-Aligned Movement, and

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<sup>17</sup> Mass Communications and American Empire (1969),

<sup>18</sup> Antonio Gramsci and Joseph A. Buttigieg (2010)

the nature of representational issues in news and media stories about conditions of development, etc. The response of the Eastern bloc was to align with the Non-Aligned Movement, which based its arguments on the cultural imperialism mode of analysis. This set up a conflict with Western countries and saw the withdrawal of America and Britain from the dialogue (Sparks 2007 citing Nordenstreng 1984; McPhail 2009). The contentions led to the formation of the McBride Commission (Pendakur 1983), instituted to research and map a process for continuing the dialogue on the basis of an adequate evaluation of the global information processes. The outcome of the process was the creation of the International Programme for Development Communication and various regional news agencies that sought to better share information between southern countries and, thereby, counter the dominance of global information by the major western news agencies which, being only a few, were seen to be wholly determinist of an hegemonic representation and selective itemisation of the coverage of global information in news reports (Pendakur 1983; Sparks 2007). In the end, the state of world mass media relations has remained an international problem (Sparks 2007) that still continues.

## **Micro-social Theories: Communication, Culture and Development**

Technology and media, in the form of global communication technology, has arguably provided the largest impetus to social change by bridging the distances between nation-states across the globe (Weinstein 2005; Chase-Dunn and Babones 2006). The social change implied is the absorption of cultural references distributed by television content; it is, arguably, pervasive and could be fundamentally re-shaping the world through cultural exchanges (Thompson 1995; Sparks 2007; Selznick 2008). The major direction of this change flows from the advanced economies of the world to the large urban cities in developing countries and connects to their rural parts, distributing media content and messages as a consequence (Weinstein 2005).

Part of this involves communicating new knowledge and is concerned with transforming social practices and promoting social consciousness and awareness about issues and information. Social marketing theories have evolved to provide the techniques associated with change communication, often called Communication for

Social Change (CSC) strategies. They are used in creating social change messages and have been applied to social projects such as behaviour change, crime prevention, and public education (Capobianco 2003; Quick 2003; Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009). CSC relies on the belief that media *is* able to exert social change influence on a population. Can such devices be used in the context of national social development, and how?

Media forms such as radio and television present under-developed countries with the opportunity to mitigate the detriments of low literacy levels and allow the optimising of a 'nationalist hegemony' for development (Alhassan, 2003). The UNESCO, and aid agencies of governments from advanced countries, invest significant expertise and funding into developing community-based agencies in under-developed countries in the hope that they would help the transformation of the social conditions that would make development possible (UNESCO 2005). It is reasonable to suggest therefore that for media to play a role in the development process requires that it finds a culturally relevant mode of communication practice and organisation model both suitable to its production systems and the end market of its products, where social change is the goal. The cultural location of the media and their control in that context underlines their effectiveness in a social development role.

The fore-grounded theories indicate a necessary and strategic understanding of the role of culture in contexts of communication and development. The dependence of development on localised cultural factors and their influence on development is broadly captured in the report of the Commission for Africa (2005). It notes that the "dynamic" (pp. 121) and organic nature of cultural development creates society's "ideas and perceptions", and that culture holds society's "values". This implies that sources of culture transmission are key factors of social transformation and development. The report also highlights the relevance of media's "role" as a "generator of change" (pp. 143) and thus confirms a developmental interdependence between culture, media and society, and reflects the belief that the media could help Third World countries develop (Johnson 2001; BBC World Service Trust 2006).

Culture is defined as a broad concept that captures, including the above notions, "beliefs, texts about the beliefs and ideas ..... systems of communication" (Falola

2008, pg 1). The relevance of culture in the African sense encompasses all forms of life expressions so that it becomes the dominant world view; everything is cultural, and culture is the lens through which everything is established, from communication, power structures, and identities to occupations. The cultures in African are not homogenous though across many cultures common phenomena are observable and their essences evoke a “oneness” (Falola 2008, pg 4). The shared colonial history, with its cultural impositions from Europeans, and subsequent militancy and new nation projects, also means that Africans and Europeans have constructed diametrically opposed identities of otherness; Black versus White, native versus alien, “primitive” culture versus “high culture” (ibid. pg. 5).

Yet, throughout history, Africans have used culture as a defence, enabling them to assuage and survive various calamities, both natural and human (Bruijn, Dijk et al. 2007; Falola 2008) and posit within it the means to both human and national emancipation (Falola 2004; 2008; Juang 2008). Culture within groups is important as it functions as an organising mechanism for African society; dictating the means and mechanics of interaction, representation, politics, and as a means to form nationalist hegemonies and seek development (Falola 2008). This means of social control is often in the hands of the powerful leaders and social “elites”; the western educated, who use the duality of native and foreign cultural knowledge to mark social difference in economic and political ways (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997; Falola 2004).

### **Participatory Communication Theory**

Thus, it is that the failure of earlier paradigm in development communication to provide adequate answers to the utilisation of media in development has not resulted in a ‘vacuum’ in the theoretical field. The recognition of the importance of local contexts of culture and history are contributing to shaping the value and influence of media products within development communication and has led to alternative approaches to the problem of siting media within social development projects. Significant of these has been the ‘participatory’ paradigm.

Grounded in the factoring of cultural and social realities, the paradigm formed a ‘third-way’ approach and emphasised “sustainability and peoples participation”



(Mefalopulos and World Bank 2008, pg. 7) in a new approach that encourages grassroots involvement in development planning and goal-setting based on local communication and historic factors, and in this way the importance of local social issues, it is hoped, would out-weigh economic measurements as prime yard-sticks for development aid work.

‘Participatory communication’ (Midgley 1986; Madzingira 2001; Dagron and Tufte 2006; Sparks 2007; McPhail 2009) is the current favoured approach to tackling development issues and has spawned a host of communication-integrated applications in the activities of local level development partners at community-level and in social development planning processes, and is championed, once again, by the major Western donor institutions (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009):

“Meaningful participation cannot occur without communication. Unfortunately, too many development programs, including community-driven ones, seem to overlook this aspect and, while paying attention to participation, do not pay similar attention to communication, intended as the professional use of dialogic methods and tools to promote change. To be truly significant and meaningful, participation needs to be based on the application of genuine two-way communication principles and practices” (Mefalopulos and World Bank 2008).

Increased importance is attached to civic participation in government and local “decision-making” regarding development; the “paternalistic” modes of communication and agenda-setting being discouraged (Frank Gerace and Hernando Lazaro in Dagron and Tufte 2006, pg. 64).

During the 1950’s Paulo Freire did literacy work in Brazil the lessons from which, later, made it possible for the benefactors to make requisitions for social improvements and this begun Freire’s work and influence in developing the participatory paradigm (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009). The paradigm focuses on “dialogical communication” processes that emphasise “collective processes” for developing solutions, exercises and methods to solving identified development goals (ibid, pg. 2), and relies for success on understanding development issues from the

viewpoint of local people with external expertise helping to execute or facilitate the execution of goals (McPhail 2009, pg. 27).

Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997) argues that culturally relevant modes of communication are important in modelling mediated communication for social change, basing his arguments on the traditional dialogical communication models from the *Akan* peoples in Ghana and pointing to Freire's work on "conscientization", which advocates a two-way dialogical process in knowledge sharing (pg. 27 – 28, citing Freire 1981). Ansu-Kyeremeh considers Freire's concept of "praxis"; of the human capacity for "reflective" thinking and "action" as the result of cogitation (pg. 23), and suggests that Freire's work sets forward a theoretical approach to development communication much more aligned to the African cultural setting.

Within that context, "education is a cultural act" (*ibid.* citing Freire 1972; 1985) that can oppress or emancipate; stating further the Freireian view that actions are more affected by instructive media products than by "dialectical" processes; such media products are "invasive" and manipulative, whereas true communication is "dialogical" and generates "education" without bias (*ibid.* pg. 23-25). The Freireian position reflects a resistance to the dominant paradigm but also partially concedes 'hypodermic' effects theory in producing cultural shifts in subject populations, by suggesting that "during communication there are no passive subjects" (*ibid.* pg. 24 citing Freire 1981). This implies that dominant theory-led practices of the time did not achieve 'true communication' but worked on an "extension" (*ibid.*) principle that strengthens the communication centre. The message giver's objective is to control the receiver. Ansu-Kyeremeh, however, is of the view that the role of media in development communication should be embedded in an understanding of a localised "theory of society" (pg. 24) and develops an Afro-centric paradigmatic:

Arguing that modes of communication are culturally deterministic and thus different everywhere, he borrows from Freire's 'conscientization' theory, (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997, pg. 25). Culturally, Ansu-Kyeremeh posits, African societies have advantages that have been over-looked by academics in the desire to 'modernise' them using the 'diffusion of innovations' model and the western social theory of a predictable social structural transition from feudal to modern societies. The advantages include

“endogenous media and communication systems” that are effective in knowledge-sharing which Western labels disparage as being “primitive”, (*ibid.* citing Hutton and Cohen 1975) to suggest an absence of “culture” (*ibid.* citing Warren 1986 and Brameld 1957). Ansu-Kyeremeh considers this a stereotyped approach to anthropological studies of “non-mainstream Western and Eastern” cultures (*ibid.* pg. 90). Also, within the traditional communal settings of Africa, power-relationships are “centripetal” and depend on coalescence between “socio-groups”<sup>19</sup> (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997, pg. 92) for authoritative actions at the political level, hence the balance of power is always equitable between the top and bottom of society.

Ansu-Kyeremeh argues that along with these factors, the “communal” space, which exists between the “individual” and the “mass”, and within which social interaction occurs, presents opportunities for a media system to co-join and share in participatory knowledge formation and dissemination for development in a manner free of political bias (*ibid.* pg. 92). This space, and in which traditional African communication modes naturally exist, is open to all community members and often exhibits a dialogical and gender representative mode of communication. The communal space is not singular but reflects the plural and ‘centripetal’ nature of African societies. It is scattered and constituted by various social groups. Thus, programmes made in this space would have a greater opportunity to reflect social plurality (*ibid.* citing Ansah 1979). This positioning of the utility of the communal space puts forward an understanding of the construct of the African ‘public sphere’ within the traditional mode of communication.

In his appropriation, Ansu-Kyeremeh, resolves that the ‘dominant’ theory-led, centre to periphery, broadcasting practices instituted with colonialism have little relevance to traditional modes of communication that involve many complex, culturally determined, forms (*ibid.* pg. 36). Yet, a modern mass media technology-based communication system could fit into this space in a culturally relevant development communication role through a process of “indigenization”; the “development of an indigenous tradition of social enquiry” (*ibid.* pg 99, citing Alo 1984). ‘Indigenization’, Ansu-Kyeremeh suggests, is necessary as the technological media

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<sup>19</sup> See Bruijn *et al.* 2007 for an extensive discussion on socio-groups in Africa and also Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997)

are controlled by powerful local elites that are imprinted with Western values (*ibid.* citing Genoud 1969). His position echoes Fanon's call for an African cultural consciousness (Fanon 1963; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997 citing Manuwuiké 1978), the advocations of the Negritude philosophy (Ahluwalia and Ahluwalia 2001), and other similar positions that have sought to incorporate African social democratic values into processes that would drive continental social emancipation projects. In Ansu-Kyeremeh's opinion, indigenization would occur through a de-linking from western modes and re-basing on traditional cultural modes, to cancel the 'duality' that is a product of colonial history, and in this proposition contrasts with Nkrumah's 'consciencism' that finds no need to undo non-indigenous cultural influences. For Ansu-Kyeremeh, the de-linkage would better reflect the historicity of media in an African setting, such as Ghana's, because the colonial cultures and institutions were super-imposed on African ones and therefore traditional cultural modes still exist and are salient as social utilities. This contrasts with the Latin Americas of Freire where local traditions were supplanted by European culture and thus made it more difficult, if not impossible, for natives to reconnect with native forms culture that pre-existed the Spanish conquests.

Thus, contemporary communication research now is guided by a reforming of understandings around the interplay of locale, culture, trans-national media influences, and the language and semiotic imperatives in communication processes (McPhail 2007). The importance of culture in determining the directions, nature and pace of development cannot be over-emphasised (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997), and immediately evident social factors affecting structure, social mechanics of power-relationships, money, education and aspiration (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992; Wilkins 2000) become the crucial points of departure for considering how processes of communication may aid social development. It is in relation to this that 'social capital theory' emerges as a contested nexus of explications on the interrelatedness of culture and social manifestations of development.

## **Social Capital**

The ability of groups of people to engage in mutually beneficial "collective action" that enhances a community's richness and well-being, as a result of building

culturally-embedded “institutions” or “networks” that engage to create commonwealth, “trust” and shared interest, and works to resolve problems is referred to as *social capital* (Grootaert and Bastelaer 2002, pg. 1-3). The initial conceptualisation is attributed to Lyda Hanifan (Castiglione, Deth et al. 2008, citing Putnam 2000) who used the term to refer to the way that communities were built internally with regards to social conventions and practices that promoted their ability to get things done. Castiglione et al. (2008) goes on to explain that in the nineteen-eighties, two social scientists working separately developed concepts on the same terminology. Castiglione et al (*ibid.*) state that James Coleman (1987; 1988) regarded “social relations” (*ibid.* pg. 3) very much in the same way as an investment asset, thus attributing to it the same properties for enterprise as money, or ‘capital’. Coleman analysed its extent and influence as being determined both by the reward for community members’ co-operations within the social group and the expected actions or behaviours required by cultures and traditions. Pierre Bourdieu developed a similar thesis and recognised social capital as an attribute that marks social differentiation, and exists in social connections that facilitate transference between generations of the typologies of existing social characteristics. He thus considered such connectedness as ‘capital’ that was transmutable, along with cultural capital, into economic power. Social capital, thus, gives ability to make wealth or hold power (*ibid.*).

Over the years other philosophers have contributed to understanding and broadening the concept of social capital and its role within society, including de Torqueville (1840), Durkheim (1893) and Fukuyama (1995) (Hooghe and Stolle 2003; Halpern 2005). Halpern (2005) further suggests that within the field of social studies, the term ‘social capital’ is contested by many researchers regarding what the term means and what it can really account for in society; citing Portes (1998), Anheier and Kendall (2002) and Nuissl (2002). Halpern, however, considers social capital as being composed of “*networks; norms, values and expectancies; and sanctions*” (*ibid.* pg. 10). Grootaert and Bastelaer (2002) also list the first two features but add “trust” and “reciprocity” (pg. 3).

Robert Putnam, however, is responsible for the current understanding and usage of the term. In his book *Making Democracy Work* he used the concept to explain the active communal civic behaviour of an Italian town’s people (Halpern 2005), and later

refined the concept to focus more on group facets that enable the achievement of goals through co-operation, more commonly referred to in the literature as “social fabric” (Halpern 2005, pg. ix). This fabric is made up of the cultural aspects of societies that enable people, unknown to each other, to socialise or work together (*ibid.*).

The concept, though, has been criticised for vagueness and an insufficient ability to demonstrate cause and effect on the large scale and much new work is emphasising the applicability and need for stronger empirical results of horizontal investigations in social “networks” (Bartkus and Davis 2009, *citing* Solow 1999). To John Harriss (2002) the concept has been a seductive success with global development agencies as it provides a means by which to shift focus from the underlying problems of neo-liberal development planning policies and strategies championed by Washington-based agencies. Thus, the blunt-force of neo-liberalism and its association with individualism could now be assuaged with a new concept that could include the importance of human agency in the processes of development, and also explain the relative differences in successes with development planning in different places.

Navarro (2002) criticises the popularity of social capital theory in the social sciences, and sees it as the result of Putnam’s re-modelling of the concept to fit a capitalist worldview. He states that Putnam’s version of the theory, especially, makes claims of cause and effect that are without basis in rigorous research, such as a “mathematical” (pg. 4) connection between social interaction and longevity. Navarro’s main contention is that Putnam fails to account for the agency of political power in influencing social outcomes, and in the centrality of conceptualising ‘capital’ as an economic resource and measurement of social performance. Thus, societies with high social capital should logically earn higher per capita in economic performance. Navarro argues that Putnam’s appropriation of the theory resonates with global economic institutions such as the World Bank in that it provides them with an answer to global economic inequalities that overlooks that fact that the presumed poor performance of poorer countries is not due to a lack of social capital but rather due to distortions in the structures of traditional societies from communal forms due to the introduction of capitalism. Navarro therefore sees a contradiction in the theoretical

position that advocates social capital and strong community as a basis for development in that capitalism promotes competition and individualism.

However, it is the position of this thesis that the concept of social capital is not incompatible with either strong community or capitalism, in that it situates national or regional and local communities as the competing units. When people co-operate for mutual benefit on the basis of trust in equitable and fair distribution of reward for effort, the system is both capitalist and communal.

While most writers on the subject have tied their ideas mainly to communities as residencies of social capital, Hooghe and Stolle (2003) also consider that there are two other factors; the “historical”; culture, norms, etc, and “contemporary” agencies (pg. 20 – 21); public policy and public or State institutions, given that these can have positive or negative social effects, that could have a role in shaping on-going affectations of social capital on a given population (citing, Berman, 1997, Foley and Edwards, 1998, Levi, 1998 amongst others). They suggest that a degree of “social engineering” might be required through social institutions, in instances of low social capital, to get a community to begin to embrace its members in order to create the essential elements that makes the concept important as a mechanism for social change. Grootaert and Bastelaer (2002) argue that networks created by government, associations and groups, etc, will lack the “cognitive” (pg. 3) or softer elements in naturally existing communities, whereas Hooghe and Stolle (2003, citing Rothstein 2002) contradict this by indicating that Scandinavian countries enjoy high levels of civic participation at the instance of public institutions but put forward that levels of democracy are likely factors in generating social capital through state institutions, in a direct proportional relationship.

## **Language**

While social capital may provide communities with the ability to work together, inevitably the strength of community bonds is dependent on the means of communication that facilitates all social interactions. In almost all of Africa various European languages are used as “official languages” (Boateng 1978, pg. 55) and these are still extensively used in national communication. The languages also served as a

means of “assimilation” of natives into European cultures (Boateng 1978), creating class distinctions between speakers and non-speakers of these languages (Falola 2004).

Kramsch (2008) states that language is embedded in “multiple and complex ways” (ibid., pg. 4; Risager 2006; 2008) extending social interaction by facilitating the sharing and creation of experiences, references for the social and physical world, signifying high-order emotive experiences and creating or bridging distances between people and their experiences. Language serves as the basis for creating meaning and is therefore a signifier of embedded representations of culture, identity, experience, aspiration, and knowledge, and when used in both its verbal and non-verbal codes is able to ‘symbolise’ and ‘embody’ a “cultural reality” (Kramsch 2008, pg. 2). The relationship between language and culture is of interest because language presents the opportunity by which to study the expressions of cultural paradigms and identities based on culture (Risager 2006). Culture grows human experiences but it is language that gives “constrained” labels of reference by which those experiences can be shared and recorded by affording a way to make “meaning” of those social experiences (Kramsch 2008, pg. 5) and thus offers the means also by which to ‘socialise’ or ‘aculture’ those who share the language into the culture of the language speakers. Joined with the “imaginings” of the community, language pronouncements of hopes, past achievements and future aspirations makes it possible for a community to express its ideas and “cultural reality” (ibid.); an essential part of its identity and the mistaking of which would result in misrepresentations (ibid. pg. 7, 65). Thus, language functions as a “representational system” (Hall 1997, pg. 7), that works within the codes implicit in “metaphorical uses of the language concept” (Risager 2006, pg. 3). This may be what makes language a powerful force that evokes historical, cultural, linguistic, regional and national identities, and to prohibit a language is to deny a group its existence (Kramsch 2008).

While there is a clear relationship between language and culture, they can be seen in separate analytical conceptions that allows for policy-makers to factor and utilise linguistic and cultural phenomena (Risager 2006). For broadcast media, the problematic of language use is one of choosing a broadcast voice; to leave out a language is to indicate a cultural and linguistic exclusion (Fardon and Furniss 2000),



with dire political consequences for a national service. This is despite the fact that across Africa, people often speak several languages on a daily basis, while in many other parts of the world languages are in decline or ascendancy (Laitin 1992; Clingingsmith 2006). Multilingualism and a reliance on a “repertoire” of languages is common practice, and people often speak different languages in different settings, switching easily between, “mixing” and creating “pidgins” and language hybrids that sustain and create new language forms (Laitin 1992, pg. 71 - 73; Heine and Nurse 2000, pg. 298 - 299). It appears that for the majority of Africans, this is a normal occurrence in daily life that allows people to play many roles of significance and access opportunities situated in different social contexts, but political interference, such as language planning or standardisation, may instigate conflicts and allegations of social discrimination (Laitin 1992; Baldauf and Kaplan 2004; David Clingingsmith 2006; Kramsch 2008). Also a functional rivalry may exist between native languages and established European languages (Heine and Nurse 2000). While Laitin (1992) opines that the use of languages does not appear to have class and stratification allusions being contextually appropriated, Heine and Nurse (2000) are of the contrary opinion, however it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the socio-linguistic opinions behind these assertions.

Yet, the issue of language is of critical developmental importance in the post-colonial territories, especially in Africa where several thousands of languages are spoken, and for the broadcast media strategies to overcome this have included the multi-lingual services, as done by GBC, and the multiple single-language programming services as done by most international broadcasters, BBC, CNN, VOA, into Africa. Yet, it is still possible for dominant languages to become established with media support when a fostering of a major language creates reliance on its frequency as a transactional tool within communication to make programme access easier (David Clingingsmith 2006). Salawu (2006) advocates the incorporation of multilingualism as a strategy for development, emphasising the importance of lingua franca as media of fuller expression of social realities, and multilingualism as being useful for harnessing an understanding of all these experiences; since the oral nature of African cultures makes broadcast media more accessible than print media. Salawu viewed this as being important for continued socialisation and cultural survival.

Thus, in the view of Walter Rodney (1982), development means any change that increases a nation's capacity to govern its society and its exchanges with other nations independently. National 'economic' development is taken to mean the connected process through which a nation would increase the value of its material well-being through the development of technologies from knowledge of science and the organisation of production modes to satisfying the needs of citizens; anything that would adversely impact this independent capability would produce under-development. Rodney, however, insists that development is not limited to economic terms and should include issues such as the growth of civil rights and liberties, the advocating for gender and sexual orientation discriminations to be outlawed, demands for unrestricted emigration, 'pro-choice' and euthanasia. These are social issues and attitudes towards these are often culturally determined but the debates around them are often led by the media establishments in the world, and thus the arguments do not happen in cultural isolation. In effect, the factors pushing global social change also become factors of nationalised social development through the media, and the attitudinal positions of a nation's media, either in accepting or resisting these changes, affect a nation's development.

Furthermore, development requires the co-operative ability of a community to work in concert and use an internal structure that is mutually supportive of members. Levels of communalism and social capital thus become of key importance; the social capital concept residing in the notion of an 'invisible glue' within communities that allows the finding of a commonness of purpose in working together without evident individual motivations for gain, in order for communities to develop (Halpern 2005).

It also becomes apparent that a culturally, and linguistically (Hall 1997; David Clingingsmith 2006; Risager 2006; Kramsch 2008), relevant broadcasting system could participate in the processes of participatory communication (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997) and aid the building of social capital by facilitating, linking and bridging, where applicable, suitable and desirable, between community members and across society. It could provide documentation and assist in monitoring social changes, and disseminating skills and knowledge between homogenous communities. However, to provide such a strategic utility of the audio-visual broadcasting facility requires an appreciation of the influences of television on the larger society.

## Television and Social Change

Located within the home, and nested in familiarity, television presents an opportunity to relax and observe, in a viewing mode that is distanced, and absorbs the viewer into a snipped up and streamed cultural milieu (John Ellis in Bennett 1990; Silverstone 1994), its pace regulating the rhythm of some domestic activities (Silverstone 1994). This situation is arguably the key factor to its assumption of a centralised position in most societies where it is available; its combined video and aural messaging means it constructs perceptual 'authenticity' and exerts power and influence in contributing to the construction of 'social reality' (Searle 1995; Daymon and Holloway 2002; Malik 2002), and defining the 'pictures in our heads' (Lippmann 1922, in Gorham, 1999) about the immediate social environment and the world at large. "Social reality" is generally accepted to mean the body of "public images" (Hall 1997), impressions, and "notions" (Malik 2002), accepted and unquestioned in social discussions; assumed to be generally true or real. Malik further argues that television is able to achieve its influence through the ability to adopt a 'bystander' approach and to neutrally echo 'official' sources, while its operative and selective mechanism that shapes content is shielded (Hindman in Demers and Viswanath 1999); it therefore is able to pass off this audio-visual construction as a real representation of the world (*ibid*). Television, therefore becomes an important platform on which a reflection of not only deemed 'truth' (*ibid*) but the dominant concepts or 'notions' that construct 'social reality' which represent the world and society to itself, become conveyed in a powerful way.

The main problematic in theorising the power of television is, as is apparent everywhere there is television, its use and fascination with all its audiences; it retains a high position as a leisure activity in most households with television. Television serves as a dominant source of opinion and information from within and without a community, and has direct engagement in expressions of 'shared culture' (McQuail, 2000, pg. 4; Miller 1971, cited in Glessing and White 1976) for a community. It is believed to be the most "pervasive medium known to modern man" and as a "catalytic social instrument" has changed society "for better or worse" (Miller 1971, cited in Glessing and White, 1976).

It is this centrality to its audiences that gives television its power to compel society in a much more radical way than other media forms. The structures, that support the making of television, are important considerations in any analysis of the scope of its ability to influence social change. Additional to this, the politics in regulatory frameworks, as well as the economics of production, further frame the ability of television to perform in a role and to be a *social transformation* agent. If, however, as suggested by media theory previously discussed, television, in its power relationships, normally aids the social status quo by performing in a social control capacity, how is it possible for television to affect and change the structural dynamics of a given society? To understand television and its influence on modern society, it is necessary to identify the relevant theories and opinions that consider how it could perform as a social transformation actor.

## **Modernity Ideology and Television**

From the mid-1980's television became a global medium as broadcasters sought out new markets made possible by satellite reach, a natural consequence of the global expansion of "capitalist modernity" (Barker 1997, pg. 3; Giddens 1991) through the institutions of world trade and economics. Television itself is seen as a construct of modernity in technology, a "totemic" (pg. 275) symbol of modernity that is in itself embedded in a cultural milieu; material progress, cultural enlightenment, poor cultural taste, and/or affluence, all being encoded associations, while the set itself is placed in a socialised context that reflects the owner's social identity construct; modern, progressive or successful (Morley 2007).

The contextual problem of modernity as a concept in the media is situated in the understanding of the dynamic relations between media as a product of society, the motivations of content producers, and the institutions of state that regulate it. Garnham (2000) discusses this problematic as a continuing extension of the influence of the Enlightenment in the debate over how social development is mediated. He quotes the opposing views of Weber and Marx in regard to this, showing that the former believed that the emergence of bureaucracy or division of labour allowed a better mechanism for the realisation of social development, the key aim of the "Enlightenment project" (*ibid.* pg. 83), whereas the latter believe that specialisation

would lock individuals into roles that they could not escape from, effectively trapping them and nullifying individual potential for growth, or development. This produces a problem regarding how humankind could be effectively emancipated – set free to enjoy the fullness of being and realising full potential.

This problem of “emancipation” (*ibid.*) raises a dichotomy of thought regarding the progress, or process, paths to modernisation. The Weberian paradigm suggests that the media and television as labour specialisations are possessed with enough specialist skills in order for their ideological products to satisfy the emancipatory needs of the rest of society – television can tell us what to do and how to do it, and we can trust it. The Marxist process would require all individuals to exert equal determination in arriving at equal social development by contributing to all aspects of social determination; achieving fullness of potential individually yet contributing, by concomitant effect, to the whole development of society. Garnham, reviews these positions in relation to Kant's (1970) view that the problem is resolved if the dissemination of thought product is through open social communication, making debate and the “public sphere” (Habermas 1989) the way to harness efforts towards social development.

The media as ideology propagator is locked into this debate due to its ability to present opportunities for open social communication, aiding conceptions of ‘meaning’ and proffering information that has influence over the rest of society. Its role effectively raises the question of *how* modernity is represented to suggest social development.

The ‘modernity’ concept has had profound impact on the nature of communication within and across the boundaries of societies. The domination of the world economic arrangement by mainly American and Anglophonic television products skews the televisual environment of social communication towards Western modes of debate, idea signification and representation, and forms the underlying rationale in the theory of ‘cultural imperialism’ (Barker 1997). This theory explicates the global exchange of cultural goods in terms that suggest a direct correlation between the organisations that produce exported cultural goods and a resulting neo-imperial mediascape; western ideologies and representations of modernity communicated through media products

that dominate the television screens of most parts of the world, and is held by some to effectively shape notions of modernity, culture and identity (Barker 1997). Barker argues that the theory of cultural imperialism is not concrete enough to account for the claims it makes – essentially, blaming American tele-visual producers for socialising the rest of the world into ‘American-ness’. Barker suggests that there is actually a diversity of alternative values in American tele-visual products, and argues that the hegemonic model ascribed to values communicated by American television is either non-existent or latent at best; the dominance of White ethnic majorities, consumerism, individualism and class roles is perhaps assumed or unnecessarily highlighted by theorists.

Yet, the presence of these artefacts has been much researched and commented on. The process of production in American television is dominated by White Americans, and their perspectives, even when alternative, remain characteristically biased. This is suggested to be because the interaction of media and society is such that the relevance of media to its society is most effective when it reflects the tone of social discourse and positions a media institution at the confluence of struggles between the larger mass society and its political classes (Martin-Barbero 1993). The idea posits the role of media as a liberator and contributor to class struggle in a Marxist paradigm.

On television, cultural ideology is seen in the “mass production of fictions ...television plays and series ...all pervasive, with consumption obligatory because of its presence ” that depict the “social organisation” (Stephen Heath in Bennett 1990, pg. 46) of a, predominantly, Western society that focuses on the individual and their relations to their environment and other people. The “family” is situated in the middle-ground, as the compromise to community and society, and marriage as the site of “happiness” (Stephen Heath in Bennett 1990, pg. 47). Chris Barker (1997), cites Tomlinson’s (1991), position that television viewing is a negotiated event in which an ideological exchange occurs between the viewer and the visual text. Thus contemporary television exchanges ideas of possibility and modernity with viewers; an example being crime shows and the “*CSI effect* ...the near infallibility of science to solve all crimes” (Byers and Johnson 2009, pg. 3; Stevens 2011) or the ‘modern sexual liberation’ message implicit in “love” and “soap operas” (Barker 1997, pg. 146).

If television viewing can be interpreted then as a cultural and ideological exchange, how can development communication messages be embedded in content as an ideologically emancipatory sub-text, and how would the 'propaganda model's' explanations of hegemony communication, and the advancement of the 'participatory paradigm' intersect with micro-theories that could explain an 'effect' of television?

### **Meaning, Ideology and Representation in 'constructed reality'**

Given the theoretical position that the media do not have a 'hypodermic' causative influence on society, what does media theory explain to be television's messaging role in society?

Like other mass media, it is important to understand television's work for several reasons: it aids communities' in understanding their environment through mediating aspects of their social reality through representing, interpreting and evaluating issues, views and opinions, as well as providing entertainment, and serving as a window into other environments and experiences (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler 1999). Television products, much the same as other mass media products, are able to facilitate a commonwealth understanding of environmental phenomena by constructing a product that is a narrative combined with realism, representations, and formats (genre) embedded in a broader process of social discourses. Where this product meets its audience 'meaning' is produced – that facility that allows the audience to interpret television's media text.

Burton (2005) discusses perspectives on message embedding in texts and audience reception and states that classical effects theory, akin to "Marxist" "media – society" thinking, focus on the media text as the locus of "meaning" – the result of making sense or "reading" media texts (*ibid*, pg. 47). This classical model sees the producer of the text as being responsible for imbuing the text with its meanings. The producer is thus a 'conscious propagandist' (Chomsky and Hermann 2010). An alternative model (citing Barthes 1977) sees media texts as either presenting opportunities for rapid 'sense making' through the use of 'formats' or leaving space for 'meaning' negotiation to occur by allowing multiple possibilities for interpretation. Accordingly,

the viewer is free to infer meaning and will do so from previously socialised references that may not relate to a producer's intent. Lastly, Burton sees that scholars such as Fiske (1987) and Jenkins (1992) consider media texts as being primed with meanings that are available to the audience who can access these through their interaction with the text at the moment of interaction between texts and their audience. Some texts are easily understood because they are imbued with attributes that allow for such rapid decoding, and some are not. Media texts therefore are very much repositories of a "potential" to convey meaning (*ibid*, pg. 48). 'Meaning', therefore, results as an individually constructed cognitive product that occurs at the interactive junction between content (media texts) and the individual, whose experiences of the media texts are influenced by dominant or minor ideological persuasions sited within social discourses on the text subject (Burton 2005; Garnham, 2000).

Umberto Eco agrees with this analytical approach and suggests that within the negotiation of meaning what occurs, and what results, is partly influenced by the programme producer but is also filtered through the psycho-social experiences of the viewer: '...between the sender and the receiving point there are many filters sensitised by psychological, social and cultural screens' (Eco in Alvarado et al 1993, pg. 103).

There may therefore be a 'gap' between the intentions of the sender and the resultant understanding in the mind of the viewer; the 'gap' being a result of differences that would exist between the 'ideological' intentions of the sender and the understanding of the viewer. Such ideological cues may awaken or deaden 'sensitivity' to subjects within the message, and could include an awareness of representation issues inherent within televisual (Malik 2002) messages that progress the sense-making process.

The concept of 'representation' in the televisual message therefore allows for the analysis of television's constructed reality. Following Burton (2005), it can be imputed that representations of society are based on ideological constructs, or beliefs, about aspects of reality structured into a suitable narrative. Representation in television is accomplished through a 'reductive' approach to codifying texts and in so doing there is a loss of significant amount of information that would have presented more accurate constructions of the real world (Mastro 2003). Furthermore, the process



of reality construction is biased towards the ideological perspectives of a dominant social majority who, often, would be in control of the media messaging process; television therefore reinforces the dominant social view point (Burgoon et al, 1983) that propagates a hegemonic worldview that justifies existing social structures and its representations in the social order.

Barker (1997) discusses a theory of audience roles and 'meaning' making in terms of the affective ideological imperatives inherent in the construction and consumption of television. The need to see television as an affective mechanism that can channel its audiences' uses and gratifications, especially in commercial television where advertisers and producers have a need to use ratings to prove dependencies and caused action in market awareness and consumption patterns, promoted a viewpoint that an audience is "passive" (*ibid.* pg. 113) and therefore can be led perceptually as producers intend (Gandy 1990). Barker argues that television provides the capability to "standardise and share common cultural meanings with virtually all members of society", and leads to *temporal* formations of hegemonies (pg. 114) when audiences, individually yet collectively, participate in watching a programme. Burton (2005) agrees that in regards to ideology, the media are thought to be either a focal point of conflicts for hegemonic dominance (Gramsci 1968 in Barker, 1997) or for manipulative use (Althusser, 2005; 1971 in Barker, 1997). Television therefore inflicts an ideological persuasion that is coded into its output, a dominant worldview that is maintained by the social classes, "ethnically or nationally constituted", that is in control of the output; a reflection of the media-power relationship that exists between producers and society (*ibid.* citing Cantor and Cantor 1992, pg. 114). He further suggests that understanding television texts in this manner opens up the discussion for cultural imperialism in exported television content in a globalised television consumption arena. Barker, however, sees this as partly a "recycled version" of the hypodermic theory, and leans towards an "active" audience theory (pg. 115).

That theoretical opposition is the currently dominant paradigm in social studies, that sees audiences as actively engaged in the process of extracting meaning from television, in many ways similar to the Barthes (1977) model, but differing in that the television output works on the level of melding the everyday familiar with the non-

familiar. Barker, citing Iser (1978), Wilson (1993), and Buckingham (1987) argues that the audience moves “between similarity and difference, and identification and distancing” depending on the audience's “specific” experience. Barker (*ibid.*) relates further theories in this “active” audience theory, citing the “radical relativist” theory as that which prefers to see sense-making in individual audience members, and thus projecting as many meanings as there are audience members. He also cites Hall (1981) in providing an “encoding-decoding model” that suggests there are biases in content understandings that work towards a “preferred meaning” (*ibid.* pg. 116). He concedes that there is therefore a case to see television sense-making as both dependent on ideological constructs as well as filtrations due to the internal mechanisms peculiar to audiences. Clearly, the role of the audience is important to television achieving a communicative function, even if only within the limits of reaching a communication goal, other than the greater desire to imbue transformative power into the audience.

Following the arguments above, it is apparent that formats and genres become the more significant aspects of theorising an understanding of how television may affect its audience. Umberto Eco (in Alvarado et al, 1993) argues that genres are important in making sense of television as they take different approaches to programme making, an ideological mechanism that is fundamental to structuring television, that has a direct link with representation. The arguments made by critics for “appropriate” (Ross 1996) representation in television is thus based on perceptions that television mirrors life, or reports ‘truth’. For its language to be understood, therefore, television relies on a ‘suspension of disbelief’ that works to confer that the content is ‘real’, whereas it may only be partially-based on some truth. Eco therefore sees a need for audience education about television in order to aid appreciation of the television message; that not all on television must be accepted as face value truth but that it is only reflective of some truth.

## **Television and Cultivation Theory**

Given the extent to which mass media content is avariciously consumed, especially television, questions about the extent of its influence and power over audiences are inevitable in theorising television. While the concept of power is evaluated in terms of

*caused action* in a subject, either through “inducements” or “sanctions” (Runciman 1989, pg. 2), the theories that explore media influence often do so through an evaluation of the ways in which its institutions are aligned with economic and political structures within the society (Douglas Blanks Hindman in Demers and Viswanath 1999). Theories also consider how culture, internal and external of media institutions, impacts the production of content, the reception by the audience, and thus its ability to affect behaviours – resulting in many effects theories though none of these have been conclusively proven except in some contextual situations (Burton 2005).

On the other hand, *cultivation theory* (Gerbner 1973, in Gripsrud 2002) posits that long exposure to television content exposes an audience to structural and assumptive ideas about the world, which is buried in the televisual content, and therefore ‘media effects’ may have a large role to play in the conceptions and presumptions that frame the opinions and ideas people may have about the world they interact with, that are carried over from their exposure to the embedded values in television content (Shanahan and Morgan in Demers and Viswanath 1999). Shanahan and Jones (in Demers and Viswanath 1999) write that cultivation theory specifically addresses the influence of television, which has competed with other socialising institutions in presenting dominant “homogenous” views of the world, in establishing “social control” (pg. 32). It attempts to explain a correlation between peoples “beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and so on” in dependence to their “degree of immersion” in, and “acceptance” of television, analysing the degree of acceptance of viewers to the world views presented in content – the formation of “common sense” presumptions being as important as opinion formation and agenda-setting (*ibid.* pg. 32). Such mediated values and ideologies can be filtered into the society at large because even audiences with relatively less viewing characteristics recognise the embedded judgemental frames since the pervasive dominance of the media texts may be used as references in interactions between heavy and light viewers; thus television acts as a “message system” (Shanahan and Jones in Demers and Viswanath 1999, pg. 33; Gripsrud 2002). Shanahan and Jones, however, consider that cultivation theory is not a media effects theory but a “critical theory” (pg. 32) of how television, as a system, helps to disseminate world views by by-passing cognitive science approaches to understanding the social construction of dominant ideas with its content “interacting with an on-

going social reality”. It is therefore a test of “what people think about” through the “mainstreaming” of hegemonic ideas, and not what they do (pg. 33). Gripsrud writes that the media’s ability to affect may be very much dependent on the degree to which the audience agrees with the message values contained in media content, thus certain skills are resorted to by the media in order to achieve ‘persuasion’ including:

- social marketing,
- participatory communication,
- communication for social change, etc.

Thus understanding media products gives profound clues to the characters of nations through its performance of a social maintenance function (Thompson 1995; Demers and Viswanath 1999). Thus the problematic between media and audiences lies in what voices are, and are not, represented in the media; the foundational argument to suggesting that a public media must be widely representative of all social groups. Yet even when all voices are represented or choices offered, how well is the audience served?

While mass communication theorists have, up till now, failed to find cause and effect ratios in accounting for the impact of media use; concrete correlations remain largely hypothetical (Adams 2004), there is scope, for a strong suggestion that imported television content often dramatically affects recipient societies, where imported content, often, has values that are different from those of the receiving society (Johnson 2001). There is also further scope to suggest that strategic broadcasting systems are able to exert influence, over considerable time, to affect social perceptions though these effects may not occur in the intended fashion due to the nature of use of the medium.

## **Television, 'Nationalism' and Social Development**

In the post-colonial Africa context where disparate nations have had to be encouraged into becoming new and singular nation-states (Adu-Boahen 1990) and to develop a homogenous nationalist and patriotic ideal, a considerable role has been perceived by governments for the public media in entrenching nationalism and patriotism, suggestively, in the view that such an ideological stance would aid national cohesion and development.

While the media is often studied in its role within social and political processes, and viewed as a necessary concomitant to democratic evolution in states (Karikari 1994; Gros 1998; Tettey 2003; Nkotto 2005; Rudra 2005), the role of the media in the creation of a “nationalist” sentiment has not been sufficiently accounted for in much of media and communication writing (Mihelj 2007). Much of early writing had largely followed Deutsch (1953, cited in Mihelj 2007) in conceiving that an explosion in global communication would make nation-states less important and would thereafter dilute nationalist sentiments across the world. Sabina Mihelj (*ibid.*) goes further to suggest that the problematic was located in an insufficient empirical or sound theoretical investigations to understand the role of media systems in fostering “nationalism”, such as became evident, post-World War II (Mihelj 2007). Citing Anderson (1983), Mihelj further argues that the root causes of nationalism, and hence their embedding into media products, have been ignored, noting that in earlier work Anderson constructed the “imagined community” as produced by an intersection of a commercially-driven print media system with ideological belonging. Mihelj points out that short-comings still exist in the manner in which the subject is researched and, in her view, attention should be given to analysing the “content” of media messages rather than the processes of media (*ibid.* citing Schlesinger 2000) in relation to how messages engage with the types of “struggles”, conflict or solidarity, that are present in any community (citing Breuilly 1993). She further cites (*ibid.*) Rubert de Ventos (1995) who suggests that communication processes should be seen as a “generative factor” enabling the growth of “national identity” in providing platforms for self-referencing, ‘the nation as a collective’ (Cox 2007) sentiment, that is stronger in newer nation-states than in old ones. The nationalist sentiment, in Cox’s analysis, is a convergent product of ethnicity, cultural identity, territorialism, post-industrial modernity and symbolic relevance of “premodern cultural collectives” as well as religio-cultural “roots” (Cox 2007, citing John Armstrong 1982). In all, the agreement is on the fundamental importance of an ideology of belongingness and differentiated juxtaposition of group identities in order for ‘nationalist’ sentiments to become salient.

In “Nationalism in a Global Era: the persistence of Nations”, Young et al (2007) put together a collection of writings that suggest that nationalism is studied mainly by

academics suitably interested in the subject, who may be inherently biased towards their subject and therefore largely ignore many individuals for whom a collective world identity is practical. Napoli (1996) suggests that the large disregard in mainstream research concerning media in the nationalist role is because of inherent traditions regarding the perceived roles for the media, and these are different between advanced countries and the developing world. He suggests that in the advanced countries media is largely not expected to directly engage with a “national economic and social development” agenda, whereas this is precisely what is expected in developing countries in order to “even” disparities between them and the advanced world. Governments expected co-operation from the media and created “development communications” programmes and practices to urge this along without regard to the experiences of the advanced countries they were trying to emulate that had developed without this tacit co-operation existing between state and media. The question, therefore, is: what merit does a nationalist medium bring to social development?

Gupta (1999) views the media as being important in processes relating to nation, nationalism and “national development”, and contribute through “sharpening” social perceptions regarding “nation” and “national cohesion”, serving as a bulwark against “forces countervailing” (see also Napoli 1996; Gupta 1999 pg. 120). Gupta further argues that nationalism serves as a motivator in conceptualising “common living” and “common destiny”, and describes it as an emotive force that does not define nationhood in legal and geographic boundary terms, but rather emphasises the togetherness of all categories of peoples within a nation in a “common purpose” (ibid. pg. 122). He suggests this is necessary for national social development. Jesus Martin-Barbero (1993), in an example, tracks the contribution of catch phrases used by national social movements in Latin America via mediation into nationalist rhetoric. His analysis puts forward that the political social movements that changed this part of the world was effected through the fostering of grassroots sentiments by the press, which worked against unpopular national figures and political structures. Nationalist populisms in the media reflected populist sentiments which, when adopted by political figures, created a powerful wave of change during times of national crisis. This process was not the conscious manipulation of a national media institution but a movement that was engendered through the press.

The foregoing discussion presents fundamental problems in discussing the use of a nationalist medium to create social development – is there a conscious process through which to harness the power of the media in a *mediated* social change process, and would an ideologically nationalist medium threaten democracy and diversity in opinion? What affective issues arise from access, the use of evolving broadcast technology and mediation processes of media in the post-colonial nationalist agenda?

## **Public Media and Social Development**

In reflection of this, there have been many studies done, and papers written, to argue the role of media in developmental communication – education, social information and political dialoguing. These have largely been in the interests of coming to an adequate understanding of how media use affects roles, power structures and social behaviours.

Analysing the objectives for national media policy in India, Gupta (1999) summarizes that these included: meeting specific and national social needs, the provision of credible information to the largest number of people in an even, dialogical, manner appropriate to a diverse and democratic society, and the provision of information on both national and international events.

The nationalist approach to social development and communication is seen by developing countries as the veritable way forward to bridging the gaps in both economic and cultural production (Olea 1979) and also by some advanced countries that worry about the dominance of American cultural products and the impact on national cultures in the large economic blocs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Raboy 1996). Whether real or perceived, the American dominance of trans-national media has resulted in the tendency of national governments, across the world, to attempt to preserve national cultural media products through policies that react to the ‘Americanisation’ of the national television space (Wang 2003; Gateward 2007; Keith Bradsher 2009). However, in as much as there have been, and continue to be, many major discussions on the national role of public service television, many other academics consider that a truly relevant system of public communication is best at the grassroots level of society.

In 1979, Frances Berrigan, in a critique, wrote that the traditional model of mass communication was unfit for aiding social development in rural societies and advanced a model of community media that envisaged a scenario of communities deliberating with expert programme makers to determine the content and context of media programming. They would determine, among other things “access and participation” in production, and would produce programmes that were, in effect, “an expression” (1979, p. 8) of the community. She agreed with Schramm (1979) that the traditional center-planning methods to development had mostly failed communities and held the view that communication for development ought to be done from within communities for which such programmes are intended, and could “bridge the gap” in the development processes between urban and rural centres.

The roots of communication models that involve citizenry in community media schemes, Berrigan argues, are in socio-political theory and the effort has been to bring grassroots participation to political processes that largely ignore citizenry, apart from balloting times. Locating communication for development projects within communities would bring benefits that should include media infrastructure that allows communities to create their own entertainment and information programmes. She points out that such schemes have traditionally been used to encourage minority/ethnic and special needs participation, but that such schemes had also relied on the traditional modes of programme formulation that still concentrated the power of determination in specialist hands at the centre of traditional power bases – with the elite, political and knowledge experts. Her proposed model of community media would require such experts to become facilitators, aiding communities in crafting their own content.

In her argument, citizen level access to information and participation in decision-making would produce more active citizens willing to engage in debates and problem-solving discussions that would both help centre and periphery policy-shaping for development – community media would enable dialogue between centre (or state) and communities, and produce more effective results as citizens at the local level would be more empowered to the development process. This was possible given that certain conditionalities were met: access to information, access to communication infrastructure, the loosening of controls, a setting back of vested interest groups such as media professionals and politicians, and the removal of media gate-keepers; such



as editors who sculpt media output for “dramatic” tastes, preserve the status quo or simply reflect the dominant or elite viewpoint, and also, the involvement of politicians, who act as gate-keepers, but are only interested in championing myopic causes. Without these conditions being met, she argues, media output would not be directly relevant to communities.

Acknowledging that media on its own could not guarantee social development, she however argues against the view that a social marketing approach to development communications is enough and suggests that the media can be a much more useful tool than mere messenger delivering centre-programmed campaigns and public information. Her critique of this approach was that research had shown only marginal attitude changes in response to behaviour change communication strategies that use “non-personal” and mass media sources. However, she further argued, development is about behaviour change but this is only greatly effective if the source of information is “inter-personal” (ibid, p. 9 -10). Citing Bordenave (1976), she advocates his suggestion of ‘communication as a system’ approach that envisages equal power relationships between all input points into the system, which would use all inputs as self-correcting and orientation information. Inputs would be from participants and could be at any time – a participative model based on the idea that a community could be the point of decision-making in the self-determination of development goals. This would reduce or eliminate passivity and conscientise participants to their own needs for development, allowing them the opportunity to take control and reflect on achievements through the communication cycle. The approach, she posits, would make it easier to allocate development resources in a manner that is more beneficial to communities than would otherwise be achieved.

Lithgow (2008) writes that community media can be useful in deepening “collective and collaborative processes” that impact social development although access and participation can also be limited by systemic social inequalities that militate against the ideal “public sphere” (Habermas 1989; Lithgow 2008, pg. 1) such as ethnic differences, gender relations, and the density of information flow from new sources and their patterns of distribution in the global era (Lithgow 2008, citing Thussu 2000). He theorises an evaluative framework, the community capital theory, as useful for judging the manner and degree within categories in which social change is likely to

occur in communities. Citing previous work by Kretzman and McKnight (1993), Markey et al (2005), Prain (2006) and Roseland et al (2005), the community capital framework theorises that social change usually is observed in *human capital* (skills, education, creativity, etc), *social capital* (relationships, trust, cultural participation and identity production, etc), *economic capital* (credits, enterprise, employment, etc) and *natural capital* (natural resources, food and water supplies, etc). The idea, by no means “exhaustive”, also includes *political capital* (citing Smith and Bailkey, 2006), which is a measurement that would reflect whether state institutions and private ones are “responsive to community needs”. The engagement of the media in these areas could be a way that community media could influence social development.

Finally, Adams (1992) writes an analysis that joins the centrality of television to modern living to the fabric of society, and states that television in the social context can be regarded as a “place”, without geographic location, where people share in expressions and meanings, and work out distinctions between society and boundaries; potentially offering a means of “social control” through a multiplier effect of mass consumption in an “environment” without operative class relations (Adams, 1992, pg. 117 - 119; *ibid* citing Meyrowitz 1985, Tuan 1977, Fiske 1987, Hartley 1978). This ‘place theory’ underpins the functional ability for the television to become an informal instructional tool, as indeed it has been used in development communication efforts (Berrigan 1979; Lithgow 2008).

## **Public Service Television**

For Lee Artz (in McCauley, Peterson et al. 2003) the most common use of the term ‘public’ is best understood as that which is not private; exclusive, yet this does not resolve the confusion as to what it truly signifies in terms of a totally inclusive social construct. The term is often applied to defining polled voters, ratings and samples, demographic groups, etc. However, “The public is not singular but diverse” (Lee Artz in McCauley, Peterson et al. 2003, pg. 4) and therefore the term is problematic since its construction naturally over-looks the distinctions that exist in society. Artz suggests that the term is especially uncomfortable for “politicians” and commercial operatives who contrive to serve constituencies and “consumers” (*ibid.*). For Artz, the problem in applying the term to the media is in resolving an operational public sphere

in which the mass media can engage in “discussions” and “debates” to make decisions, “meaning-making” and give communal ownership and “access” to the generated content (*ibid.* pg. 5). Thus the growing emphasis of thought is for public media systems to be directly involving in programming creation and community social reality, problem solving and growth experiences.

The question of whether or not public service broadcasting should occur in its dominant forms is a question to which there is no clear answer (Raboy 1996). Raboy sees three fundamental problems that challenge an adequate answer to the question:

- Where they do exist and are controlled by ‘totalitarian’ or ‘neo-colonialist’ regimes, ‘public interests’ are ‘equated to political interests’,<sup>20</sup>,
- how media in democratically transitioning countries would operationalise the practice of democracy in their output, since they lack the historical fortitude and autonomy that would guide their practice,
- And lastly, even in countries that do have the public service broadcasting experience there needs to be resolved tensions regarding the financing, remits and the interpretations of purpose for public broadcasters.

Historically, and up to the early 1980’s, the dominant type of broadcaster in most parts of Europe and Africa that operated public broadcasters, had been publicly funded monopoly systems, while in the Americas and Asia, the dominant model has been commercial. In between these is the public/commercial model that can be found in the UK, Finland, Canada, Australia and Japan (Raboy 1996; Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne 2005). Raboy analyses this history and points out that since the nineteen -eighties, three, almost synchronous, events have changed the landscape for broadcasting worldwide – new multi-channel technologies have almost exterminated the threat of zero-spectrum for broadcasting, the collapse of the Eastern political bloc

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<sup>20</sup> See also Chomsky and Herman 2010

and increasing democratisation in other parts of the world, and the great gains of commercial broadcasting in the marketplace, as well as increasing reversion to mixed public/commercial models in more countries. McCauley, Peterson et al (2003) concur that the explosion in digital channels has led to public service television facing infringement from commercial competitors worsened by an absence of adequate policies to designate an uncontested field. These trends have pushed forward the question of 'why' public broadcasting should continue, following the logic that broadcasting is not "analogous" to having a social, and cultural, service (Raboy 1996 p. 3, citing Servaes 1993) and should therefore be a market-determined service.

The argument has been further strengthened by collapsing audience figures for national broadcasters, as fragmentation occurs with the increases in multi-channel television, and broadcasters seem to be losing significant proportions of the 'national' viewership, thus diluting claims to a 'national' audience. This undermines the traditional view of public broadcasters as the prime profilers of "national culture" to a nation (Raboy 1996, p. 3). Again, if the "mass appeal" of American television is indicative of a preference for "mass culture" commercial television, then the case for the mass reflection of "national culture" is annulled, and satisfying the minority gap can be met by other means than within the larger framework of public television. Effectively, the case for using mass media resources in the interest of "national cohesion" can no longer be justified (*ibid.*, 4 - 5). Thus public service broadcasting systems should be looking to answer the challenge of the commercial environment within which they now operate.

Raboy puts forward these arguments to set the stage for a rebuttal and defence of the idea of public television. Citing Ellis (1994), he makes the case that the interests of the market economy will not lend itself naturally to the rigorous pursuance of a "social agenda" and, therefore, the project of "emancipation" through social communication, begun with the Enlightenment, is best achieved in an idea of "public spaces", assured by a public service that is independent and publicly organised (*ibid.* pg 5; Raboy, 1996 citing Habermas 1989). In this manner, public television becomes a tool for socio-cultural development (Raboy et al 1994), and the state should be a facilitator that allows this principle to work outside of the influence of market forces (*ibid.*, citing Murdoch 1992). Commercial media, on the other hand, is also criticised

as being unchallenging and using reductive and selective approaches to content creation that does not offer truly plural and diverse programming geared towards dominant demographic sections, in pursuit of commercial revenues, for audiences “whose chief wish is never to grow or change” (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg. xviii; Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne 2005).

McCauley *et al.* (2003) suggest that public broadcasting systems can be made more effective and relevant by promoting public participation in social debate, producing universally accessible programming to suit the comprehension of diverse groups, and by building systems in which public determination and contribution to programming is made possible. Raboy’s (1996) opinion is that due to the complexity of meeting national public television objectives, and in consideration of new social development models, using low level community television approaches as used in development communication, which are “autonomous and endogenous”, may be a way forward to redefining public television service in the twenty-first century (*ibid.* pg. 5, citing O’Siochru 1992). The theoretical basis is in recognising the “potential for public communication to serve as a model for social integration” (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg. xviii) based on Habermas’s concept of the “public sphere” as a space or place in which social debate happens freely to form public opinion as the best way to achieve social goals through “public communication”, especially in developing countries (McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg. xxv; Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne 2005).

Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne (2005) propose, in consideration of the variety and complexity of public broadcasting practices across the world, not a “gold standard” (pg. 13), but essential characteristics that public broadcasters ought to demonstrate in order to achieve a public service objective. Acknowledging the tensions between private-commercial interests and the public interest and the propensity for government subversion in the State-controlled models, the writers offer “factors” to be considered in “judging whether a PSB is playing the role it is expected to perform” (pg. 15 - 16):

- “*Universality*” – of access to the medium in order to participate in content production, and to also receive the communication produced, by every citizen.

- “*Diversity*” – in “genres”, target “audience” and programme “subject” (pg. 15), in order to reflect the plurality and currency of need and use of the medium within the broad context of a given society.
- “*Independence*” – in the public sphere must be assured against the forces of commercial concerns and political manipulations that would undermine the confidence of the public in the content and messages produced by the broadcaster.
- “*Distinctiveness*” – the strength of a public service must be in its ability to show a difference between its output and that of other market players in order to justify its existence and role; providing market leadership, challenging conventions and providing creative impetus to industry.

These standards relate to social development in this way:

“only in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge can we achieve international peace, understanding and sustainable development” (*ibid.* citing Dr Abdul Waheed Khan 2003).

## **Making Television**

Television is an institutional product and, as a technological medium, there are many factors of production that affect its consumption and also play a part in its affective communication processes. These factors include its accessibility and penetration, market competition between stations, and the ideological values within programmes that signify differentiation in programmes that are attributable to the role of programme makers. There are other factors, such as media literacy and media market regulation and economics are beyond the scope of this thesis.

## **Television Penetration**

Television penetration refers to the extent to which it is available to a given population. Its factors are the coverage area of signal reception, and availability and/or ownership of units of television sets (usually calculated in terms of units per household or per thousand in the population). In many advanced countries, there tends

to be multiple television accessing screens per home, as computers and multi-media devices are increasingly brought on to deliver both inter-active and audio-visual content. This relates directly to the ‘universality factor’, in that wide penetration assures availability for public enjoyment of the medium.

## **Viewer Choice**

In countries where digital television transmission formats allow a plethora of channels to be accessed from single or multiple sets in a household, and viewers have access to multi-channel programming, viewers are increasingly determining final output schedules using PVRs and DVRs to record and playback content at suitable times. While the many channels available to audiences in these countries has spurred a generally observed fragmentation of audiences, and this was widely predicted to be the future evolution of television, the evidence available also suggests that most television viewers still gravitate to a few popular channels and programmes (McQuail 2000). Viewer choice is also directly related to the ‘diversity factor’, assuring that various social and demographic groups find content that satisfy their use of the medium.

Viewer choice in television is important to the extent that as a cultural medium, television is engaged in the processes of identity, representation and the socialisation of the audience *en masse* (McQuail 2000). Socialisation in this instance refers to that process that joins culture, as a societal artefact, to culture as an enfolding social “process” with television acting as an agent (Karl Rosengren 1981, cited in Ball-Rokeach and Cantor 1986, pg. 90), accomplished through eliciting identification. Identification is “the particular form of imitation in which copying a model, generalised beyond specific acts, springs from wanting to be and trying to be like the model with respect to some broader quality” (White 1972 cited in Baran & Davies 2003, pg. 192). This means that to be engaged with television, a viewer must necessarily be able to access and identify with some cultural and/or identity representations that reflect their perceived circumstances and aspirations in the society. Rosengren’s (1981) position is that the viewer must either be an assimilator or an actor, however limited, in the process of socialisation but at all times is both.

Abercrombie (1996) also describes that, on one hand, the audience is theorised as a market for advertisers; where when found in large numbers indicates 'popular' programming which can then serve as a target for a sponsor's message or advertisement. This audience as market model underpins commercial broadcast television, and has spawned various statistical measurement methods that work to identify the audience demographics that are attracted to particular programmes, and on the basis of which advertising rates are set. In this instance the influence of the audience on programming is in their indication of preference-by-numbers. On the other hand, the audience is seen as an active citizen needing information as equipment useful to their decision-making, socialisation and understanding of the rest of the world (see also discussions on active audience theory in Barker, 1997; Baran and Davies, 2003), and this is the basis of reasoning for a purposed public broadcasting system (Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne 2005).

## **Producer Roles**

Much of the literature discussing the role of the television producer in the medium does so from narrow contexts, genre production, type of organisation, and policy driven impacts on the environment of the producer or simply the technical and technological skills needed for the role (see for example Tunstall 1993 and Owens and Millerson 2012). However, the content creation process is helmed by human factors. Newcomb and Alley (in Ettema and Whitney 1982) state that "television is a producer's medium" (pg. 69), and that producers play a key role in shouldering overall responsibility in delivering programmes by negotiating, gaining control and delivering on both the bottom-line and creative enterprise involved in programme-making. Thus they deal with a bounded-rationality universe, both free yet limited by resources, individual ability to command power or control and reputation, and by their individually held creative ability and ideological persuasions which are implicit with working in the medium (*ibid.*). Citing Turner (1977) they apply ritualisation or enactment to the production of artistic work and suggest that production processes refine and represent dominant socio-cultural values and ideas in created content; making them viable texts for reading and understanding social reality, best exemplified by popular genres.



James Ettema (Ettema and Whitney 1982) also posits that producers exist in an organisational milieu, and thus the producers work should be understood by bringing together three factors: messages embedded in content, organisational production routines with its constraints and limitations, and by conflict and negotiation within the producer's media organisation and between it and its competition.

## **Summary and Implications for Study**

The ramifications of the media theory positions reviewed have significance for understanding how, through television and other media, the transfer of modernisation ideas of social development may become a situational problematic for post-colonial developing nations or nations whose cultures are less assimilated to Western ideological conventions of politics, economics and culture. Theories of the media also show that televisual messages may influence social perceptions through providing education and information, as well as carrying dominant social values and ideological discourses in programming. The overt and unintentional processes that occur in content production practices therefore suggests that the media space can only be truly diverse if the control of production is in the hands of diverse ideological actors, both private and public, in order to allow as many voices as possible to be represented across programming.

Theoretical analysis of the ideological imperatives implicit in the practice and global distribution of television products also suggest that the Western view of the world of modernity and development is embedded in transnationalised content and these could have an impact on conceptions of development in reception communities. These theories and debates about the globalisation of television have mostly been researched and debated in such terms as capitalism, regulation, culture and media nationalism. However, there is an evident gap in the literature around the subject of modernity communication and representation in media products. The studies extensively ignore or do not note the contribution of Eastern (Chinese, Japanese, etc.) media products into developing countries. Cognisance of such factors could allow for a comparative analysis of the textual readings of ideology and representation between Eastern and Western media products in developing societies.

For the local situation in Ghana, an analysis of the GBC and its public service remit is long overdue. While a nationalist media is seen, by thinkers from developing countries, to be key to social development, this is conceived of as the operationalising of an ideological output that is balanced against the Western orientations of national political classes to favour a national discourse that is relevant to local cultural situations (Martin-Barbero 1993; Gupta 1999). The emphasis for mediated social change has therefore shifted from ‘broadcasting’ in the traditional ‘one-to-many’ model to a ‘many-to-many’ model that encourages the involvement of community/audience participation as essential for crafting media that is responsive and integral to community life and development.

However, not all these concerns can be fully addressed in this thesis, as it will focus on the structural agency of one national broadcaster, and its involvement in national social development.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this research followed an ethos suggested by Rudestam and Newton (1992, cited in Leshem and Trafford 2007), as the formulation of a guiding outline of the theoretical ideas underlying a piece of research, in relation to data to be collected, which would form a malleable model to guide the formation of methods for data collection and analysis. Therefore, the framework operates as a tool “for researchers to use rather than totems for them to worship” (Weaver-Hart 1988, p. 11, cited in Leshem and Trafford 2007), and provides a guiding means through which both the methodology and analysis for the research finds legitimation.

The conceptual framework of this study was, thus, intended to provide a mechanism through which a synthesis of the theoretical and empirical evidences that this research pulls together could make it possible to understand how the content production *ideas* and *actions* of GTv’s producer-directors, as well as broadcast output, reflect on Ghanaian social development efforts. It thus provided the means by which an attempt could be made to describe and discuss the **social development contribution** of GTv to Ghanaian society through providing sets of analytical frameworks by which to gain an understanding of GTv’s potential for *mediating* social change. This would be

indicated through assessing broadcast communication factors that would promote social capital, producers' agency and representations of modernity in content, while making it possible to evaluate the implications for public broadcasting in relation to social development and development communication strategies in a post-colonial context. Thus, the construction of the framework would necessarily follow a critical cultural perspective in order to achieve a correct interpretation of empirical data. As such it became important to also resolve the communication context<sup>21</sup> and the corollary of culturally determined modes of communication that are employed within broadcast output.

The rationalisation for the approach was in conceiving **the public broadcasting services as being historically integral to the typical African post-colonial society**, thus national political history and media policies would interact together with the enactments of both producers and the public media organisation to produce social outcomes that affect the direction, pace and achievement of social emancipation end-goals. Furthermore, it was also considered that since television has been argued to exert some influence on social life and that **the mass media is both a 'structural' element and a change 'trigger' in society**, as suggested by Haferkamp and Smelser (1992), in contributing to social processes, the question to be answered by this research was 'to what degree is that role achieved in the agenda for social development'. This thesis also recognised that public broadcasting, being embedded in that larger mass media category, was not the only agent that *mediates* social change, and therefore acknowledges that, that larger process would include socially affective output from commercial stations, whose contribution to Ghana's society was not studied in this research. Following from this theoretical approach the following considerations for an operation theoretical framework was set out:

Firstly, as one of the types of the socialist emancipation ideologies that guided social reformations in a post-colonial African country, Nkrumah's "consciencism" (Nkrumah 1964) provides a key framework through which to understand the post-colonial social order and how its political history played a role in the formulation, history and cultures of service at state institutions, such as the GBC, that were

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<sup>21</sup> In this case study the context is African as set out in Ansu-Kyeremeh (1997)

subsumed into the national social development programme, as already discussed in Chapter I. In its emphasis on community, consciencism provides an older, historic, ideology to current “social capital” (Halpern 2005) although both theories seek to explain the importance of an alignment between community human resources and social development end-goals. Both theories, thus, provide a means for assessing ‘community’ or ‘social cohesion’ as an asset to social development as its strength would be indicative of the existence of strong social networks and a common culture essential to end-goal achievement.

Secondly, preceding discussions have shown that ‘**culture**’ is constructed as the general framework within which the sum total of human activity finds expression in paradigmatic moulds relating to local histories and social development. The means of culture expression are married to forms, or **modes, of communication** that are the vehicles for idea exchange and ‘meaning-making’. This makes communication a premier vehicle for social development as it is in the exchange of ideas that community knowledge is enriched through challenging hegemonies and historical interpretations, and offers opportunities for the presentation of new facts and evidences. Ideas also produce new human experiences that advance the expressions of culture in new social forms of organisation and structure. Thus, the means of conveying expressions become crucial in the meaning-making process and **language** becomes a prime factor in that communication process. A communal media system should, therefore, reflect and use the cultural means of expressions relevant and applicable to the community it resides in. The lens of Freirean ‘conscientization’ as a form of participatory development communication through which people are aided to emancipate themselves through improving the basic human capital resource, knowledge, therefore allows for an assessing of the empowering attributes of education in television programming, as well as a determination of the pedagogic role of culture and language use in development communication in understanding and the affective role of the media in a low literacy development context. Importantly, the adoption and use of multiple languages means that wider communities can participate and interact to strengthen social cohesion and nation-identity. Thus, an assessment of the degree of **public participation** in television programming would provide an indication of the propensity for change and modernisation within the public sphere.

Linking this theoretical framework to the concept of “**television as a place**” (Berrigan 1979) would further provide a means for assessing how the mediating of idea exchange and learning was being achieved for the national as well as segmented ‘publics’ to understand the enablement of social capital. As a nation-wide, nationalised, non-geographically subsisting phenomenon ‘television as a place’ allows for the consideration of conscientization as a nation-wide social development and modernisation project that can be achieved through televisual mediation.

The rationalised theoretical framework is set out below in operative terms to enable the formalisation and subsequent construction of a research methodology.

## Concepts and Operations

Table 1, below, shows an integration of the conceptual propositions of Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne (2005) for a public broadcasting test, Halpern’s (2005) discussion of social capital and Lithgow’s (2008) framework for community capital, to define key elements for producing an investigative and analytic approach to this research:

*Table 1: Concepts and Operations*

Concepts	Indicators	Operational Definitions
Universality	Access	Broadcast signal reach. Broadcast language(s).
	Use	Audience interaction opportunities. Citizen origination of programmes.
Diversity	Genre	Type of programme; Origination.
	Audience	Language(s); Demographics; Producer’s audience awareness.
	Subject	Religious; Social; Political; International

Independence	Organisation  Producer	Legal guards; Political interference;  Funding;  Editorial independence; Creative control;  Production logistics
Distinctiveness	Character  Purpose	Content differentiation  Nationalist, social development
Social Capital	Social Cohesion	Inclusive programming strategies
Human Capital	Knowledge and education	Learning, factual programming
Modernity	Plurality	Challenging and new content
Stasis	Hegemony	Resistance to plurality in producer's work

This thesis, therefore, constructed its theoretical framework to enable an assessment of the social development performativity of GTv, as a public media system, through linking **the operational factors** in programme-making with **signifiers of social development communication** in broadcast output. The important participants in the process therefore included **GTv**, and **the institutional framework** that guides its work; its cultural routines, its individual content producers' capabilities and abilities to 'command power' and control production processes to create content that **challenges hegemonies** and **avails community members opportunities to participate dialogically in social debate** that 'conscientises' community members for social change. Also, the **producer's orientation** within the community; knowing its history, demographics, power structures, cultural values, language(s), become an important focus point for observing and interpreting the opportunities available to both the community and its public media, both as a structural element, confirming and helping establish order, and also as a change 'trigger', bringing new ideas of **modernisation** into the community public sphere.

## **Chapter III: RESEARCH METHODS**

The logics of theory underpinning this study are already discussed in the summary to the literature review chapter. The conceptual framework for this study was anchored in the identification of concepts that followed from the reviewed literature concerning social transformation through development communication; understanding the role of culture, media consumption and ideology within the performances of broadcast communication agents, and the constraints within the national social development context. This context is defined by the historical relationships between State, national populations, and the public broadcasting service that serves them in the effort to achieve communication goals, as well as a wider context of social and cultural factors present in a non-homogenous ethnic, yet ‘nationalised’, community, such as is common in African countries. Therefrom, it becomes possible to construct a methodological framework that would enable the objectives of this research to be achieved; developing a philosophical outlook as platform for research design, selection of methods and strategy for data analysis. These are presented below.

## **Research Philosophy**

### **Ontology**

From an ontological perspective, this research considered the nature of social entities as being constructs of ‘negotiation’ and the effects of ‘influence’, and thus very much dependent on the abilities and capabilities of social actors involved in the social creation of reality. This thesis appropriates a “constructivism” ontology of social reality (Bryman 2008, pg. 19) but, considered that organisations are cultural entities that produce forms of behaviour that are unique in character as a result of tensions between structural impositions and the individual actions of members. They produce forms of reality that become “institutionalised” (Singh 2010, pg. 387). Thus they can be regarded as ‘atomistic’ (Emanuel Gaziano and Cecilie Gaziano 1999; Weissman 2000) units, which suggests that an ontological “realism” (Sam Porter 2003) can be applied to organisations as they exist as discrete social entities. According to Emanuel Gaziano and Cecilie Gaziano (1999, pg. 128-129), “knowledge” and “information” can be treated as “structural” “elements” that set social boundaries and limit actions for “collective” social “actors”; this therefore includes such structural mechanisms as the legal directives that apply to an organisation and its internally socialised cultures. However, interpretations of textual readings offer “meaning”, and “knowledge” is “conceptualised” within the organisation by its group(s) of social actors. Information, thus, is definitive, whereas meaning is subjective, negotiated and constructed. Organisations and their functionaries constantly reiterate objectives and practices in order to achieve aims; the “social order” (Strauss et al 1973 cited in Bryman 2008, pg. 19) is thus both real and transient, and the social/organisational forms that exist can be identified and described in the moments in which ‘objective-subjective’ recordings are made. To suggest an objective recording of social events occurs in a study of organisation is to suggest that “social ontology” is naturally occurring, and to suggest that subjective observations are also made is to, again, admit “constructivism” (Bryman 2008, pg. 18-19) in the ontology. Hence both constructivism and realism offer joint ontological perspectives to understanding organisational cultures and behaviour.



The construction of television programmes and their consumption, this thesis has shown, can be understood to be constructs of reality (Burgoon, Dillard et al. 1983; Burton 2005) in a social context. In seeking an understanding of the key considerations that affects GTv, as a television *organisation* and its ideological construction of public service and development communication, this research seeks to understand how television, as an *institutionalised* system of *creative culture production* and an ideological tool, produces *products* intended to affect Ghanaian society.

### **Critical Realism**

The need for social scientists to have available to them a tool for describing and evaluating ‘social reality’ as dynamic phenomena resulting from the interaction of humans with their lived environments, producing results that are “*never definitely proven*” (Corbetta 2003, pg. 19. Italics in original), measured or explained by the processed application of natural science methods, nor fully accounted for by peripheral observation, is the logic that provides the basis for *critical realism* as an evaluative method or strategy to explain social phenomena. Critical realism therefore is the research stance that proceeds from the ontological position that the research subject operates in an open-systemic way that does not allow for immediate causal explanations to be imputed. Bhaskar (1998) who conceptualised the philosophy explains that:

“The conception I am proposing is that people, in their conscious activity, for the most part unconsciously reproduce (and occasionally transform) the structures governing their substantive activities of production. Thus people do not marry to reproduce the nuclear family or work to sustain the capitalist economy. Yet it is nevertheless the unintended consequence (and inexorable result) of, as it is also a necessary condition for, their activity. Moreover, when social forms change, the explanation will not normally lie in the desires of agents to change them that way, though as a very important theoretical and political limit it may do so” (pg. 52).

His thesis proposed that, ontologically, social phenomena can be addressed by the fact of their existence, but the knowledge of them cannot be drawn from natural science methods. He proposed a framing of a research approach that could account for the realism situated in the studied subject, i.e. their discrete existence and ability to cause actions or events, and the experience of knowledge, e.g. the feeling of pain, which results from a researcher's ability to experience and interpret the experienced.

Easton (2010, pg 119) states that Sayer (1998) provides "eight assumptions of critical realism" including the rationale that existence is *independent* of human encounter and for human encounter to explain existence a *critical* stance is necessary and valid, with the understanding that this knowledge acquisition is possible because of the situation of human encounter within that frame of existence.

In application therefore, while the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and GTv are unique social phenomena, insofar as they exist in a specific geographic and social milieu, they are best understood as products of an affective history. As social phenomena they are also part of a systemic social process; that which initially created the GBC and its various broadcast divisions, and the operative machinations of its personnel. Over time, the nature of the GBC and its GTv division have been influenced by its operators – production personnel and management (administrative and political agents) – as socially acting agents, and its current state may not be the original intentions of its founders.

To unravel the concomitant collaboration of these agencies and resolve a project that best frames the social phenomena of values, perceptions and decisions that inhabit the process of programme-making, this researcher takes the stance of the critical realist. This is necessary in order to reconcile the familiarity and situation of the researcher in the socio-cultural milieu inhabited and acted out by GTv, and to acknowledge an independent rationality that allows a distanced and objective construction of the broadcaster's social reality (Cruickshank 2003). The strength of the stance is in its adaptability to continuous correction and growth of knowledge through incremental exercises of judgement and observation (Archer 2004), and its flexible fit with a structural social ontology. The challenge therefore is to appropriate a relevant research approach that, acknowledging the differences in ontological perspectives,

conceptualises social ontology from a critical perspective in its epistemology; meshing both definite and indefinites in social realities.

## **Epistemology**

The “critical realism” (Corbetta 2003, pg. 14; Bryman 2008, pg. 14) approach is situated in both ontological and epistemological philosophies in social research. It represents a departure from traditional positivist paradigms such as “empirical realism” in offering an accommodation for a ‘social constructivist’ approach to understanding social phenomena (Bryman 2008, pg. 14). It assumes a “modified dualism-objectivity” (Corbetta 2003, pg. 14) approach in epistemology in accepting theoretical explanations as causal to social phenomena. In its departure from solely natural science investigative methods, critical realism affords an episteme that can describe social reality in interpretive terms. While pure interpretivists would reject this viewpoint and state a clear dichotomy between “neutral” and “engaged” (Ezzy 2002, pg. xii), critical realists advocate a ‘detached researcher’ approach to studies. This researcher considers that theoretical explanations that arise from the immersion of a researcher-observer in the social milieu is useful for understanding the underlying factors that shape social construction and contributes much more to proper understanding and enunciation of the social reality in social science studies. Thus qualitative methods of inquiry can be appropriated in conjunction with quantitative methods to provide a richer epistemological approach to designing a study of discrete phenomena; to offer better elaboration of ‘social reality’ descriptions and to give causal explanations through an “interpretivist” mode of analysis, especially suitable in case study projects (Corbetta 2003, pg. 14).

## **Research Approach**

This research project therefore carries out its study using a mixed-method approach. Much used in social research, this approach allows flexibility in the research design process as qualitative methods data collection processes would allow the researcher to gain a depth of understanding of issues under investigation than would otherwise be possible with the more rigid methodological quantitative approach (Bryman and Burgess, 1999; Cohen, 1978 in Bryman and Burgess, 1999). Also, developing

contextual, process and meaning understandings of social phenomena are shown to be more suited to qualitative research strategies (Maxwell 2005) which involve methods that are better suited to describing and constructing the social realities that underpin social processes. On the other hand, quantitative measurements allow for patterns of social process to emerge as illustrative constructions of aspects of the social reality universe.

### **Research Design and Rationale for Methods Selection**

Punch (2005) puts forward that, where the idea is to gain “holistic” (pg. 144) understanding of a particular phenomenon or event, the case study strategy is appropriate. This study examines a single phenomenon; in this instance Ghana Television within the socio-economic and national social development context of its home nation, and against a background of post-colonial history. The features of the proposed study include characteristics that are essential, according to Gerring (2007), to merit the case study approach:

- a. the study of a particular entity as a unique and spatially-bounded entity that solely exists in one territorial instance. It is also a study that covers a specific time-frame, historically exploring attributes of GBC and GTv within fifty years of post-colonial history, and
- b. pulling together evidences that include texts, records and statistics, the research will be both qualitative and holistic in its explorations, exploring between different sources of evidences, as will be explained below.

The research is therefore an 'intrinsic case study type'; a study that is concerned with the holistic understanding of a unique phenomenon (Stake, 1995; Punch 2005).

In order to gain a full understanding of the contributory role of GTv, it was considered necessary to evaluate three areas of operational influence on content making and output programming. These would include the guiding remit established by law and any normative documents important to the achievement of this remit, structural and ideation processes that producers employ for content making and evaluation of their

work, and an evaluation of actual broadcast output to understand broadly the types of content and embedded sociological factors that typically occur in schedules.

This indicated specific methodological tools would be best suited to be used to garner the required data: textual analysis, personal interviews and the quantitative enumeration of broadcast output per unit time in a suitably constructed sample frame.

## **Methods of Enquiry**

### **Textual Analysis**

The research, thus, analyses the **texts** that define the GBC and GTv's remit as a public broadcaster. These documents include Article 12 of the Fourth Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (Appendices 1), which sets out the constitutional rights of the media in Ghana; the National Liberation Council Decree 266 (Appendices 2), which set up the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation as a public corporation; the National Media Policy of the National Media Commission (Appendices 3) and its accompanying Broadcasting Standards (Appendices 4).

The purpose was to set out an understanding from the legal frameworks and to compare legislative provisions that define the remit of the broadcaster, its responsibilities and functional role. Essentially, the analysis set out to note definitions of 'public service', 'public interest', 'public value', 'national/social development' and such other terminology that would indicate specific requirements and/or obligations, and to compare with other meanings that would arise from other data sources. These terms are often used as the "pre-defined categories" (Ezzy 2002, pg. 83) but may be found to have different conceptualisations in varied contexts.

### **Interviews**

The personal interview method was used to gather the qualitative research data in this thesis as this was the best method suitable to recording cognitive reflections and individual perceptions; the narrative provides the best means to constructing a social reality that exists within the "consciousness" and is related through "words" that contribute to "meaning-making" processes that attempt to understand personal

experiences (Seidman 2006, pg. 7 citing Vygotsky 1987 pg. 236 - 237). Lilleker (2003) supports the position that interviews offer “rich insights” (citing May 2001, pg. 120) through the personal accounts related in interviews by creating windows into private worlds. He, however, cautions that the value of the method is often hampered by the very nature of the personalisation of events and experiences by interviewees, “exaggerations” and untruths (*ibid.* pg. 208). However, the integrity of the reported data could be supported through using the corroborating evidences from the number of participants involved in discussing the subject event, and by applying keen awareness to the social contexts that could instigate ‘false’ data, usually the result of personal interests that influence the painting of a different picture or memory flaws due to the passage of time.

In using the interview method, it was, therefore, necessary for some precautions to be taken to ensure the integrity of the data: firstly, respondents were asked to give personal opinions and perceptions as responses, which would not to be interpreted as official statements made on behalf of GBC or GTv. Due to the highly politicised nature of the organisation respondents were assured of anonymity in order to elicit their full co-operation. Secondly, where respondents have made inferences to other persons and job roles within the organisation and where such inferences are likely to reveal or indicate specific persons the job roles have been anonymised in the thesis. Thirdly, questions asked were restricted to reflections on the nature of work and the perceptions of ‘organisation’, therefrom. While interviewees were not restricted from making direct inferences to other persons, follow up questions were not based on speculating the personal characters or motives of the inferred but on the subjective perceptions that motivated the inference. In avoiding personalisation, it was possible to avoid adversarial narratives, except where including such accounts were directly indicative of systemic functions within the organisation and were corroborated by similar data from other respondents. While this does not fully constitute “triangulation” (Lilleker 2003, pg. 211 citing Davies 2001) for data verification, it does ensure that data used was indicative of a severally-held perception.

Thus, the research carried out interviews with eight persons with work experience at GTV, and included producers at various levels of responsibility and management, as well as staff from an auxiliary service. Producers, as the end-point enactors of the

public service remit for programming in-house, are critical to understanding the systemic workings of the GTv television system. Understanding their interpretations of public service values was therefore essential to constructing an adequate description of GTv's role through its programming output. The other persons selected for interviews provide critical commentaries on other dimensions of the producers' work as well as system functions at GTv.

### **Sample Frame for Interviews**

Eight participants were recruited through a simple criteria-based purposive sampling method (Bryman 2008). Four selection criteria were applied, and participants had to be involved, or had been involved, in at least two of the measures: producer management or supervision, producer-director, involvement in content decision-making at supervisory level, and involvement in non-News production and development communication programmes. In all eight participants were recruited participated in the research, out of which three were senior managers in production-related capacities. Of the remaining five, three were junior producers. The remaining two respondents had experiences in affective programming decision-making at GTv. A guide to interviewees is provided at the end of this thesis (Appendices 7).

### **Quantitative Data Sampling and Frame**

Three consecutive weeks of GTv's broadcast schedules published on its online portal were used in the statistical analysis. The aim was to understand the broad structures of scheduling per unit of airtime, using enough data to produce an adequate sample frame during a non-special season of the year, i.e., out-side of the Christmas, Easter and Moslem Hajj calendar, in order to limit programming distortions that may be produced by national festivities.

Modern television programmes are often cross-genre or cross-type in format; entertainment programmes can have embedded educational values, for example dramatic entertainment in Ghana often has public education messages. This approach to programme-making can raise complexities for categorisation and gives rise to such

labels as ‘infotainment’ or ‘edutainment’. The analysis for this research, however, required an attempt to understand programming in strict categories. To achieve this therefore required a process of *reductive categorisation* to the prime intents of a programme to which the labels of ‘entertainment’, ‘information’ and ‘education’ could be applied. To achieve this, programmes were first coded into general genres and then reduced into ‘type’ categories as in Fig. 1. A total of eight hundred and thirty-one programmes were counted in the sample, which were then categorised into twenty-five genres distributed over the three programme types, as well as an ‘Unknown’ category, for programmes for which there was no available or reliable means of determining content, genre or type. Approximately five hundred hours of broadcast programming was captured within the sample frame (500.81333\* hours).

## **Research Implementation**

The research project was implemented over a four year time-span, after the initial project proposal and indicative literature write-ups. The three categories of data were collected without co-dependent links in order to ensure that their connection would be unbiased and without prejudice to the objectives of the research.

Respondents were informally contacted directly and scheduled for interviews according to their convenience. The project was explained and consent received prior to their inclusion as participants. Interviews were carried out using semi-structured questionnaires, by recorded phone-call, and each lasted between one and one and a half hours. Semi-structured questionnaires allowed the researcher to explore tangential questions from core questions that simply asked respondents to define personal understandings about work roles. Producers particularly were asked these questions in relation to their personal understandings of ‘public service’, ‘production processes’, ‘social cohesion/nationalism’ and development communication. Other respondents were asked similar questions and specific questions relating to their job functions. All interviews were done by recorded telephone conversation and transcribed for analysis. Interviews were carried out between October and December 2010.



Textual data was acquired from internet sources over the same timeframe. With regards to the programming output data, using a simple numeric coding method, all programmes were coded according to the following variable factors: type, genre, government communication, language employed, programme origination, in-house production, out-house production, in-programme audience participation and audience targeting. Also language usage within programmes can vary depending on screen personalities and can employ language-switching or presenter translation, the use of over-dubs or sub-titling. Such types of programmes were categorised on the basis of prime language usage within the format or coded as ‘multi-language’, where the format is known to often use variation in languages employed.

The programming data was rendered in pie-charts and numeric cross-tabulations using IBM SPSS version 19 statistical software.

### **Strategy of Analysis**

According to Yin (2003), analytical strategies for case study research is often not considered well in advance of doing research, leaving most researchers struggling to complete data analysis, despite the existence of some helpful tools to mitigate the problem, and the essential need to fully develop methodological outlooks.

This research develops a logical approach to integrating and analysing data collected from its different methods. The primary aim of this study is to describe the **role** of Ghana Television in the social development framework of Ghana as a post-colonial developing country and arrives at its conclusions from a ‘constructive-interpretive’ understanding of the “pattern” (Yin 2003, pg. 116) outcomes from interview data, juxtaposed to similar themes from the text analysis and compared to broadcast samples for contextual commentary.

The thematic analysis organised the data into four themes:

1. Meanings and concepts relating to the ‘public’ broadcasting remit and UNESCO endorsed standards (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005).
2. Challenges.
3. Programming Outcomes.

#### 4. The media environment and the organisational future.

While there are many points at which data evidences overlap, the effort has been made to preserve the thematic structure and indicate points at which data overlaps occur.

Several theoretical frameworks have been explicated in the literature review to this thesis and forms the bedrock on which the investigative questions posed to respondents were formed. The analysis of the data was interpreted through the framework theories within the conceptual framework that offer interpretative accounting of the relationships between the theoretical strands and the data, thus this work has followed a process of “deductive” (Bryman 2008, pg. 9 - 11) theorising.

### **On Validity and Reliability**

The logic of imposing rigorous quality tests in terms of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ rejected by qualitative methodology traditions owing to inherent inferences to “measurement” and replication (Bryman 2008, pg. 376). Interpretivists suggest that the nature of qualitative data requires that data be judged on the basis of “trustworthiness” and “authenticity” (ibid. 377 – 378), which would strengthen the world views described and explained; using multiple sources of data to build depth, cross-checking data-recording with “members of the social world” (*ibid.*) for fidelity, ensuring data integrity and giving fitting, accurate contextual links to employed theories, and within the society, that helps its members connect to the research (Bryman 2008, citing Guba 1985; Guba and Lincoln 1994; Geertz 1973a). On the other hand, quantitative research constructs rigorous frameworks to test the quality of data both within the study and in regards to its wider generalisations, emphasising the reproducibility of results and statistical measurements and accuracy of measuring tools (Bryman 2008).

This thesis has employed a use of statistical data but has ensured that the data recordings are as exactly accurate as observed and has utilised computational software to ensure that measurements are accurate within tolerable computational margins of error as detailed exactness and rigor were not considered salient to this study’s focus.

‘Soft’ data was recorded and transcribed faithfully and accurately, and interpretations of ‘Ghanaian’ English are included in square brackets to facilitate readers’ understandings. Throughout interviews, recorded data was represented to respondents to offer the opportunity for checking meanings and exactness in implied or inferential statements. The data reported was weighted to overcome personal biases by reporting the perceptions that were recorded from more than one participant.

## **Methodological Limitations**

### **Sample Size**

The qualitative enquiry methods used access to individuals willing to participate in the research to enumerate its sample. Building perceptual conceptions of social realities relies very much on the researcher’s ability to accurately and validly interpret the data generated, as well as on having a broad representation of views to inform the validity of claims made. The sample size was considered adequate for the representation of views about GTv as an organisation, however the exclusion of representation from the News department was considered to have been an over-sight in gaining an understanding of the importance of that department’s self-perception on contributing to the social role of GTv. It was, however, possible to theorise its production significance from the literature reviewed.

### **Data**

Statistics of the per capita distribution of television sets and audience viewing were not available. Such studies have not been done in Ghana for many years, and although at the time of this research a partial study had been done by the GBC’s Audience Research Department the information was not available as it was considered incomplete and only available through pursuing ‘diplomatic’ and bureaucratic channels. However, it was considered that due to the study’s focus on the structural elements of GBC as an organisation, audience studies was not a major limitation to understanding the likely social affectations of agency due to the strength of the data gathered.

## Methods

While the statistical data was intended to be illustrative of the general make-up of GTv's schedule, in considering the social affectations of content, there were details in the programmes that are not revealed by the statistical method. It makes it important for supplementary studies to consider the social significance and affectations of specific programmes within the schedule, notably the *Local Drama* series, *Mmaa Nkomo*, *Adult Education* and *Stand Point*, which are GTv productions.

Thus, following the implementation of the research's methods for gathering the research data, the significant findings and analysis are presented in the following chapter.

## **Chapter IV: FINDINGS**

The research data presented below offers insights into the perceptions of television producers at GTv about their outlook on their work and the role of GTv as a social institution that could contribute to the social development of Ghana. It is set out thematically in relation to connections between macro and micro structural links between the type of broadcasting service that GTv is and what it achieved through its agency. It also constructs an understanding of GTv as a public broadcasting service; its values and challenges, from a ‘social reality’ construction based on the perceptions and insights of respondents, juxtaposed against statistical data and the textual analysis of the remit that is meant to regulate the service. It then examines the salience of the organisation in relation to assumptions about its social role and synthesizes an explanation of the facets of the data through the lens offered by the conceptual framework of the study. The overall implications for development communication as a social development objective of public broadcasting are then discussed subsequently.

### **Defining Public Service at GTv**

The reviewed literature showed there was no specific definition of ‘public service broadcasting’ (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005), but an appreciation of ‘commitments’ to four key standards, or benchmarks, that could suggest the degree to which ‘public service broadcasting’ was being achieved by a broadcaster. Those standards make it necessary to exclude state-owned media services but it does not mean that such media

systems are not capable of functioning as ‘public service’ media. It was possible then to assess GTv from the viewpoint of its function as public service broadcaster in order to understand its degree of fit to this type of broadcasting purpose.

Instead of considering specificities of definitions for a public service, the National Media Policy recognised the importance for active social debate in the media, and ascribes to the enablement of this as a function of the State-owned public media. Following many years of limited civil liberties under various military regimes, there is also a provision in the Ghanaian Constitution that suggests a public interest-based approach to the functioning of the publicly-owned media services which follows from its guarantees of freedom and independence for all media (Appendices 1, Article 162, section 1):

“All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions”.

The Constitution, thus, sets out clearly that a vibrant public sphere is important for the nation, and recognises that the media can contribute to this. If the ‘public’ is constructed as an amalgam of varied communities of opinion, then this provision recognises that ‘the public’ is to be served by the state-media through inclusive social debate opportunities. The Constitution, however, does not set out specific criteria for doing this, nor does it set out to delineate specific groups of the public within the national community as a means of constructing the public that must be served. How then may “divergent and dissenting opinions” (*ibid.*) be identified within the nation in order to ascribe plurality of representation to the work of State media?

In assuming the “one nation” (Asante 1996, pg. 59) stance and inferring that airing differences in ‘expressed’ opinion on a diverse range of issues would enable the public sphere in the media, the Constitution leaves the protection of that public sphere to citizens, even though it sets up regulatory bodies to supervise media performance. Its spirit agrees with a ‘social emancipatory project’, which sees social development as a product of diverse debate within the public sphere (Garnham 2000, citing Kant 1970 and Habermas 1989). It also makes state-owned media directly responsible for the facilitation of that public sphere and, thereby, suggests that the Constitution

writers were following the continuum of the Enlightenment philosophy that is also reflected in Habermas' original posit of the public sphere as central to the solution of social problems through debate.

For GTv to exercise its mandate, it would require an operational understanding by staff of what that remit is. That understanding will underpin their actions as content producers. Since producers are important as communication agents, whose role performance is in controlling and deciding what and how content is produced (Ettema and Whitney 1982), what is their understanding of the 'public service broadcast' concept, operationally or notionally? Consequently, to what extent can it be assessed that their decisions are motivated by personal ideologies or an organisationally socialised culture?

Respondents answers did not identify directly with the construct of public service benchmarks put forward by Banerjee and Seneviratne (2005). Their responses, however, fell into two primary rationalisations of function, the 'nation as public' and/or the 'nation as State'. Both notions were expressed but did not appear to be mutually exclusive to respondents:

### **The 'Nation as Public'**

The 'nation as public' notion considers the functional operation of GTv, primarily, within a national post-colonial context and connects functions to a social emancipatory ethos that is located in an envisaged participatory role in national social development, as X5 states:

X5: You see, that is the main purpose of GBC; to educate the public within the context of national development, because when we are educating the people, informing the people, it would accelerate development.

AT: Do you believe that all producers understand this?

X5: Yes, I do. You can find that in the kind of programmes that we do, especially in the *Adult Education* programmes, we [are] doing agricultural

programmes, health programmes, as well as all those entertainment programmes that was done before and we are still doing.

X5's position, which connects the core programming types to social development, was found to be a fundamental understanding amongst all respondents. They saw the organisational function and the producer's participation within the organisation as public service agency, as summed up by X3:

X3: Everything we do is public service and I'm part of the chain.

This can be understood as a conceptualisation of public service broadcasting as a catalytic service given to the national population who constitute 'the public'. It indicates the notion of 'broadcasting' function in its widest paternalistic sense: it does not adduce a role for this 'public' within programme-making, nor does it conceive of a variously differentiated national 'publics'. This 'scatter-shot' notion is rooted in both the colonial and the immediate post-independence media practices urged by the application of the 'dominant paradigm'; to provide the broadcasting service with the aim of 'diffusing innovations' as a means of prompting or promoting developmental ideas. The challenge to this notion is to consider whether in the service delivery an audience-centred, participatory, approach is utilised in the conceiving and making of programmes, even if in the end programming is provided in a 'scatter-shot' manner.

### **The 'Public as State' Definition**

The other understanding of the meaning of 'public service broadcasting' was primed on the provision of a media platform through which State functions and the government agenda are broadcast without consideration for organisational commercial reward:

X4: For them public service broadcasting is with the ones that we do like *Meet The Press*, these ceremonials and all these things that we do for the government and all that. Those ones they call public service broadcasting.



X5:... For instance, if we went to parliament to go and cover parliamentary proceedings, which would come freely without any commensurate [compensation], ... it's also within the public service domain. Now, once in a while, the Ministry of Information also brings things concerning the government, some development things, and when that also comes it goes on air free of charge.

This notion perceives 'public' as constructed as government/State. That perception sees that GTv's coverage of national and State functions is a 'public' service provided to the widest national audience. It identifies closely with being a government 'mouth-piece', which is the dominant conception regarding public service broadcasting across the continent (Article 19 2003).

However, both constructions of the 'public' still result in a misconstruction of the 'public interest' as 'what is in the interest of the public'; the social well-being is the basis of the broadcasting ethos in this type of broadcaster. As shown in the literature review and introduction chapters, presenting the State's voice and programming intended to educate for development and civic action is conceptualised as the essential work of the public broadcasting service across developing democracies, and especially the case in Africa.

X8 considered that there were fundamental errors in these rationalisations and suggested that they emanated from a fundamental misunderstanding of it should mean 'to do' public service broadcasting, as a concept, based on a organisational misconception of what it meant to perform the function in a contemporary setting:

X8: ... they've got an idea of public service that is set in a completely different paradigm from the present. The first thing is that we don't have a monopoly on public service any more.... Second thing is people have feedback channels through the other kinds of stations. They don't just necessarily take everything that GBC would say as the gospel truth, so the idea of being the sole communicator of the public truth is the wrong perception to go with now, and there is a certain, almost papal, assumption of divinity that is built into the structure; where people think that they are the ones who must speak and,

because the feedback channels are not particularly well-organised, there is a self-congratulatory, self-affirming pattern, that allows them to continuously send out messages without knowing that the public is not even watching any more....

It was certainly problematic for GTv producers to have narrow concepts of what the public service ethos was meant to be and brought to the fore the importance of defining and engaging with ‘the public’ as fundamental to the exercising of a public service broadcasting mandate. While the State represents the expressed will of ‘the public,’ as the outcome of a participatory civic exercise, the role of public service media is certainly not to only reflect this ‘officialdom’ but to also enable a continual national dialogue that encourages the contribution of the diversity of social groups in an effort to balance ‘the power of the State’ with ‘the will and aspirations of the mass’ in the project of national social development.

However, it was found that neither the Ghanaian Constitution, the NLCD 266 (Appendices 1 and 2) nor the National Media Commission’s Media Policy documents (Appendices 3) provide definitions of ‘public service’ broadcasting. The exercise of ‘public service’ in the media, inferred from Article 162 (Appendices 1) of the Constitution, considers a ‘public’ medium to be one that disseminates “information to the public”. It specifies their general and inclusive duty to be constitutional guardians and watchdogs of government. The Constitution, therefore, does not distinguish in its treatment of freedom and responsibility guarantees for the private and State-owned media, and provides these as absolutes in addition to human rights but proscribed by the need to uphold considerations for personal reputations and national security. This infers that all mass media in Ghana are, necessarily, ‘public media’ distinguished by a “matter of degree” (Appendices 3 Section 5.1, pg. 20), and providing services either for commercial gain, or as public institutions, to deliver socially beneficial services.

The NMC Media Policy is, therefore, intended to locate media institutions in Ghana within categorised frameworks in order to achieve an overall industrial policy to guide services provision in the country. It starts from a recognition of the historical antecedents that have shaped the development of the media in Ghana and formulates specific sector policies for types of media organisations both public and private. It,

however, also specifies ‘public media’ as the State-owned. It further regards these as having the “special” responsibility to “meet the information, education and communication needs of the nation” (Appendices 3 Section 6.2.1, sub-section i, ii, iii, and v, pg. 32), and specifically defines them as “not-for-profit organisations” tasked to operate commercially “efficient” business models (*ibid*, sub-section vii). The policy reflects the spirit of the Constitution and, importantly, enjoins all media into a “public trust” (Appendices 2, pg. vii) to work in the “public interest”. Thus, ‘public service’ media in Ghana are two types of service, State-controlled or private, and both are charged with delivering socially beneficial services. Thus, it can be understood that within this environment, some respondents identify more with their type of ‘public service’, which is the type that provides a not-for-profit service for the national good.

This type of service is founded on a specified remit stated in the NLCD 226. The decree lists functional duties for GBC in its Section 2 (Appendices 2). It specifically states that GBC should “prepare in the field of culture, education, information and entertainment programmes reflecting National progress and aspirations” (Appendices 2, Section 2 (b)). In this, it is clearly stated that the prime duty of the GBC is to exhibit the continuum of the nation’s stages in development, and evidence public “aspirations” through programming. The objective to use the GBC and its operations in the promotion of national social development is evident, and that ethos is joined to the production of specific programme types that should ideologically both inspire and provide catalysis for social development in nationalist causes. The phrase “reflecting National progress” is indicative of an intention to have programmes also mirror the contemporaneous society. It indicates an intention to have broadcast programming that portrays advances and progresses; that mark and celebrate successes, as well as providing points of reckoning of the growth of modernity within the country.

Importantly, it can be seen in the wording of both the NLCD 226 and the Media Policy that while the importance of reflecting the nation is valued, the integration of the national ‘mass public’ is not fundamental to the construction of the remit and duties of GBC. This reflects the historical development of GBC from its inception as a government service department. It is also reflected in the responses of interviewees who showed that as a foundational notion, producers identified with a public interest-centred approach to conceptualising their work. That construction of the public

interest that sees the mass population as needing to be served with a pre-determined communication agenda intended for their good but determined without their participation. A true public interest approach would require producers to assess the organisational function in a reversing of their outlook to an audience-centred perspective. Thus, the purpose of GBC, and hence GTv, is located in what interpretation of the remit by GTv staff gives them a notional understanding of what their social role and agency is through television programming and broadcasting.

## **Purpose**

Respondents considered that the purpose of GTv was to “educate, inform and entertain”. These values were repeatedly cited like a mantra and have likely been acquired through organisational socialisation as they did not state that these were specific values in normative guidelines for programme-making. The values were found to serve as notional benchmarks used by producers to categorise types of programmes, and thus serve to indicate the types of programmes they make. As values, their real integration into production ideation processes was not evidenced by practices and approaches to making programmes, even though it was found that there was the understanding that fulfilling the values was important for impacting social development<sup>22</sup> through programmes:

X5: ... to inform, educate and entertain. You see, that is the main purpose of GBC, to educate the public within the context of national development, because when we are educating the people, informing the people, it would accelerate development.

X4: Policy guidelines that, I would say is written, is that you have to educate, entertain and inform. That is first and foremost. ... but really, really, on paper there is nothing. So it's only out of experience that you will get it that “this” thing is not allowed, it's not done here, or this and that,... but hugely no written guidelines, we are just using our own heads.

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<sup>22</sup> See X1's comments on pg. 214

Thus, respondents relate to a connectedness between their work and social outcomes in the larger context of driving development forward. However, there were no evidenced criteria for programme-making that would encourage producers to systematically embed these values in making programmes. Programme-making was an activity born out of ‘experience’. However, as a notion, it was found to be in alignment with the Media Policy’s identification of GBC as a support system for “national socio-economic development” (Appendices 3, pg. 46).

Thus, to what extent are these purposed types of programming constituted to align the media policy, and the reflected producer’s understandings, with actual outcomes in broadcasting? The NMC policy identifies cornerstone principles in public media as the provision of information and education, among other “communication needs” (Appendices 3 Section 6.2.1 (ii), pg. 32.), and thus the levels of these programming types should be the foundational evidences through which a measuring of outcomes can be performed.

The statistical data on broadcast output (Fig. 1) showed that GTv was providing almost equal measures of information, education and entertainment in its schedule; less than one and half per cent of programming was unaccounted for.

*Figure 1 Hours of Programming by Type of Programming*

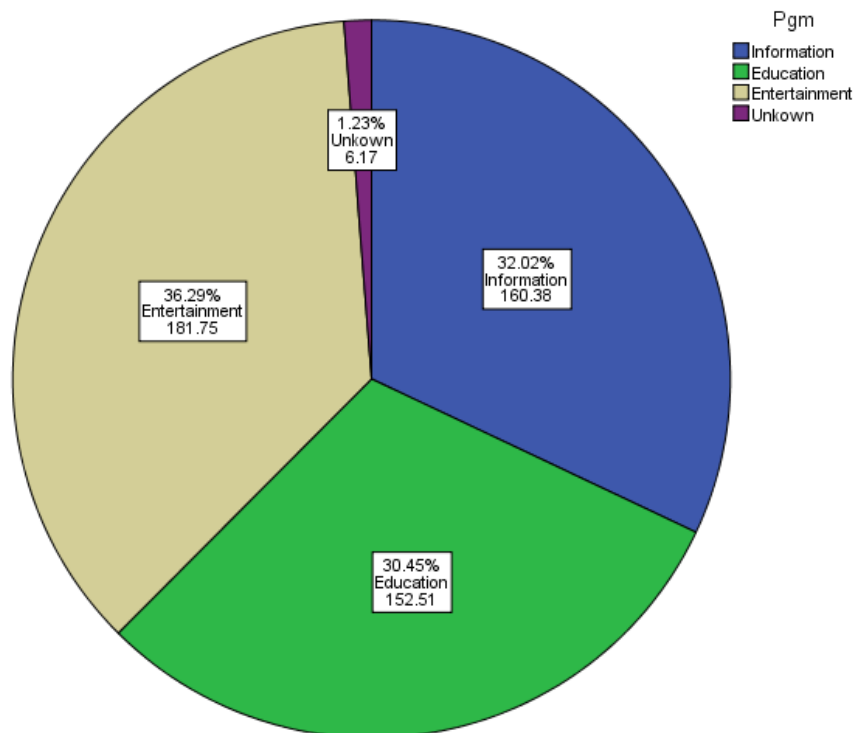


Table 2, below, shows the programming composition within the statistics.

*Table 2: Distribution of Types of Programmes*

Types of Programmes	Nos. of Programmes	Airtime %
Information	339	32.02
Education	272	30.45
Entertainment	207	36.29
Unknown	12	1.23

Thus, the vast majority of programming was clearly attributable to specific programme types and, prima facie, suggested that GTv was providing a broad, equitable, service in providing equal amounts of the core programming areas stated in the remit and thus would have been reflecting the dominant cultural uses of television (Holtz-Bacha and Norris). Table 3 below shows the distribution of programming from producer sources, and shows that GTv was involved directly, or through co-

production, with producing about forty percent of the programmes captured in the data (Fig. 2). However, the greater amount of programming was externally sourced, therefore how much of the purposive intentions for GTv, as expressed, is actually fulfilled by GTv itself?

Figure 2: Distribution of Production Sources by Airtime

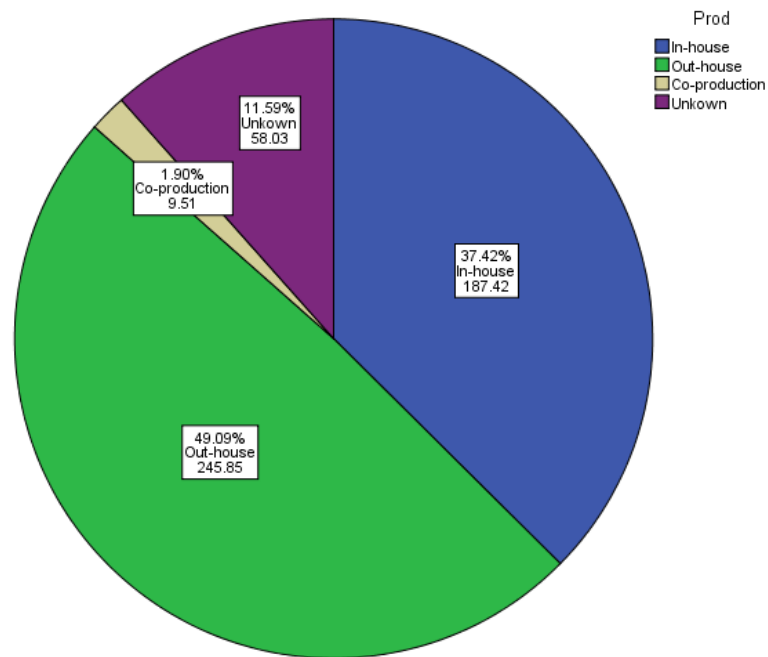


Table 3: Types of Programming by Production Source

	Prod					Total
		In-house	Out-house	Co-prod.	Unknown	
	1	0	0	0	0	1
Information	0	267	63	2	7	339
Education	0	66	154	5	47	272
Entertainment	0	31	144	7	25	207
Unknown	0	0	2	0	10	12
Total	1	364	363	14	89	831

## Programme Types

The statistics showed that the greater percentage of ‘information’ type programming was in News (256 programmes out of 339, representing 19.31% of airtime), Programme Line-up and Announcements, and Factual (28 programmes, representing 17.90% of airtime) programming, as in Table 5 (See below). The Factual programming in this count was composed of News-type programming (Newsreels and live events). Thus, the information type of programming was found to be essentially News programming and the domination of the programme type by a single genre showed a narrow realisation of potential forms of programming that could be possible for this type of programming. Further, the engagement of GTv producers with the provision of education and entertainment programming types was marginal, constituting less than half of the effort in the production of information programming as shown by Table 3 and also Table 4 below. Thus, the internal production of content at GTv is biased in favour of a predominantly News-driven production agenda. The statistics therefore suggested that GTv, at least internally, was not fulfilling its purpose as a provider of the types of programming that are understood to be at the core of its remit. The dominance of the News in the internal production process therefore also suggests that politics and politicking is mostly driving the organisation’s production agenda, and the analysis supports Hastings’ (2005) observation that Ghanaian state-owned media were notably biased in their coverage of government in the News agenda.

*Table 4: Distribution of Genre by Production Source*

	Prod					Total
		In-house	Out-house	Co-production	Unknown	
<b>Genre</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
News	0	<b>196</b>	60	0	0	256
Telenovela	0	0	21	0	0	21
Culture (Art, Music)	0	2	4	1	0	7
Christian Teaching	0	1	94	2	0	97
Fashion/Beauty	0	0	2	4	0	6
Local Drama	0	7	0	1	1	9
Islamic Teaching	0	3	0	0	0	3
Series, Serial	0	0	8	0	0	8



Game Show	0	2	2	0	0	4
Talkshow	0	<b>18</b>	7	1	0	26
Soap	0	0	2	0	0	2
Sport	0	<b>11</b>	5	0	12	28
Quiz	0	3	4	0	1	8
Line-Up, Announcements	0	46	0	0	0	46
Brand Infotainment	0	0	7	0	4	11
Life	0	2	4	0	0	6
Unknown	0	1	3	1	14	19
Product Advertising	0	0	5	0	3	8
Film	0	3	34	0	0	37
Factual	0	<b>48</b>	12	1	46	107
Learning	0	<b>16</b>	25	0	0	41
Sitcom	0	0	12	0	0	12
Variety/Magazine	0	0	3	3	2	8
Music (Pop)	0	2	49	0	6	57
Music (Religious)	0	3	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>831</b>

*Table 5: Percentages of Genres in Sample*

Genres	Percentage of Airtime
News	19.31
Factual	17.9
Film	12.31
Christain Teaching	10
Music (Pop)	6.5
Sport	6.11
Learning	5.86
Talkshow	3.8
Unknown	2.7
Telenovela	2.4
Local Drama	1.7
Sitcom	1.68

Quiz	1.37
Line-Up, Announcements	1.28
Series, Serial	1.15
Variety/Magazine	1.02
Culture (Art, Music)	0.85
Branded Infotainment	0.81
Product Advertising	0.78
Fashion Beauty	0.58
Life	0.57
Game Show	0.5
Music (Religious)	0.3
Soap	0.28
Islamic Teaching	0.25

*In summary, out of a total programme count of 831, GTv produced 364 of which 196 was News, a further 28 in News-related production, 48 in Factual and 16 in Learning.*

Considering that GTv, should be providing a fair composition of programming within the three types of programming values, the statistics indicated that other in house programming would suffer from the prioritisation of News. Thus, non-News producers would have lower priority and this would be reflected in access to resources for programme-making. They would also be more likely to feel a disconnection between themselves and their work and contribution to the achievement of organisational purpose, especially when measured in terms of their contribution to programming in the three programming categories. Hence, it becomes useful to consider the achievement of the overall public service broadcasting objective through benchmarks that offer a holistic means of appraisal.

## **PBS Values Benchmarks**

To test the level of appreciation of these standards within the existing culture of production, the research interviews discussed the broad frames of the benchmarks with both producers and supervising executives. Considering that GTv's producers have a centre-to-periphery orientation in their understanding of the public service broadcasting function, it becomes important to discover if within this orientation there is an unconscious recognition and use of the benchmark values and features in their work performance.

## Universality

### Access

GTV provides a service that is the most widely available within Ghana; broadcast signal coverage is assumed to reach most of the population<sup>23</sup>. This provides reception access to the vast majority. However, without reliable statistics on the ownership of television sets it is not possible to actually judge the extent of the social benefit in terms of reception and service use. No recent statistics were available to indicate whether public viewing facilities put up, post-independence, have been maintained or gone into decline, though it can be assumed that the latter is more likely to be true, considering the general economic decline over the years. Most viewing, in rural and extra-urban communities, traditionally has been by shared viewing in homes and shops. How then does the broadcaster operationalise the demand to be both national and communal?

Language use is fundamental to enabling audience access, in terms of comprehending and making sense of television programmes. Respondent X1 stated that GTV continues to employ the six local languages instituted at the inception of GBC:

X1: We are talking about Akan, Dagbani, Hausa, Ewe, we have Ga and we have Nzema.

The languages are employed within the working week on allotted days and have at least one programme in a week devoted to them – the News in a local language and a local drama. On their dedicated days the languages are used in a summarised News bulletin as well as in the *Adult Education* segment before the prime evening News. However, although *Hausa* and *Dagbani* are the most widely spoken languages in northern Ghana they are not used in programming in the same manner as other languages. Though predominantly spoken in northern Nigeria, *Hausa* has been widely spoken in the West-African Sahel even before Ghana's independence and the creation

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<sup>23</sup> NCA has not published market performance or penetration data in detail for tv and radio as it does for mobile telephony

of national boundaries<sup>24</sup>. Respondent X4 explains the use of the languages in *Adult Education*:

X4: ... Hausa and Dagbani alternate, they go [on air] on the [same] day.

And, furthermore, concerning its use in *Local Drama*:

X4: ... the Hausa one is only for their *Eid* festivities, the *Eid ul Fitr* and *Eid ul Adar*, those two. That's when we feature Hausa because the argument is that Hausa is not a Ghanaian language.

In X4's use of "their" as an attributive pronoun, and the connection of the language to the Moslem religion, there was a construction of *Hausa* speakers as social entities defined by not only linguistic difference but also an assumption that the language represents a religious affiliation in Ghana. This is not so for while northern Ghana has most of the nation's Islam adherents (Gocking 2005), it is thought to be mainly animist in its religious composition. However, the languages employed are suggested to represent the majority of linguistic access to programmes:

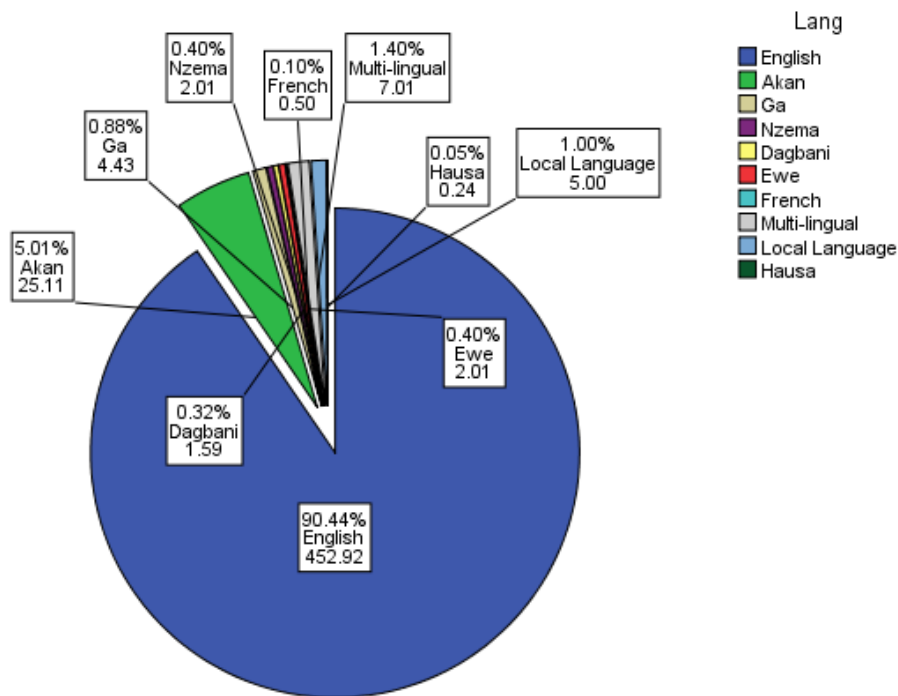
X1: Yes, I think ... these languages, like the Akan, be it Fanti [a] person speaking or Akuapim, [it is understood by most of the language group], yes. And I think that maybe Nzemas [may] not be able to understand Fanti or [other Akan], I don't know, so there is a section for Nzema to be covered. And in the North most people would understand the Hausa and some will understand the Dagbon, so that access too is covered. So I think it's a fair representation of the languages within the country.

Fig. 3 shows that more than ninety per cent of programming on air was done in English), and less than ten per cent in indigenous and other languages. In a country with a low estimated adult literacy rate at sixty-seven per cent, which includes literacy in local languages (UNICEF 2012), this means that a significant majority of the audience would have resorted to visual cues and semi-literate interpretations of television content.

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<sup>24</sup> For linguistic discussion on origins and usage of Hausa see Phillip J. Jagger, 2001.

Figure 3: Percentages of Languages in Sample



Thus, the data suggests a very, narrow use of the diversity of Ghana’s indigenous languages in programming. Significantly, however, it also showed a bias towards the employment of *Akan*. In a total of eight hundred and thirty programme events, the discrete count of programmes (ignoring periodic counts) was one hundred and eighty-three. The count of programmes with *Akan* titles and/or language use was twenty-four programmes. There were three programmes with *Ga* titles. Respondent X6 suggested a growing centrality of the *Akan* language:

X6: Yes, you know, fortunately, should I say fortunately, the Akan language goes very far, even in Accra the Ga people understand most of the Akan programmes. So when it comes to that, and I think because of our inter-tribal marriages and stuff, most of the languages can still be absorbed. To tell you the truth, the Akan language is almost universal...from the north to the south sectors; some people might choose not to believe that...

This assertion could explain the dominance of the *Akan* language over others and indicates an increasingly mediated progression of the *Akan*. Thus GTv is contributing to the evolving cultural character of the nation through its allowance for ‘Akanisation’ (Gocking 2005), even though marginal. This could eventually contribute to the evolution of *Akan* as a dominant language form and its use as a symbolic national language. Considering that *Akans* are the largest ethnic grouping, it is logical to assume they may have greater representation of ethnicity within GTv departments. Their acceptance, or assumption, of their language dominance could also result in a creep towards hegemonic approaches to culture portrayal in programming and could repress other cultural forms and artefacts from the diverse character of the current nation-state if the processes of production do not facilitate consultation on culture representation in content. Thus, production processes need to be able to ensure fair, balanced and adequate representation of the ‘cultural needs’ of the national population, and in the manner in which it is ethically segmented, and the National Media Policy, as well as GBC, needs to develop guidelines to ensuring the fair and equitable representation of the diversity in both languages and the cultures they signify. Thus, despite the recognition of the importance of content accessibility in assuring service universality, the GTv’s language policy does not fully represent the lingual diversity within the country, and the cultural output of the television system promotes the use of *Akan* as a dominant language over other major languages, and altogether ignores about forty other minority languages.

It is also pertinent to note that GTv has added the French language in broadcasting a weekly, summarised, News bulletin. French, is non-native to Ghana but is the official language in all the border countries, but its use is even more marginal. This, ostensibly, is either to show regional solidarity and/or to give some, however limited, access to the migrant, or trans-national, French-West Africans who have either sought refuge in the country, following recent regional disturbances, or to the transiting regional labour force. This particular engagement may be an attempt to re-engage with the roots of the GBC in the Nkrumahist pan-African ethos for broadcasting in Africa.

Access to television programming is not only through the use indigenous languages. The sign language is used to bridge the programme access gap for the hearing-impaired but is only used in the prime-time English-language News.

X2: ...With the people we call "deaf and dumb" we have what is called 'missing link' or sign language. So in our News currently, which is a major thing that happens on TV, if you know Ghana, in our News we have the signing person always on to sign the News.

There is recognition of the limited accessibility of programmes for audience members with hearing-impairment and X6 explains that resource limitations are the reason for the narrow access facilitation:

X6: The idea is there but the problem we are having now is about the other side of the coin, that is personnel that would come and help people access this, the personnel from sign-language, as at now, they are only able to satisfy the News, they are yet to try as much as possible to cover the other programmes.

Other producers have employed a mixed methods approach and have used sub-titling to improve access to productions. In relation to sub-titling X1 explains:

X1: Sometime ago we used to do that a lot, especially with the local dramas, but these days they don't. I don't know why but they don't. And in our News we don't sub-title. I think it's only when somebody is [speaking vernacular], in the documentaries, [for example], I do sub-titles when someone is speaking in a particular vernacular language. I would sub-title in English.

GTv does consider programme access to be important to its competitiveness within the general industry:

X6: ... when you are dealing with audio-visuals, [there's] sound accompanying the pictures, [but] sometimes the programmes are well-produced [so] that [people] are excited to watch the pictures alone. Sometimes too, yes, if you don't understand the language you will not be able to follow

[the story] and therefore you'd have the temptation to switch channels, and that is why we are developing our other channels and started with sports to that if you switch at all you would not switch to any other competition but stay within the GBC channels. So we are taking care of that, and very soon the entertainment channel will also start, like I was saying, and News 24 will also follow.

X6, however, also explained that technical problems with sub-titling equipment had limited the use of the method for improving programme-access.

Beyond the limitations in the local language usage policy, a fundamental error is in the over-reliance on English as the main television language in a country that has low English literacy rates as just over sixty-five percent of the population is deemed to be literate, a measure that includes literacy in both the local languages and English. To broadcast nearly ninety percent of programming in English critically reduces GTv's 'universality' reach and effectively makes it an elitist platform for the educated; providing a very narrow service that does not meet the challenge to provide a 'universal' 'place' (Adams 1992) within which the nation can gather to enjoy, fully, televised events that provide the opportunity to share equally in socio-cultural events that are meant to underline unitary nationhood. The National Media Policy acknowledges this over-reliance on the English language and states that it may also be causing an "atrophy of local cultures" and "an exclusion of the majority of the population" (Appendices 3, pg. 22). This limited communicative ability also means that GTv is not engaged with providing a service that would allow the whole nation to easily see its 'reflection, mark its progresses and connect to aspirations' expressed or embedded in media content; the driving ethos in the law establishing GBC (Appendices 2, Section 2 (b)). This error would also be driving audience "fragmentation" (Raboy 1996); diluting the nationalist ethos of the platform and causing, especially, low-English literate audiences to congregate in low culture and taste, 'ghetto', genres with low-language and media literacy barriers.

If singular nationhood is an underlying objective in having a 'national' broadcaster, then efforts must be made to avail linguistically differentiated audiences with alternative language access services so they can share in the same broadcast and

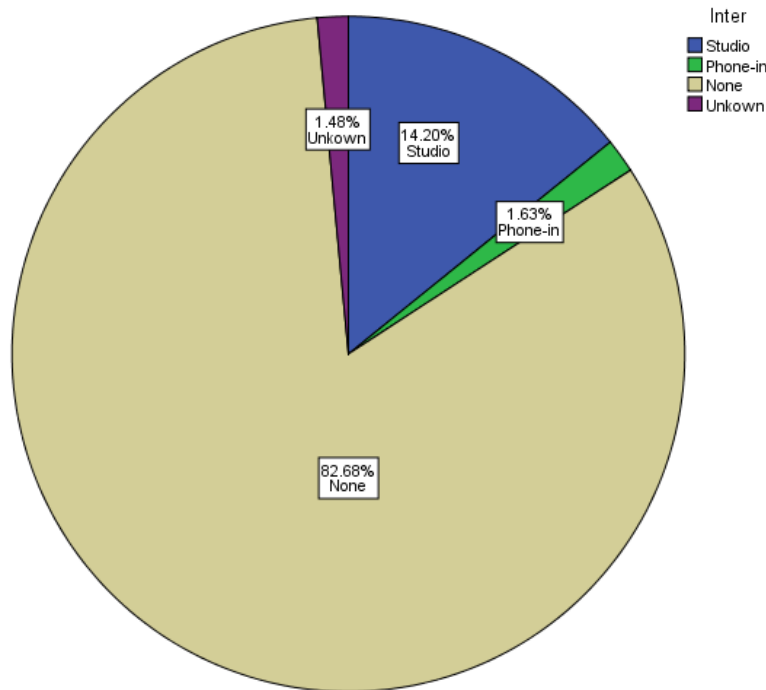


content experiences. Also, given the mixed public-commercial funding model of the GBC, a fragmenting audience is a challenge to its ability to compete effectively for advertising revenue as split audiences may not necessarily gravitate to newly introduced television channels. In a liberalised media market, geographic reach alone would not make sufficient impression on advertising revenue sources. Furthermore, the digital broadcast platform also works against the ‘we reach everyone’ claim as it allows, hitherto, smaller broadcasters to enter the nation-wide broadcasting frame. These competitors offer an entertainment-biased schedule, as noted in the NMC Media Policy (Appendices 3) that meets the low-literacy needs of a significant size of the population. There is therefore a need to rethink the relative importance of language and media literacy within the scope of building a socially relevant and competitive broadcast offering from GTv.

### **Use**

The ability of the general public access and to use a broadcasting system to interact and create content that addresses social aspirational, through discussion and sharing experiences, also an important measure of the system’s universality (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005). Audience participation in television programming was estimated to be about fifteen per cent of programming, and was largely recorded in seven Talkshows that utilised in-studio audiences and public phone-in (compare Fig. 4 and Table 4). These were also mostly in the *Akan* language. Thus, about eighty-six percent of programming did not factor general public participation.

*Figure 4: Percentages of Audience Participation/Interaction in Sample*

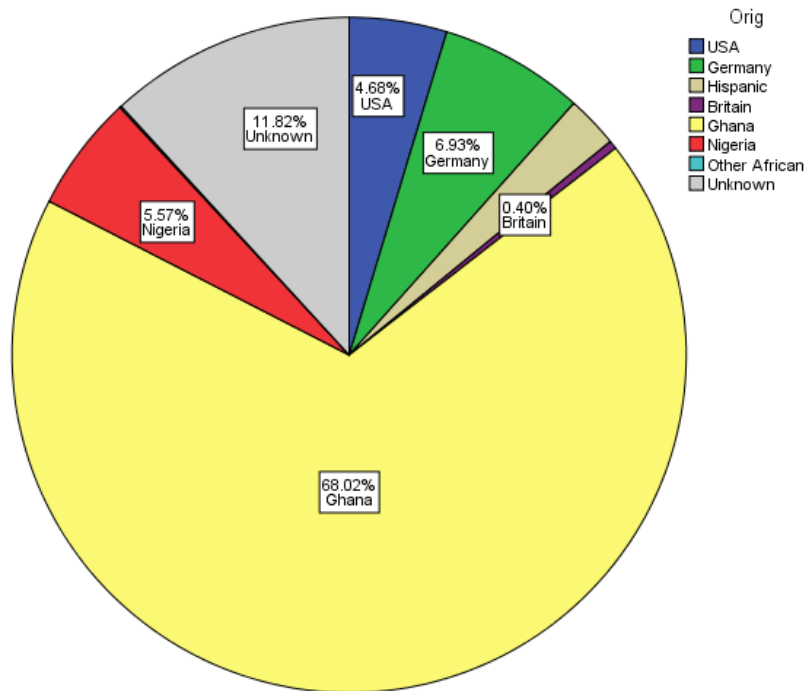


Again, although about half of the programming in the schedule were recorded as out-house productions (compare with Fig. 2<sup>25</sup>), there did not appear to be much effort towards originating programming from within communities or enable wide public participation as these programmes were mostly filmed entertainment (Table 4). However, this exposes a tension in that the greater percent of programming on air that was captured in the data was made in Ghana, and almost fifty per cent of programming was sourced from out-house producers, while GTv itself produced 37.42% of programming in the sample. This indicated positively that there was available opportunity for producers out-side of the GBC access its platform. It also suggested that there was opportunity for an internally diverse programming platform should GTv formulate policies to not discriminate against ‘controversial’ productions and its historically State-sanctioned editorial position. 68.02% (see Fig. 5 below) of programming was found to be local, and less than twenty per cent was from non-Ghanaian sources. Thus the percentage of local content exceeded the NMC Broadcasting Standards policy (Appendices 4), which stipulates that at least fifty per cent of airtime be given to locally originated content.

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<sup>25</sup> Pg. 149

Figure 5: Percentages of Programmes by Origination in Sample



However, the Media Policy highlights that production is “severely constrained ...to the urban areas” (Appendices 3, pg. 21) and also notes a need for producers to recognise that programming ought to give expressive opportunity to different segments of the society. Thus, in practical terms, there is an acknowledgement of limited window of opportunity for the general public to contribute directly to programming and programme formulation in a manner that would facilitate their use of GTv as an expressive medium. Only the children’s programme, *Our Children, Our Future*, done in collaboration with the Ghana International School, indicated a programme formulated to give expressive opportunity to a segmented ‘public’. Other programmes such as *The Business Advocate*, *Adult Education* and *Mmra Nsem*, which are in-house productions that address legal and public education issues, specifically give opportunities to identifiable public agencies and social leaders to engage in public education that is, usually, on specific social and economic issues.

Thus the access of the public to a public debate space (Habermas 1989; Lee Artz in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003) on GTv may be biased towards groups who are able to avail themselves of the access opportunities in being able to not only produce programmes but also pay for the airtime, since the out-house productions

were all bought airtime slots. And while the Media Policy considers community media as the more suitable mechanism required to improve participation in the public sphere, GTv as a national public broadcaster also needs to directly enable the access and use of its platform by the public in encouraging true universality of service and functions.

Interestingly, the statistics show that content imports from out-side the continent are marginal, and the very popular Hispanic *Telenovelas*, widely shown in Ghana, are also marginal at 2.40%. There were, however, a large percentage of programmes from unknown sources (11.82%) that was attributed to programmes with non-specified titles, for example 'Documentaries'.

The low participation figure measured indicates a challenge in making programmes that are formatted to be inclusive of the public. Given the socio-political tensions indicated in the country, with regards to media politicisation (Gifford 2004; Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998), this indicated a disengagement of GTv from the public and reflects government's apprehension that an agitated public sphere may reproduce the historical conditions that resulted in political instability under previous civilian regimes (Asante 1996), and hence the limitation of the national television platform to broad social discussions other than in what is political and, inherently, divisive.

Thus, with limited opportunities to programme participation, content creation and limited linguistic access to enjoying programming, even as passive consumers, how does GTv perform in a proactive manner to meeting the needs of a variegated society?

## **Diversity**

Programming diversity (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005) considers both programme subjects and the reflection of social demographics and voices within the large society; bringing marginal subjects and social sections into programming in a manner as to give opportunity for many different subjects to air.

The Media Policy document engages with plurality only from the media ownership point of view but does not suggest standards for on the public media platform. The bedrock of values for a 'public service' is founded on the notion that the service is driven to serve a 'public interest', where the public is the larger commune of a national society both within and outside of political interests (UNESCO 2005). Plurality is necessary for the broadcaster to serve as the first point of expression for the majority of nationals who cannot afford their own media channels. While limitations are not put on the broadcasting of party political views and issues on GTv, as this would be unconstitutional, there is a stipulation in the NMC's Broadcasting Standards that such programming be logged, be given access fairly across political groups and should present truthful and accurate information (Appendices 4, Section 17). The limited access opportunities to GTv, the dominance of two parties in national politics, and the predominance of programme origination from urban enterprises, however, means that the majority of on-air representations may not fully give voice to all sections of the national public. In recognition of this the National Media policy also notes that the 'public' needs to be "disaggregated" (Appendices 3, pg. 21) for effective plurality in order that marginalised voices may be heard and served. Applying this as a test in interviewing respondents revealed a fragmented picture of contesting opinions:

X8 pointed out that the external media plurality has changed the media landscape for GBC as a national broadcaster; the existence of other information sources is undermining its, previously dominant, media source leadership. This indicated that GBC ought to be more responsive to pursuing an inclusive strategy that builds both quality and credibility into output:

X8: ... people have feedback channels through the other kinds of stations. They don't just necessarily take everything that GBC would say as the gospel truth... because the feedback channels are not particularly well-organised, there is a self-congratulatory, self-affirming pattern, that allows them to continuously send out messages without knowing that the public is not even watching any more....

X8's observation is borne out by the responses of X5, who responds in affirmation that the level of access granted government, and perhaps public sector, information services equates to championing the 'public interest':

X5: .... Anything concerning the government, they come to us.

However, other respondents do not support this view of a public service that is, effectively, a government communication service:

X4: ... if it's the demand of the government they think we are doing the public a service. Of course they are doing it [free] for you so it is a service. Maybe Upper East [Region] at Fifty, maybe Teachers' Day. So, at least, most other departments too enjoy that benefit.

AT: So basically GTv is a play out box for government departments and public organisations.

X4: Yes, especially for the government. We are just there, whichever party comes on we say "yes sir, yes sir", that is all.

Respondent X7 supports X4 and sees a clear infringement and manipulation of GTv resources by the government, even in an environment in which legal frameworks exist to insulate GBC from direct government control:

X7: Let me put it this way, various governments will always want to use GTv to propagate whatever ideas they have, whether economic, social or other, and ...[with] the availability of GTv in every Region, this is achieved, .... there is a programme, *Then and Now*, that has been on air for some time. This present administration [introduced this], where they take a particular location and then a picture is taken of that area and then what has been done presently after they came into power, the transformation that has taken place in terms of schools, other developments, hospitals, etc.

AT: Is that a government sponsored programme?

X7: They don't necessarily sponsor it, some are sponsored, some are by independent producers, and then they are brought to GBC to broadcast.

AT: Are they paid for by government?

X7: They are not paid for, GBC belongs to the government so those kinds of programmes are not paid for.

AT: But if independent producers are making these productions and bringing it to GTv how are the independent producers paid?

X7: They will be paid. The government contracts these people to do this for them and then they come and dump it and go, and we have no say. If you want your bread buttered .... then you have to do it, just close your eyes and do it.

X7's statement that GBC "belongs" to any party in power indicates either disillusionment with structural protections availed the GBC, indicated an inability to resist government demands and signified the high level of control over the organisation by governments in power. The suggestion that for organisational survival, and perhaps for personal job security, the GBC and its functionaries have to do as government wants also indicates that neither Constitutional provisions, nor the existence of the Media Commission, provide adequate independence guarantees for the corporation. Such perceptual limitations, whether real or notional, may not only reside in one person's point of view. Any existence of the fear of victimisation will limit the ability of the whole organisation to fully work in a plural manner in pursuit of the public interest.

### **The Audience**

Respondent X2 considered that the diversity motive in programming should be influenced by an ethos to make content that does not merely respond to commercial imperatives, for a broadcaster to claim public service attributes:

X2: A public broadcaster is a service that goes out to fish for materials, probably information, that doesn't have any commercial dimensions, or to a [lesser extent]; it's not for sale [it's airtime]... [It's about] informing and entertaining people with the material you have...

X2 is stating that the organisation should have a public serving remit that plugs a market gap, presumably, left unfulfilled by private broadcasters that are profit motivated. X2 is backing the position that programming ought not to be commercially driven (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005), but should be to provide programmes as a public value driven service. X2 suggests further that when subjects are treated within mainstream television formats there is opportunity to create wider appeal and greater efficiencies in broadening social education; suggesting that television programmes with wide-audience appeal are better for diversity programming. Referencing work done in sports with social minorities, X2 put it thus:

X2: .... the idea is to bring a change and a different dimension, that is, to add a little bit more taste to our station... and to give a different taste to the audience about soccer which is the “passion of the nation”<sup>26</sup>... We need to bring it to the fore so people get educated..., everybody would benefit, we need to be there to capture that thing to inform everybody so that at the end of the day every Ghanaian will be very [well informed].

Banerjee and Seneviratne (2005) argue that programme diversity is a public service broadcasting feature that shows commitment to broad programming, in both genre and subject, in ways that deliberately includes, and reflects, the wide social spectrum of a nation. X2 suggests that television is powerful, as a tool, for influencing society through education as it is experienced in a temporally and spatially differentiated context (Thompson 1995); the home or any viewing place becomes a socialising environment for learning about new ideas and gaining perspective on social issues. While, diverse programming allows many different subjects to be addressed, a strategic approach is still necessary for efficient and effective communication. Diverse programming is achieved when programmes are ‘disaggregated’ in terms of

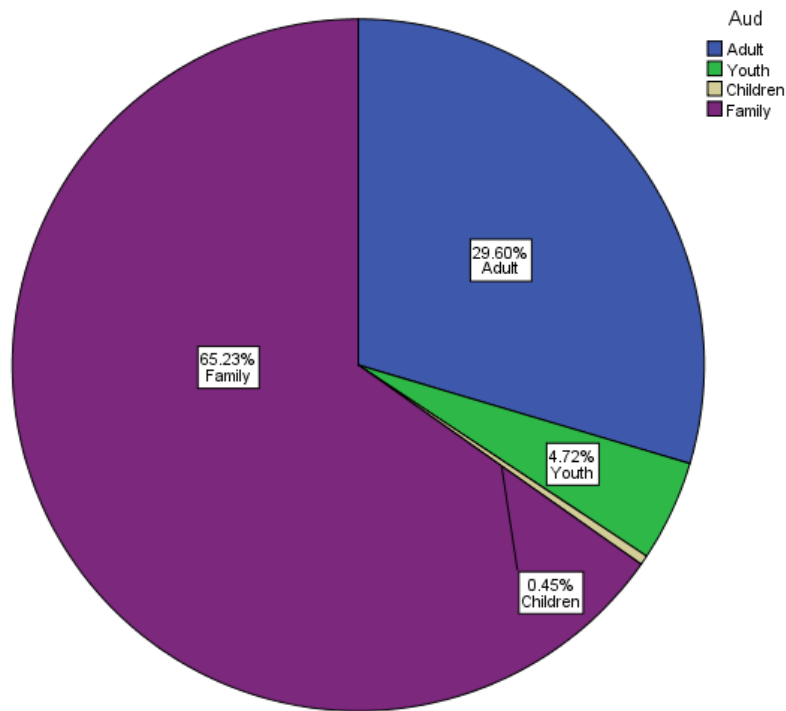
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<sup>26</sup> This reference is common in Ghanaian parlance.



content and targeting in order to reflect differentiated needs for information, education and entertainment.

## Targeting



*Figure 6: Percentages of Targeted Audiences in Sample*

Programming was found to be largely for family viewing (Fig. 6). This indicated the intention to reach the whole nation with programming that reflects “good taste and decency” as stated in the NMC documents (Appendices 3 and 4). It also reflected social conservatism. Although many African films are shown in the daytime hours, and such productions have been noted to exploit sensualised content, it can be assumed that on GTV these would, very likely, be edited to fit the viewing times and to keep within the NMC Broadcasting Standards (Appendices 3) policy that establishes a past-10 PM ‘watershed’ for adult content (Section 6, sub-section (g)). Western films, which typically would contain non-African cultural elements, were noted to be at very late night viewing times for an adult audience.

Youth programming was observed to be mainly music videos. A new wave of strength in the music industry, created by a blending of the local Hip-Life (American Hip-Hop with traditional Highlife) genre with Nigerian and other traditional music styles, with ill-disguised sexual lyrics, is spawning an internationally appealing genre. The music videos that accompany the promotion of these artistic releases also blend both traditional and American Hip-Hop music videos styles, with scantily clad girls and sexualised dance forms that push the traditional decency and taste boundaries. However, these have very wide appeal and are available to view on most local stations as well as on popular online platforms, worldwide. The *Paid Music* slots, of which there are many in the weekly schedules, are therefore intended to into the music industry as a valuable source of income. The content of such music videos may very well serve as a barometer reflecting changes in youth culture and indicating the growth of a blended western and conservative culture in the urban cities of Ghana.

The data also showed low allocation of time for instructive and learning programmes targeted at youth and children. Fig. 6 and Table 5<sup>27</sup> show that with only one programme was targeted at children, and the total airtime given to Learning for adults, youth and children was 5.86% of airtime. With nearly twice as much airtime given to Christian Teaching, this meant that quasi-educational programming undermined the character of the educational type of programming. Thus, this indicated a of limited achievement of the educational value purpose in GTv's broadcasting as it was dominated by programmes which did not have real value in improving the knowledge base of audiences in subjects directly connected to the socio-economic and political advancement of the country.

## Genres

Thus, within genres it was important to assess the extent to which programming was differentiated to address social subjects as well as the provision of the purposive programming values discussed before. Respondents showed an awareness of the social differences within the nation, particularly with regards to ethnic differentiation. While, commonly, stating that there were no structural guidelines to embedding specific thresholds of values into programme-making, they suggested that a socially

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<sup>27</sup> Pages 168 and 152, respectively

aware public, and instances of audience complaints, served as an influence on diversity-inclusion in programme-making:

X1: Well, for me, if I think about the different ethnic groups, for example, even though a paper wasn't given to me about this, when I'm, at least, doing some of the cultural activities I make sure that I don't centre it to one particular area. It varies. If I do something about the Akans, then I maybe I have to do something from the North, I make sure I don't keep to one [ethnic group] because when it's like that people will complain, you know, somebody might say [this, that and the other]. So even though it's not spelt out when we are programming I have that in mind, so I make sure I am not biased, you know. I just vary things. Yes, so that people don't say that because you are in Accra you just stay there and do things there, but you need to move around to give people opportunities.

The producer is suggesting that the national audience expects its public broadcaster to engage with an ethnically differentiated audience. In an ethnically differentiated nation like Ghana, the problem of creating a unitary national identity, while recognising ethnic and tribal differentiation, can generate frictions that are a resistance to the evolution of hegemonic culture. Thus, the salience of programmes like the *Local Drama* productions, in which the major languages provide cultural cues to ethnic differentiation, are a means of acknowledging respect for, representations of, the differentiations. The problem may be in the balance of motivational ideologies, and understanding of society and social evolution, that a producer may bring to diversity inclusion. For example, X3 demonstrates a silo-effect approach to production that over-looks opportunities to develop an inter-ethnic and national culture for building inclusiveness and social cohesion:

X3: ... When you write a local drama I see certain standards working, because once you are dealing with their life you are dealing with the tribe. So if you are dealing with a story in *Ga* it presupposes everybody, everything in it is *Ga*. So the issue of tribalism doesn't even come in. Tribalism comes in when another tribe is introduced [into a drama], so it doesn't even come up as a factor in *Local Drama* because it deals with only one tribe...so the situation is

in *Ga*, the story is in *Ga*, everything is *Ga* because they are going to speak in *Ga*, so there can't be anything else.

X3's statement suggests apprehension at the possibility of accusations of tribalism may be driving production forms into culturally insular media products. However, the Media Policy notes an asphyxiation of local languages in the media generally. Banerjee and Seneviratne (2005) suggest that diversity in programming ought to pursue modes for building inclusiveness into programme-making in order to achieve new formats that stretch the envelope in including and embracing the society, such as Lunt (2009) suggests in his analysis of the utilitarian social effects of the talkshow format as being contributory to a new form of social education through the mediation of personal experiences. Considering the salience of language in mediation, the employment of language diversity within media content should be a natural mechanism through which to foster both ethnic and national cultural forms. It would also work to strengthen the programming access on GTv and, thereby, satisfy the Media Policy's vision to encourage, at least, sixty percent use of local languages in public broadcasting (Appendices 3, Section 7.2.3 (iii)). Greater local language use in more programmes throughout the day can also facilitate language learning and culture growth. X3's position that unitary language use in local drama is desirable for deflecting inter-tribal tension ignores the natural occurrence of multilingualism (Laitin 1992; Heine and Nurse 2000) within communities. Using the technique in dramatic characters will not only be natural representative of local communities and tribes, but would also provide further opportunities for language groups to learn and share cultural diversity through the public broadcaster.

This biased operation of the broadcaster was confirmed in the statistics from the broadcast schedule sample. The sample counted twenty-three programme genres and the analysis revealed that News (19.31%), Factual (mainly documentaries; 17.90%), Film (12.31%) and Christian Teaching (10%) have the top allotments of airtime<sup>28</sup>. All other genres, including formal and informal Learning (5.86%) for adults, youth and children had much smaller allocations. A total of twenty-five genres categories were counted with more genres in the entertainment type of programmes. Thus, it was

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<sup>28</sup> Refer to Table 5 on pg. 152

observed that while many genres are provided, the heavy bias in airtime devoted to News, Factual, Film and Christian Teaching, may be undermining the extent of diversity that might be actually possible to create within the airtime resources available because the same programmes were repeated each day with few variations across the days within the weekly schedule and this indicated important observations:

### News

Firstly, there was an hourly news bulletin broadcast most parts of the day, five-minute presentations within working hours with hour-long news at 7pm and 10pm. There were not only in-house news productions but also re-broadcasts of news, current affairs and culture and arts from Deutsche Welle TV, in the early morning, and live-news and current affairs programmes from VOA in the afternoon. Such a dominant position for News programming could be attributable to its social maintenance function, re-assuring the nation about social and political stability, and developments therein, or an attempt to deliver orientating information to the national community. The news cycle could also be a copying of the formats of global news broadcasters, whose programming styles are indicative of modern media practice. Competition in the local television industry has seen the emergence of both local and satellite broadcasters which carry the 24-hour rolling news formats of global media giants, whose programming formats serve could be seen as indicators of modernity in the media business.

Certainly, it is likely that all three factors play a role. The political history of the nation and the growth of democracy may be salient factors for the delivery of news, which could therefore be serving a social maintenance role through re-assurance and orientation to socio-political developments. The history of constitutional usurpation by the army made the state-controlled media an important source of 'emergency' information, and Hastings (2005) observed the central role of news in daily routines and inter-personal conversations within Ghanaian society. Thus, it can be concluded that the need for the 'cyclic' news on both national and global events has made News programming the single most important function of GTv, nationally. Along with a historical culture of propaganda on behalf of governments (Hastings 2005; Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998), the production of News at GTv could provide a social

stabilising function in prosecuting an agenda of rhetoric in favour of an existing government; its frequency indicating ‘normality’ within the political status quo, even as it serves to provide cues for social debate and commentary (Hastings 2005).

The alternate news sources available to the public; through competing radio and television stations, makes it important to understand the social relevance of GBC-produced News in relation to its history of dislocation from the ‘public interest. A vibrant private broadcasting industry competes aggressively to provide alternate discussions and interpretations of the News, and is much more ready to use ‘grapevine’ sources. Such sensationalized media output from competition will therefore provide more relevance to a public that traditionally trades on ‘gossip’ (Hastings 2005) and inter-personal news exchanges, and obviate the presentation on a station perceived to exercise a “culture of silence” (Ansu-Keremeh and Karikari 1998, pg. 2) that does not serve the public interest.

Global news broadcasts, therefore, need to be understood separately from local news content. They serve a socialising and orienting role for cuing ideas of modernity, place, people and events, and provide connections to the diaspora for expatriates, and community-members with relatives abroad. The statistics showed that an estimable third of News broadcast was from Deutsche Welle TV; broadcast in the very small hours of the morning. It therefore will have limited social impact and relevance. While DW TV is a world renowned institution, very much like any other news organisation, it is engaged in selective construction of a world view that is editorially determined and different, regarding public interest, to what may be conceived of as ‘interesting’ to the local Ghanaian. If GTv’s intent is to tap into a global news source in order to offer much broader information content than it is itself able to provide, then it ought to consider a critically balanced array of news sources to present on the public service platform. The VOA programme *In Focus*, which has regular live re-broadcast slots, in contrast to DW TV News, presents an African-issues based programme that is necessarily different in intent and ideological slant compared to the Euro-centric formats of the news programmes *Journal* and *Global 3000*. However, the wider social significance of such international news on GTv is difficult to theorise due to the social structure of Ghana, in which the size of the literate and professional classes are relatively smaller compared to the working and agrarian classes.

Definitely, for social elites, the global sources of news will provide cues of 'modernity' that will inform their debates of public and social issues (Barker 1991; Morley 2007; Sparks 2007). Their social debates and the decisions they make, as the people invariably in control of politics and social institutions of influence, will be informed by a global cultural orientation world view that will either further divide them from lower social classes, when not understood, or will filter into mass society as modern ideas (Falola 2004; Sparks 2007).

Critically, therefore, the global news events that would also affect the lower classes through the assimilated ideas of the social elites that control the political and economic reins of the country, needs to be related to lower classes as part of the work of GTv in providing an understanding of the evolving world within which the nation-state, and its development agenda, is situated. Particular to note are incidents in global-market trade events in agricultural commodities, mining and petroleum, as well as sub-regional political events. All of these instances affect population movements, income distribution and national civic activities.

### **Factual**

Secondly, the Factual genre was made up, mainly, of documentary slots in the schedule. It was observed that many of these slots were simply entered as 'Documentary'. These un-named slots were a concern in that it made it impossible to infer the nature of content intended for broadcast in those slots. Considering that the Factual genre was the second most significant use of airtime, the concern was that these slots are left un-programmed in anticipation of government communication needs. This conclusion was deduced from respondents' strong suggestions that GTv carried a lot of programming that was government communication, yet apart from three named documentaries on civic education, *Meet The Press*, *News Conference* and distance learning programmes there were no programmes in the schedules directly attributable to a being were counted that were similar. Thus, un-named 'documentary' slots could be ways to 'spring' communication on the public without having to log these formally, as per Broadcasting Standards Policy (Appendices 4, Section 17, pg. 7). However, the large extent of government communication, and its disguise, was

attributed to the extensive coverage of government personalities and events in the News slots<sup>29</sup> (see Fig. 7 below).

### **Christian Teaching**

Thirdly, the Christian Teaching genre was noted to command a high proportion of the education type of programming on GTv, approximately a third (50.09 hours of CT as a fraction of 154.75 hours of Education programming, and 10% of total airtime sample<sup>30</sup>). The programmes were all noted to be from evangelical/charismatic and Pentecostal denominations. While Ghana is a largely Christian nation, at about “sixty-three per cent”, just about a quarter of those are Pentecostal although there is a continuing growth in these denominations (Gocking 2005) which teach a fundamentalist interpretation of Christianity and ‘prosperity messages’ inspired by American evangelistic denominations. Hence the faith branch adopts religious-right Americanisms in ideological propagations about faith, life and society (Gifford 2004). Yet, that religious minority is monopolising a substantial part of the national broadcast resource in regular slots. Pentecostals have shown they can have potentially hegemonic influences on the character and nature of nationalist and social discussions (Appendices 6). In a decidedly inclusive nation, not necessarily secular, where other religious groups do not feel threatened, the dominance of one group over many others in the public sphere reflects policy failings, inadequate policy strategies or a lack of institutional sensitivity. Islamic Teaching, for example, at only .25% of airtime, is less than a tenth of Christian Teaching airtime. The balance of religious rhetoric is not plural on national television, and is against the NMC Broadcasting Standards policy on representation of social groups (Appendices 4).

The airtime for Christian Teaching is accessed via commercially sold slots to the various church organisations that produce the content, while Islamic Teaching is produced by GTv. The revenues generated from selling these slots to Pentecostal denominations, in view of GTv’s need to operate a commercially-optimised usage of airtime is giving opportunity to Christian-evangelistic churches with requisite financial resources to dominate religious programming. Thus, without a strategy to balance the diversity of religions on television, GTv is failing to provide fairness and

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to Figure 7 on pg. 177

<sup>30</sup> Refer to Table 5 on pg. 152

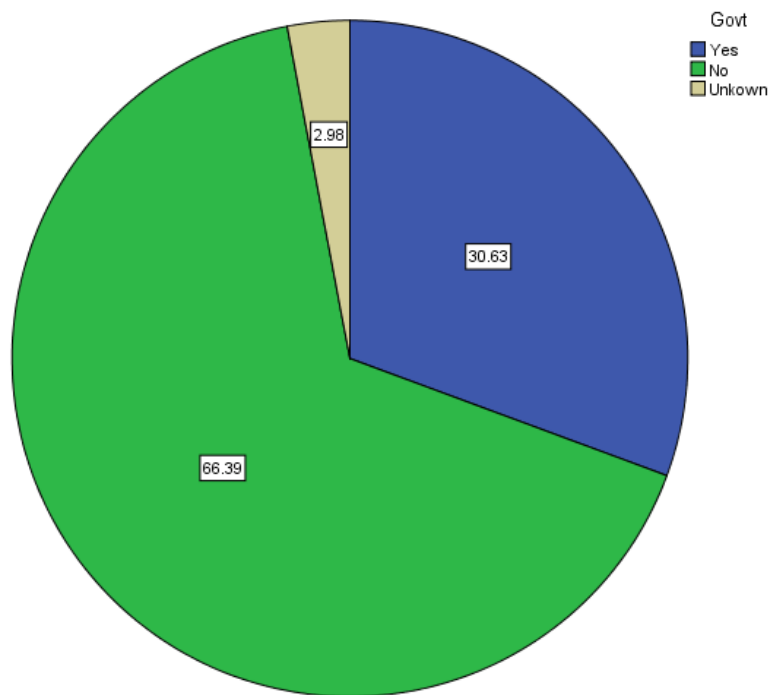


balance in the representation of diverse religions and faiths in the broadcast output. This is not within the spirit of the Constitution and is a singular, or limited, opinion in the national media is noted to be undesirable in the National Media Policy. Also, Article 163 of the Constitution, (Appendices 1), provides that “All state-owned media shall afford *fair opportunities and facilities* for the presentation of *divergent views and dissenting opinions*”. The Constitution, thus, sets out clearly that a diverse and inclusive media is important for reflecting the varied character of the nation. While “fair opportunity” relates to equitability of access opportunities, it by no means suggests that marginal groups should be allowed to suffer the consequences of their inability, or even unwillingness, to avail themselves of existing opportunities. The NMC Media policy particularly recognises that a history of monopolised access to media has rendered a vast majority of Ghanaians without the knowledge required to enable them to gain access to media opportunities that would allow them to engage in the public sphere debates of social issues.

### **Government Communication**

Crucially, the presence of government communication (see Fig. 7 below) in programming was found in very few programmes, specifically in *News Conference*, *Meet the Press* and *Distance Learning*. *Distance Learning* was counted as government communication only because it is a state-sponsored programme. The programme *Adult Education* is often centred on public and civic education messages, some of which includes promoting an understanding of government decisions, government-backed social programmes, initiatives and other public and civic education.

**Fig. 7: Percentages of Government Sponsored Programming in Sample**



The marginal presence of specifically generated government communication content lends credence to the assumption that other genre forms are co-opted into the government communication machine, and is further explored in the qualitative data analysis. It may also be an indication of the withdrawal of government from direct development communication programming in such areas as health and agriculture which have been a historic occupation of the state-media in Ghana (Asante 1996).

### **Independence**

The independence of the broadcaster, its freedom from political and sectional control, is to allow it to solely exercise editorial responsibility, and, therefore, enable its ability to present different voices and ideas within the public sphere. Interviewed producers were involved in different productions, requiring different approaches to production and editorial decisions. They differed in perceptions of their creative and editorial freedoms. While some saw checks within their production routines as necessary for ensuring quality in eventual outcomes, others saw circumspection; within the learning of GBC work culture, which works to limit creative and expressive latitudes. In the

first, they point to organisational control mechanisms that, ostensibly, serve as editorial quality control checks and expression of a ‘house-style’:

X8: So you have to have house rules, and in developing those house rules you can develop a sensitive but useful set of rules by which [to work]. BBC has rules; there are certain programmes that will not fly. Have you seen the coverage of the Wiki-Leaks files? You will see that the information itself is not on BBC, there’s only the story about it. So there are certain things that are not for the national good that we will not let through.

Censorship in any form limits both the creative and factual expressions of media content producers. It is also unconstitutional in Ghana (Appendices 1). However, the data suggests that respondents did not see a difference between ‘editorial control’ and ‘censorship’, and indicates the production of ‘self-censorship’ as a socialised attitude from a persistence of a culture of conflict avoidance with political authority. For X8, the practical logic of censoring is in exercising careful judgement as to what content satisfies the ‘public interest’ attributes of a subject, without jeopardising ‘national security’. NLCD 226 (Appendices 2, Section 18) makes it possible for a ruling government to take over control of the broadcaster in circumstances it deems as appropriate in reaction to a “national emergency” (Appendices 2). X7 says that the National Media Commission’s insulation of GBC from direct government interference is not trusted for a number of reasons: the NMC Board’s appointment of a Director-General is by Presidential approval, and X7 suggests apprehension that this process can be unduly influenced by a government to its ends:

AT: But I think what you are saying is that the Head of State can influence the NMC too...

X7: He can influence the NMC because if he appoints the NMC Board then why not, he can influence [them].

AT: So that still makes you .....

X7: Vulnerable, sure, sure. It makes you vulnerable because one thing is GBC is not completely independent, it's the government, ruling government, which pays our emoluments.

Only two appointments, of fifteen, to the NMC's Board are Presidential. However, the perception that governments are all-powerful may be a residual result of decades of military rule, and usurpation of the rule of law, as well as contemporary events<sup>31</sup>. This suggests that greater efforts at ensuring transparency in both corporate governance at GBC and the work of the NMC is required to erase notions of possible political manipulation.

In consideration of these factors, it was interesting to observe that GTv has a mechanism to control the editorial contents of its broadcasts. The mechanism, known as the Preview Committee, was suggested to work at ensuring both editorial correctness and technical quality in productions. However, there are problems with the operation of this committee. Its 'house rules' are not comprehensively stated, leaving room for interpretations, it reinforces the 'neo-patrimonialist' attitudes of the "big man" (X1; Gifford 2004, pg. 13) whose biased patronage is essential to facilitating processes.

X2 stated that the committee has documentation for standards of quality to aid their review work yet finds latitude for individual interpretations that blur the value judgements of the committee. X1 and X8 stated that the committee does not always carry out the previewing duty, and X8 further stated that experience had shown that the absence of clear rules leaves room for infringements on creative work. X1 also referred to the committee members as "big men" and imputed that it is in winning their "trust" that producers are entrusted with productions. However, X1 preferred to interpret the work of the committee as "editorial" supervision, suggesting that the culture of re-producing is a form of standardising the editorial leaning at GTv. Some respondents indicated that learning on the job socialised them into the GTv's work culture:

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<sup>31</sup> During Gen. Acheampong SMC regime he threatened to withhold public journalists salaries on the grounds of a lack of positive co-operation (Asante 1996). The current NDC government is boycotting media stations of the MBC for similar reasons.

*X1:* ... what happens is that because you've gone through the mill you know what the policy is and what you are expected to do.

*X3:* Well I think it's like this, I think it's kind of like the chicken and egg thing. You wouldn't be given that position to produce and direct if you didn't have a track record and you hadn't imbibed the standards of [GBC].

Considering that this system is applied to vetting out-house productions it may have been useful to have evolved a structured commissioning system as a basis on which to ensure that content development was within sets of rules without arbitrariness for producers.

*AT:* Are the independent producers given guidelines as to what to bring or is the stuff approved to be deemed to be suitable after its been looked at?

*X5:* No, they do their own thing and it will go through a preview committee, if the product is approved then they sign a contract and we put it on air. If its not approved then that will be it, it won't be on air.

Clearly, there is a critical need for GTv to plug the gap created by a non-existent commissioning guide. It tries to manage this with a process that from beginning to end is only partially structured and has various informal and socialised enactments that locks the organisational culture into a dependence on its socialised culture. X8 suggested that the inability of GTv to evolve a system of structured guidelines and appropriate bureaucracy was due to a systemic inability to evolve system structures and operational documents, thus operations are carried out on the basis of a learned culture of production.

*AT:* My question is, if there are such house rules why can't there be a document put in place that basically would give commissioning guidelines so that anybody, third party or in-house, would have clear knowledge of what the parameters are for developing content.

X8: You are flogging a dead horse and saying why can't the horse, at least, get up on its knees.

### **Creative Control**

To base the exercise of a public service remit on a “trust” factor in the production control system suggests both dysfunction and arbitrariness. GTv’s producer-directors are trained professionals whose “editorial” decisions should have to fit into an operational guide for the different types of programmes they produce. However, GTv does not operate a commissioning guide and various departments through a Chief Controller of Programmes (CcoP) or Head of Programmes (HoP) determine what content needs are (X5). Executive Producers then supervise the productions carried out by producer-directors. The system appears organised but actually works on an ‘idea’ volunteering basis for both new programmes and content improvement in regular slots.

Therefore, what do producers perceive to be their degree of independence and control over creative content production within what appears to be a, historically, political-conflict avoiding system in the state-owned media (Asante 1996; Ansu-Kyeremah and Karikari 1998; Hastings 2005)?

Respondents did not all agree on a common view of censorship as an aspect of their independent ability to, authoritatively, take charge of productions without recourse to higher authorities for the approval of programme-making decisions, in order to forestall politically-motivated challenges. X6 defended the GTv system of previews and supervision by suggesting that productions are not constrained by norms or special interests; that creativity in production is really the essential test for producers and producers that are capable of creatively producing content have no impediments inhibiting them from exploring social subjects in making content:

X6: ... they have a lot of independence. Those who are very creative are encouraged to go ahead, those who sit aside are not prevented from exploring, actually.

That opinion was also supported by X4, who suggested that some producers may have lost creativity in approaching their work, but also suggested that this is due both to managing producers' fear of political out-falls, as well the result of loss of job satisfaction due to operational constraints (see Funding):

X4: I think people are afraid of their own shadows so they don't make us go beyond some things and I think also creativity has been stifled for some time so it's not making a lot of us think, and there are frustrations, you know, sometimes logistics...

Ultimately, producers understand that there is a new climate of constitutional and legal frameworks that should allow them to be more exploratory in content production; however they expressed perceptions of being limited by superiors<sup>32</sup>. Thus, the historical experience of management, regarding the treatments of media personnel under military regimes, form anxieties that still frame and limits their courage in sanctioning productions that could later turn out to be politically 'controversial' productions. The fear has socialised the production group into narrow production exercises that limit their creativity in choosing subject matter, since they are focussed on avoiding what may later be interpreted as political-motivated under a different future-governing regime.

While respondents expressed a belief that, to a large extent, they owned their productions and ideas, they also expressed that they are sometimes frustrated by another kind of political intrusion that originates from outside of GBC; Ministerial approval. X4 talked about an idea to produce a documentary that would explore effects on households of changing trends in education. The challenge was to get ministerial sector buy-in:

X4: .... If I take it to them and they refuse then I have a problem. I cannot do it, because if I go ahead and I do it somebody may call me or talk to P1 [saying] this thing came up and they refused it, but if I do it just like a normal drama and I don't seek their advice, and talk to just a few people, and I do it

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<sup>32</sup> All the senior producers interviewed for this thesis had been at post through, at least, one military regime rule and three civilian governments.

without any research that [also leaves me] subject to blame or [I could be] applauded. So that is what I am thinking about. When I get back to the office I will discuss with a few people and see what to do.

*AT:* So you are actually suggesting that even as a drama you are still likely to face the same problems as if you were doing it as a factual documentary.

*X4:* Yes, yes.

Does this climate of suggestive interferences and politically motivated checks on producers' creative processes constitute a form of censorship? While its extent is not measurable within this research it appears to be a functional part of the production process and is termed 'self-checking' (X1). Essentially it is a process of self-censoring in the processes of narrative construction and is justified as part of the 'quality checking' process (X1; X5; X6; X8) within the organisation. X1 suggests that such 'self-checking' is necessary as an editorial mechanism in order not to cause public offence, i.e. as a mechanism to ensure high public value in a production:

*X1:* ... they expect that you produce quality programmes, and make sure that decisions you take in the editorial [stage] is well done so that when the programme is shown people will not call back to say "this thing", you need to check [and make sure] your facts [are] right because you are going to show it to people and if something you've represented is not right they might even tell your bosses and then they might get you to [answer] "why did you do this?", even though they didn't watch it but they will get you back [to answer], so they expect quality, they expect you to get your facts right and to take good editorial decisions.

Thus there is a tension in the discussion of the subject: some respondents preferred to deny the existence of 'censorship' as a politically motivated action, considering its legal implications under the Constitution (X8), while others, like X4, saw a wider application of the term in relation to supervisory limitations on politically 'controversial' subject matter discussions in productions. X3 and X1 preferred to discuss the subject in terms of creative choices in programme-making, and therefore



denied the existence of formalised censorship, but agreeing to ‘self-censorship’ as a naturally professional process. X3 particularly suggests that censorship may be a misapplied term in that the notion is more consonant with ‘editorial decision-making’ as opposed to the type of decision-making that is politically motivated to deny the ‘public interest’:

X3: Well, censorship is always there, everybody censors, nobody lets everything out of the door so it’s always there, but it depends on what you are censoring, how much, and why and all those things, but censorship always exists, don’t let anybody tell you nothing is censored....

X3 therefore is suggesting that ‘self-censorship’, occurs in the selective narrative construction of a story, and is the result of the natural attrition that occurs when the producer chooses what to show, in keeping with the house rules of any media organisation.

Thus, despite the protestations, it can be surmised that the GTv media system works to avoid conflict in political relationships, both current and in the future. It also seeks to avoid criticisms from audiences or parties with special interest (X4). The creative constraints that producers face are therefore, partly, a result of the media system’s continual avoidance of conflict. For a media system to avoid ‘making trouble’ means that is engaged in processes that cut it off from the public interest; given that the public, when facilitated, will offer the ‘diverse’ opinions that occur in social debates, some of which may well cause offence to sectional interests.

## **Distinctiveness**

Programming distinctiveness is required, not only in terms of brand differentiation, but as an ethos to deliver new genres of content that push boundaries and create new ways of programme-making and service provision that marks a difference between it and other broadcasting services (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005). In the monopoly environment within which the NLCD 226 was written, the effort was not given to marking such a distinction in GBC’s services. The decree rather attempted to create a full-service institution and even included a remit for the corporation to manufacture or

license broadcast equipment devices, either for its own use or, arguably, for onward sale to the public that received its services.

Respondent X2 was the only interviewee to suggest that the distinction between GTv and other television broadcasters was in its willingness to make and broadcast programmes that were not simply “commercial” but valuable for their educational and social messages. In contrast X8 thought that GBC was not unique in its service delivery, and was much the same as other broadcasters in the type of programming that is thought of as being ‘public service’. X3 suggested that there was too much dependence on entertainment formats on other stations, however, without statistics to compare it is difficult to generalise on this point. GTv’s distinguishing feature may be its business model and the reach of its broadcasting signals; however it may not be much different from other broadcasters as they may have replicated its type of programming, as well as the use of imported content to out-compete GTv (X7).

The liberalised media marketplace has made it even more important for GTv to distinguish its services from the competition, which X7 see as, predominantly, offering entertainment programming:

X7: And secondly, because of the advent of these private stations most of them only do entertainment programmes, and you know Ghanaians and entertainment, we wish that we would watch telenovelas and *Concert Party* from morning to evening, which we cannot do in GBC ....

However, the challenge that now faces the corporation is not only the liberalised media market. The very idea of offering a ‘public service’ in broadcasting is ascribed to by the private commercial stations:

X8: They do pretty much what GBC does, AIDS campaign, they give either free airtime or sometimes they actually, like GBC, do actual stories, tell people how to work on sanitation, stuff like that, actual stories.

The competition have copied the format of the programmes produced at GTv. Ex-staff who have joined the private sector have replicated the types of programmes that are,

in essence, understood to be ‘how’ television is done (X8). How does GTv offer a differentiated service that would make it the premier provider of public broadcasting?

Respondents did consider that providing “education, information and entertainment” were the core values of the public service remit. They also suggested that there is a nationalist and development role for GTv. They did not identify other salient factors that would distinguish GTv from other television services. However, the use of multiple local languages and the sign language is a unique service on GTv.

The basis for creating a differentiated service in public broadcasting is contained in the National Media Policy document (Appendices 3) with specific stipulations for GTv. It generically stipulates plurality and diversity, and also includes an airtime usage quota for local content in programming at sixty percent of airtime, fifty percent of which should be aired during primetime (*ibid.*, Section 7.2.3 (iii)). These stipulations have not been incorporated into the operational objectives at GTv, and X8 suggests that this is due to systemic dysfunctions:

X8: Working document. You are talking about an organised system. Documents? First of all your budget is not on, you don't have any money, you don't have any way of putting a concept to be tried out in place, you don't cover anything except for News and some national events... essentially those who come to manage GBC are not broadcasters, anybody else but broadcasters.

Despite this institutional failure to incorporate content guidelines due to monetary and technical constraints, some respondents considered that GTv’s audience has a nationalist expectation of its services that does translate into programmes in culture and entertainment that differentiate the schedule of GTv from its competition:

XI: ....with GTv being state-owned, most of the time people expect to see these kinds of documentaries, like things dealing with our culture, because with some stations that may not be their priority. So these are the kind of things that people would expect GTv to do. As [a matter of] national interest people would want to see GTv do more of these programmes rather than take

programmes from outside and put them on air..... I think it's because people feel that GBC is state-owned and it should take the national interest [to] hand and should cover local programmes.

Thus, the respondent holds a viewpoint that suggests a tendency to see commercial stations as lacking in public service value commitments, yet there is no research basis for the assumption of what reasons people may have for either protesting content or asking for a specific kind of content, nor is there a reliable basis for establishing what percentage of the population or viewership may hold such views. This patriarchal viewpoint was common in respondents' views of the relevance of GTv, and it also assumes that GTv fills a market gap that would exist without it. Yet, none of these assumptive positions are backed by available research, nor was there any suggestion of internally generated research; even though at the time of this research's data collection the GBC had partly-finished a media uses survey. That was yet to form a basis for programming policy. X7 actually suggests that, often, programming decisions are based on the unilateral decisions of channel managers, as well as in response to some public appeals through letters to the GBC when changes are made to entertainment programmes:

X7: ....and in most cases we realised the majority were disappointed when programmes are discontinued. And people sometimes write asking for GTv or GBC to bring back certain programmes which had been rested.

.....They normally happen with the entertainment programmes, especially drama. *Obra*, for instance, was off for some time. It was rested. *Cantata* was rested for some time and people kept asking for [it], and then again there may be a particular programme on GTv which [goes] to another station and then people [watching] GTv would want it brought back. It's normally with entertainment.

Thus GTv is seen to have a purpose that is tied to an assumption of the public's engagement with it as a public broadcaster, and its viewing is linked to a history of programming that were unique to it. This attributed purpose was found to hold

salience for producers and in their notions was the distinguishing factor between it and the competition.

## **Summary**

The above analysis indicates both socio-political challenges and some positive developments within the usage of airtime on GTv. Despite the suggestion of a lack of diverse and plural output, it is worth bearing in mind that Hindman (in Demers and Viswanath 1999) cites Rheingold (1993) in suggesting that broadcast media are unable to provide a wholly inclusive public sphere at all times. This is both true in relation to schedule construction per unit of time and the institutional capacity to perform in a manner that is abreast with a rapidly changing social landscape in an era of technologically disseminated media content. Thus, a well-functioning model of public service broadcasting must rest on key fundamentals in the provision of a public service; not competing for audiences or hampered by economic limitations, or attempting a whole-sale satisfaction of ‘publics’ (Lee Artz in McCauley, Eric E. Peterson et al. 2003, pg. 4). It should be able to provide programming that meets a ‘public service’ commitment to building an inclusive, plural and diverse mediated public sphere over the entire frame of programming provided.

## **The Challenges of GTv**

Thus, the data shows that producers notionally define ‘public’ as both State and the national community of citizens and public institutions. The former connects to an emancipatory notion that is based on an understanding of public service broadcasting’s role in social development through the communication of education and information programming. The latter considers public communication on behalf of government as public service broadcasting. The suggestion from respondents was that this was the view taken by management, however, both viewpoints are dually held and salience of the latter over the former may increase with staff seniority.

The data also shows that while producers did not immediately identify with the public service benchmarks of universality, plurality, distinctiveness and independence, as set out in Banerjee and Seneviratne (2005), it was still possible to evaluate these concepts

in the interviews as notional understandings of them were found to be present in the data. The National Media Commission's Broadcasting Policy document also discusses the salience of these factors both in achieving and shaping a public broadcasting service, as well as recognising their interdependence. What then is the resulting impact on producers at GTv in relation to how functional roles help to define the social contributions of GTv to the national social development project?

Given that social debate in the public sphere is necessary to inspire social change through challenging conventions and established opinions and ideas, the withdrawal of GTv from the mediating role that is necessary to create the enabling public sphere suggests that the media system is unwilling to engage strategically with social change communication, in the kind of debate that may affect changes to political power relationships in Ghanaian society.

Media systems are able to play a role in social change through the enablement of communication elements and systems within societies. The ability of media systems to play such a role is linked directly to the formation of a public sphere in which they play the role of mediators. Factors that limit the ability of media systems to achieve this mediation role in an unfettered manner; including political interference, ideological preventions, social institutions of culture and structure within media systems, also act as social retardants that contribute to the maintenances of a status quo. Media systems therefore need to be free in order to enable them play a role in social liberation agenda. The data shows that GTv's media system is constrained as much by its producers' ritualised routines, organisational ideological conflicts in the different viewpoints on production routines that lead to frustrations, as well as external conflicts with other media systems that perform in the same or similar role, as suggested by James Ettema (Ettema and Whitney 1982).

## **Funding**

While respondents differed on issues such as their independence, and by the extension GTv's, they were unanimous in blaming what they perceive to be a flawed business-funding model for remit fulfilment difficulties and their premier challenge. The funding model of a public broadcaster is also one of the contentious issues in the

literature that reflects on the independence and ability to perform a public service remit (Holtz-Bacha and Norris 2005; Galloway *undated*; Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005), in Africa state-owned media especially rely on government funding sources and this makes many broadcasters unwilling to be critical of governments (Galloway, *undated*).

In the case of the GBC, its funding model is based on three revenue streams: commercial operation and advertising revenue from airtime sale, a television license fee provision, and government grants for the purposes of infrastructure procurement (Appendices 2, section 10). Respondent X7 explained that as public sector workers, the salaries of staff are paid from national tax revenues – the Consolidated Fund, however, operational expenses are to be paid from operational revenues. Yet, both X7 and X8 suggested that the operational costs are too much for GBC to offset through the judicious management of revenues, especially if a key objective of the corporation is the delivery of a universally accessible broadcast signal. X7 further suggested that utility bills for the large staff population also present a challenge. However, X8 and X6 suggested that the corporation is over-staffed, with no political will to deal with the labour issues and financial implications of making redundancies.

However, some respondents, such as X2, saw the mixed-model approach as being inimical to a public service ethos. It suggests that there is a fundamental problem with the understanding among staff of public service broadcasting, both as a type of service and as a type of organisation.

X2: ...and when you are getting information you don't have to think hard about what would come out of it but what you are going to give and the success of it that makes you a public broadcaster.

For a public broadcaster to function in the public interest requires making programmes, and not ones that are necessarily profitable financially. X2 judges that social benefits and public value outcomes are more important when judging between the costs of funding public television, as a business, to its social benefits.

To X8, there are more fundamental problems regarding the organisational structures at GBC, including the remit, staffing, and funding model.

X8: You see, it is because the government, .... has not paid attention to the basic structures, they sit and wring their hands in despair and expect somebody else to walk into GBC, weed out the [problems], you know, shed the blood on the floor, and become sacrificial lamb.

Implementing “basic structures for GBC” would therefore include updating, and passing as law, the legal framework within which it operates; especially in regard to its funding mechanism, in order to strengthen clarity in the operational mandate and provide adequate protection, in law, for the actions of staff. However, the structural issues also extend beyond what may be written in tangible organisational codes; respondents’ basic notion about ‘public service broadcasting’ needs to be addressed as part of a communicated re-structuring process in order to fully engage staff with organisation purpose and ethos:

The responses of interviewees have suggested an equation of a “free” service to “public broadcasting”. ‘Free’ has been suggested to mean either ‘free cost of access to broadcasting service’ (X4), or ‘state funding without regard to cost due to public need’, (X2). These notional suggestions have sprung from an historical equation of ‘public service’ to ‘civil service’, in the Ghanaian psyche (X8), in which the State is seen as the bearer of costs of services provided to the national public, paid out of tax collections. In that historically formed psyche, the State is seen as wealthy and patrimonial (Gifford 2004) and should have resources to expend on, at least, ‘public services’.

Thus, ‘going commercial’ (X5) carries with it a pejorative suggestion of loss of direction, a creeping towards neo-liberalist economics away from the communal, and ‘charging service fees’ for services that should be free provided:

X2: this time on GBC they have changed our direction a little to a financial drive. If there's no money “don't go”, but not everything is money when we think of the nation's broadcaster, we are public broadcasters.



Therefore, there is a tension in the understandings of respondents between what a public service broadcaster does and how it is funded.

*X5:* You see, the subvention is supposed to pay salaries and then run operations but, you see, as money becomes so hard to [find] we have to do our best to find it somehow to make our operations work. Because if you saw the Act that set up GBC, virtually, we are not supposed to go commercial, but silently we are going there because we are not getting enough money from the government to do all the things that we would like to do.

*AT:* So the move towards being commercial was not out of a government mandate but out of necessity?

*X5:* Yes. Gradually. It's out of necessity.

In reality, the mixed-model approach was instituted within the provisions that created the new GBC after the ousting of Nkrumah. However, it is the 'free' model that Nkrumah instituted that remains the referential understanding of respondents. The NLCD 226, in Section 10 (Article 19)(c) (Appendices 2), does make clear that commercial returns can be made from service delivery. Thus, by interpretation, GBC can run a fully commercial service, that provides broadcasting on the basis of a public broadcasting ethos.

Thus the legal frameworks that stipulates government funding for the corporation (Appendices 2, Section 10), and the Media Policy position that also enjoins government to adequately fund infrastructure needed for service provision, need to be translated into a broader management communication process that situates the vision of the broadcaster within its funding mechanisms in a manner that is unambiguous to staff. For respondents to necessarily equate 'public' to mean 'that which is funded by the State, without regard for cost' does not indicate callousness on their part, but a lack of education and a failing of management communication in terms of pursuing a 'public value' measurement of the corporation's work output and organisational processes.

Yet, it is not so much as that respondents did not fully understand the funding model, even though they also suggest an abdication of State responsibility for funding provision. The confusion is due to a lack of understanding regarding the extent to which commercial functioning has been part of the original mandate. The question then, is how a national public service broadcaster, with the widest reach, and hence the logical argument to charge premium rates for advertising, come to be struggling for funds?

X6: Because, you know, as a state-owned media that takes care of state functions and other elements of any programmes connected or coming from government, we budget for it but we are not given the money as it should be because the government pays the workers. When it comes to airtime [and they are able to access this], we are not able to get it from them, you know. Most of our space, which is given up for government or state functions, are not recapped. That is what I am talking about, and it creates budgetary constraints...

..... if you look at a situation where, for instance, let's take the statutory holidays like the 6th March<sup>33</sup>, the 1st July<sup>34</sup>, and you come to the Moslem days - *Eid'l Addah*, *Eid'l Fitr*, then you come to Farmer's Day, Nkrumah's Birthday, AIDS Day, all these days are very involving because they are statutory holidays and it takes almost about fifty per cent of our airtime... throughout the year, ... you are supposed to make sure that you get the morning programmes and the evening programmes and sometimes even repeat.

X7 illustrates the costs incurred in producing and broadcasting State events:

X7: .... If you have to pay 600 Ghana Cedis<sup>35</sup> for a thirty-minute programme, and sometimes there is a programme like *Meet the Press*, each of the Ministers

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<sup>33</sup> Independence Day

<sup>34</sup> Republic Day

<sup>35</sup> About £240

meet the press and GBC has to cover it live. We send all our OB<sup>36</sup> vans there, crew and officials, and it's covered live and broadcast live. So all programmes scheduled for that period will have to be cut. If there are adverts which [were] going to generate funds for us, we'll have to stuff those adverts and make good spots for the advertisers or refund their money to them.

Thus the very ethos of the public broadcaster; its mandate to broadcast the programmes that reflect the nation, mediating cultural and social events for the public, etc, is seen as drain on its resources because of the times and frequency allotted to such programmes. X7 further explains that the opportunity to gain sponsorship for such events is thwarted by the government which sees these as national events that have to be sponsored at State level, and however does not allow GTv to run commercials or programme-sponsorships of these events<sup>37</sup>. The suggestion seems to be that government functionaries do not realise that broadcasting costs money. Does GTv realise that it can also refuse to provide the State with broadcast services unless these are paid for at the threshold cost of provision, and on a basis that it should practice good corporate governance and preserve public value, in the mandate to work commercially? The organisation's management may very well not feel able to challenge government in this way, in the interest of ensuring jobs and keeping the status quo.

Thus there is a reluctant engagement with a commercial operation in which advertising and outright airtime sale to private producers are simply seen as a means to generate income, as opposed to a mandatory process of being 'commercially practical' or running a business organisation able to soundly fund its operational activities:

X7: ... Sometimes we have to go out of our way to broadcast some programmes which as a national broadcaster we may not want to broadcast but the others are doing it and we realise the audience like it so why don't we do it too because we need the sponsorship money.

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<sup>36</sup> OB – Outside Broadcasting

<sup>37</sup> This seems to be the case for State-managed events. International sports events are often sponsored; for the 2010 CAF Cup GTv needed the Vice-President's intervention with corporates to secure \$2million dollars to pay for the national broadcast rights.

X5: and then the other aspect too is we now allow independent producers to bring in their material. They buy the airtime, so that is where we generate some income to also supplement our business.

There is awareness that competition is challenging GTv for the premier broadcasting claim and that this directly affects funding revenues:

X7: ...we have to generate our funds in this era of competition with these private stations trying to [chip] away [at] GBC and denigrate GBC to the background.

While advertising and airtime sales are the ‘uncomfortable’ commercial income stream, the television licence fee exists in legal provision, is less contentious to respondents, but requires re-engineering for the mechanism to generate funding:

X5: .... right now it [the tv licence] is useless, you know. The TV license used to be three thousand cedis but now this is thirty pesewas. Thirty pesewas, you can just use to buy groundnuts and corn<sup>38</sup> .... It is worthless so nobody is collecting that and nobody is paying...

X8: ...there is an argument now that the tv license fee, which is supposed to be for public sector broadcasting, should be fairly distributed by rating between GBC and other stations that do public service

The tax revenue route may be less contentious for respondents, and this may be due to the organisation’s inability to get departments to work together cohesively in the corporate value-added model common in private enterprise. GTv has a Commercial department charged with responding to the commercial challenge by making the value-added propositions that would sell both airtime and brand or corporate sponsorship for broadcasts and productions:

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<sup>38</sup> A roasted snack.

X6: .... The bottle-neck might be perhaps there might not be enough money to take up the full cost of equipment and that is where our marketing department comes into play. Whiles the programme pilot is done, and if it's good, they take it over and sometimes we get the profit, sometimes we are able to break-even. People buy space within the programme and then show their products.

The department should be working, in conjunction with the Television Production department, to develop such strategies for monetising productions; however, it appears that the system does not work effectively and producers find that they are required to do the work of finding money for their productions:

X4: Commercial department, they are not up to the task..., as I was telling you, everyone seems to be working on their own. If you give [the commercial department] programme ideas they don't work on it.

And X6 concedes, when asked about the collaborative structure, that there are problems:

X6: I wouldn't say it works smoothly; there are a lot of problems. As a producer it is part of your occupational hazard, even at the best of times. Sometimes it's easier, sometimes it's very difficult.

The resentment towards what is seen as a the gradual commercialising of GTv, by respondents, may lie in the dysfunctional operation of the system with regards to the difficulty in inter-department co-operation with Commercial, or also in the possibility that producers sense a fracturing of their relationships between themselves, their creative products, and the audience that usually informs the core of their production considerations. That creative relationship is forced aside when the over-riding consideration is the commercial viability of a production idea:

AT: I get the sense that producers are free to do whatever they want, if an idea comes to you and your line-manager thinks it's a good enough idea then you go ahead and do it. There's no real connection between the audience and

producers, or there is no real attempt to prove a connection between the idea and the public service and public interest. Is that correct?

X4: That is true. If you think that the concept you have is good the next thing is finance, you see; if it will bring money to GBC all well and good.

Some respondents were found to resent the situation that makes them solely responsible for creating productions that are not just commercially viable, but also responsible for finding the sponsorship to back the productions. Producers are adapting to the constrained financial environment and adopting innovative approaches to keep productions on air, showing the willingness to be inventive and creative within their constrained environment and demonstrating the skills of the classic television producer posited by Newcomb and Alley (in Ettema and Whitney 1982), but X4 suggests that the creative quality of productions will eventually suffer:

X4: So what we do is that [we build] the programme so that it doesn't involve too many artistes, it doesn't involve too many things that would take money out of GBC. Maybe you are only paying the presenter or host something small, I wouldn't call it peanuts, like an allowance...but you see, it's not enough because sometimes you need to go out<sup>39</sup>, you need to do this and that, so it will happen that you don't go out, unless you are really keen on going out, you see, but then the frustrations start coming in and then what do you do? So you will realise that after sometime you lose interest in the programme.

Negotiating smaller production budgets may get a production signed-off but at greater expense to the public interest; a smaller budget means an inability to reach out to farther communities, or develop programming that involves participants who may need to be transported, accommodated or fed; it means a resort to centralised, urban, producing activities that rely on a few groups who are able to afford the cost of the involvement in what should be a diverse and plural platforms for not only ideas and voices from differing communities, but also talent and cultural expressions from around the country. The resource challenge results is the inability of producers to

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<sup>39</sup> "Going out" is a reference to production organizing and production management activities outside of GTv offices.

reach and involve community sections and groups, resulting in an over-representation of some social groups through an over-reliance on their ability to engage with productions that are key programmes in the broadcast schedule:

X4: .... So it makes us rely on a few [groups] which actually are professional, and you are just, if I should call it, ad hoc, that's what we are doing to keep the station running...

Thus, it is seen that the values of ensuring plurality, diversity, independence and distinguished productions can be undermined by the ineffective operation of the television system; if the organisation will sign-off a production that have primarily demonstrated commercial significance, then the challenge of delivering on the key values of public service broadcasting may become subservient to commercial interests, creative and logistic convenience, and result in the replication of the type of programming that is typical of commercial broadcasters, and that leaves the question open as to how productions that have no clearly demonstrable commercial revenue streams, yet may be in the public interest, may get production approval.

The challenge is demonstrated by several points of fracture in the delivery of effective planning and resource management that are an essential part of media production management. Producers expressed frustrations with the inability of GTv to not only fully resource productions, but also plan for logistic operations:

X4: .... there are frustrations, you know, sometimes logistics. For instance, [with] the programme I'm handling, I'm supposed to actually go out and look for groups myself and then book for rehearsals at least once or twice, look at the locations, go for recce, but because of transport problems [I] can't go. If [I go] it's from my own pocket, and whatever is affecting you, the corporation does not gain or lose, they don't bother. Nobody is bothered about you...

X4: We had disks..., when the new system was brought, the digital thing, I asked a question that "my brothers, this disk how long?", they said "oh, we have plenty in the system". Before I went on leave, for more than three to how many months, we had to recycle and wipe and clean programmes instead of

keeping them in the library. In this age, we [shouldn't] be wiping programmes but this is what we have,....If you ask for vehicle, they tell you [there's none available]. TV [production department] we don't have any car for ourselves, we are always sharing, I mean, it's not right. ... When we used to go on location we used to get a TATA bus and it may be around 10 O'Clock before you move from GBC because maybe they are telling you they are now charging battery, or the car has gone for fuel,... and when you are on location, 3:30[PM], the driver starts to blow the horn and you have to go because he's returning staff home. What work can we do? Nothing meaningful. So ... you end up shooting long shots, long shots, so you can complete the scene.... If you have to shoot in the night it's not possible, we don't have a vehicle so you have to shoot day-for-night. The problems are just too many.

The data suggests that producer's frustrations may be undermining professional ethics due to developing dependencies, through over-familiar relationships with some screen talent and groups:

*X4:* ... Sometimes they are [willing] to give you some money or [gift] you something, so they are not too difficult to work with.

*AT:* They are actually happy to fund some of the production costs?

*X4:* Yes. So that is what helps us. So you get more interested in doing the programme for them.

X4's answer suggests that disillusionment with the organisation has reduced some producers' work to finding satisfaction in other ways. However, if the corporation is unable to meet its operational expenditures to the extent that producers are forced to accept 'gifts' to enable them complete some productions, either in desperation or for job accomplishment satisfaction, then there is a 'public interest' issue at stake that necessitates an evaluation of the corporation's financial and corporate governance structures. It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss the ethics and legal implications of 'gift' receipts, however, best practice would suggest that non-commercial transactions are exchanges in favours, and exchange processes are two-way; producers may be receiving a life-line for their productions, but the question



then remains, what do the artistes or organisations receive in return: further access to national airtime or screen time that promotes individual careers or sectarian ideas on the national platform that GTv offers?

Thus, it is logical to suggest that the current management of the operations of the GTv system is prone to hijack by sectarian groups, who may have an upper hand in the power relationship between themselves and producers, and GTv by extension. Hegemonies of ideas and social structures would have an unchallenging, dependent, media system allowing access to a national audience through a unidirectional mode of communication. The vigilance of the national public and their willingness to protect their public service becomes the only safeguard, as put forward in the preamble to the national media policy. However, that safe-guard is very much dependent on the levels of media literacy, general levels of education and access and feedback systems to the GTv system that would allow the challenging feedback to gain currency in the public sphere.

However, if the contention is that airtime on GTv is valuable in commercial terms then it stands to reason that adequate monetisation of this resource ought to be a good source of revenue. Since staff salaries are covered by provision of the Consolidation Fund, GBC is only left with covering operational costs for overheads and content programming for both television and radio, both of which generate advertising revenues. GBC is not prevented from charging commercial prices for its services; therefore the difficulty in generating balanced accounting must be a result of other factors, for example, higher than commercially justifiable overhead costs that can only be controlled by a full restructuring of operations at the corporation. X7 suggests that this may be the case:

X7: So the problem GBC is facing currently is with funds because now GBC is facing competition, it's no more a monopoly but then government is weaning GBC off the national purse by now paying only the personal emoluments in which case GBC has to raise funds to pay all the utilities - water, electricity, telephone bills, these are always in arrears because they are very huge, because, for example, the transmitters needs a lot either electricity or oil, so [the bills] are very, very, high.

.... like head office for instance, [there] are so many, like, over a thousand workers. So if all these people are using telephones, electricity, water and all that, you can imagine the enormity of the expenditure every month and since we have to generate our funds in this era of competition with these private stations trying to [chip] away GBC and denigrate GBC to the background, you can imagine the burden every Chief Executive of GBC will be shouldering. It's not an easy task. Those who had to work during the monopoly, they had it easy because during those times we were aware of the monopoly and everybody depended on GBC but then government was doing everything, everything was paid.

Thus, to manage the challenge of financial re-engineering, to enable the corporation to deliver its remit at good public value, part of the resolution of the funding challenge at GTv should be an effort to re-think and develop creative and new programming that would appeal to advertisers, implement a commissioning plan, that makes it possible for out-house producers to also provide programming within a public broadcast remit while also providing content that makes GTv more competitive in a liberalised media market.

However, it is sufficiently established that difficulties with reconciling revenues and operational costs, the respondents suggest, are the products of three factors:

- a. an incompetent commercial department, that is unable to find sponsorship deals to make productions funding and producers jobs easier,
- b. the State, blamed for draining the corporation's resources, and
- c. high operational costs.

## **Labour**

However, beyond the mechanics imposed by limited financial resources, X7 also links the financial difficulties at GBC with the cost its labour force contributes to the

corporation's administrative expenses through the use of utilities: electricity, water and phone bills accruing from their work. Labour itself, is also a critical aspect of organisational performance, in that labour competence impacts the ability of organisations to make value-added products for the markets they service, and its competence would a direct relationship with its profitability. At GBC, there appears to be fundamental problems with labour management. In X8's opinion, the situation is the result of historical factors, much of which began in the immediate post-independence era and hinges on human resource management practices:

X8: ... the real comedy comes when you go into history of how they've staffed the place through the years. First of all, it's like, if you are in a range where you have no [tertiary] degree and you make an effort to go and do a degree in that particular field, and you come back, it doesn't affect your standing in GBC. If you are doing a Masters degree in certain aspects of our work [it's worth nothing].... The training and so on went on but it went only up to a certain point. It got to a point where those who were trained were not put in place. They were trained but were never given the authority because the authority ceased to matter on the basis of your ability; it mattered on the basis of the connection.

'Connection' means 'having 'political patronage', and the situation arose as a product of the military's mismanagement of public service institutions, a characteristic of those times (Gifford 2004). In the successive years following Dr. Nkrumah's overthrow by the military junta, GBC spiralled into a human resource crisis:

X8: That is because of a certain incestuous relationship that developed during the previous period of, you know, the dark period.... where people brought their daughters, sons, nephews, girlfriends and the like, into GBC as a source of work. ... Am not saying that there were not some who were taken for their professional [ability], but the magnitude of [the problem] is that people who come in at a certain [low] level rise through the ranks..... And for many years there [were] a lot of people who would just work at it, who hadn't the slightest idea. If anyone came in with anything like an idea, he got a very very short [talking down to]....

Thus, incompetent labour became integrated into the organisation at GBC, and would have contributed to the formation of its work cultures. For X8, a direct corollary has been the instability of GBC management; which has seen several changes at Board level even in a Constitutional era. Labour resists changes that it finds threatening to its interests, and thus presents a latent threat to both government, which very much relies on the GBC, and management. The social power exerted by labour has made it difficult for management to restructure operations, internally:

X8: .... the Union, from that time in 1976 or 79 when they were forced into a Boardroom and forced, management was forced, to write a collective agreement favouring labour, labour has had the ability to harass any P2 out of office. ... and it's not that labour is unreasonable, no, but if they don't understand something they act first, and ultimately it becomes power play.... then come other things like transportation, subsidised transportation, meals, bonuses, and then the focus becomes an administrative structure. So then it becomes a public service [civil service] construct rather than a broadcasting one...

However, it is not as though governments have been totally unwilling to attempt restructuring the GBC:

X5: Yes, they were saying the organisation was over-staffed and they were talking about restructuring and, that restructuring, it [meant] that if people had to be laid-off they had to be given their severance pay and the government never did it because it looks like when they saw the quantum of money that they had to pay, it was going to be a lot, [and] those were the times that people like me, and I can bet that I was [going to be] the first person to go and write my name that I was going, [because] looking at the amount of money that I'd be taking away I was just going to establish my own service company and run. But the government never had the courage.

Obviously, governments are averse to creating a labour crisis, unpopular sentiments, or may simply lack redundancy funds, if it chose to pursue a staff restructuring policy.

## **Political Interference**

It may appear to respondents that dependence on government for the funding that directly affects their welfare, beyond government's ability to influence the Board of the National Media Commission, amounts to the exercise of a shielded threat. Thus, real or not, staff may not be keen on finding out the extent to which government may go to keep the corporation in line with the political agenda. This fundamentally destroys any conception that staff or organisation may imagine in the belief that their work is an exercise of a public service remit. The GBC cannot function in true public service character, in the public interest, either in spirit or form, while in the immediate reach of any Ghanaian government; democratic, benign or despotic. The position of the corporation fundamentally is undermined by its direct dependence on government, in spite of constitutional provisions, and the result of that dependence over the years has in-grained in staff an acquiescence to government:

*AT:* But with the new Constitution and the creation of the Media Commission, the Media Commission was supposed to make it possible for GBC management to run GBC without government's undue influence.

*X8:* That is there but government's undue influence is when they call you to do something by all means. That, they may have done only once or twice to my knowledge. But the undue influence comes from, you know, there's some influence that are undue that you can't see.

... A certain internal culture that government can rely on, so that when they say "boo", you have nothing to be scared of but everybody is scared [totally].... It's too tempting a target [but] if GBC itself were proactive about what it is doing then nobody would presume to tell it what to do.

## **Structural Challenges**

The data has already shown that respondents indicated both structural and organisational problems related to the delivery of the public broadcasting service

remit, including, a lack of proper insulation from political influence, and difficulty with operationalizing the business model. Their responses further indicated fractures in the understanding of the key concepts central to delivering a true public broadcasting service, while still striving to find social relevance in catalysing the social development of Ghana, with which they identify. However, other problems with the structural organisation of the organisation require focus. These are problems that result from the organisation's internal culture due to the interaction of its human resource with its organisational purpose; these relate to human resource competencies in delivering the service remit. In as much as these constitute a problem with 'labour' they are however best examined separately as a structural issue, as X8 explains:

X8: It is sad that when we are discussing something like this it comes down to basic stupidities, am afraid what is happening in GBC is that there is no purpose. They know what it's about, they have an idea what they are supposed to be doing from looking at the past, but in the present the organisational structure has not been put in place to achieve its goals...

The 'organisation' is a product of its management ability to assiduously put in place human resource and process systems to align purposes with objectives<sup>40</sup>. The competencies of human resources are revealed partly in the internal work cultures they enact, and at GTv there are problems with 'organising' the media system:

X4: Look, professionally we don't do things right, everything we do is ad hoc, because what must be done is not [done], we sit down and just follow Ministers here and there.

While X4's comment indicates a frustration with the manner in which 'work' is executed, X8's comment indicates that the frustration is a product of the inability of human resource to 'envision' a purposeful ethos of being for the service they are charged with, hence a continual reproduction of past enactments, which not only indicates stasis in organisational processes but also an incapability in envisioning a way forward with the passage of time; GTv is unable to perform as it should because

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<sup>40</sup> Millmore et al (2010) Strategic Human Resource Management: Contemporary Issues. Harlow. Pearson Education

even though the fundamental understanding exists, as evidenced in the catch phrase ‘to entertain, educate and inform’ it does not pursue these ideals in a manner that concretizes its work as a public service broadcaster and public service organisation that is directly accountable to citizens. It is therefore reproducing the past ‘work’ of relaying as a government ‘mouth-piece’ and thus fails to perform as an organisation that knows what ‘public service broadcasting’ is. To change this would require an organisation-wide reorganising of the ‘work’ enactments:

*AT:* Is there a way, internally, to change this culture?

*X4:* I wish we could but what is done is that every department is sort of autonomous [and inward looking], so nobody seems to be bothered. P1, for instance, should be bothered about audience research, you know, to know how P1’s faring. That should be P1’s yardstick, but P1’s only thinking of P1’s pocket, what P1 gets at the end of the day and so forth, and the car that P1 sits in, you know. P1’s got position and that’s what P1’s doing.

The migration to partial-commercial operation has left gaps of competence in an organisation forced out of its comfort-zone to compete. The four decade-long years of monopoly meant that human resource was often not prioritised as an essential component of organisational functioning. Thus, the need to make programmes that generate revenue makes it difficult for GTv, to favourably deliver a full-range of public service broadcast programming that would also be commercially attractive to advertising clients; facilitated by professionally competent staff and a clearly nuanced public service mission within a plural media context. Critical of this state of affairs, X8 suggests that the organisation is operationally flawed in its management and focus:

*X8:* ... the internal revenue priority has become so high that I dare say that if there is enough public service programming GBC would be hard put upon to actually put those programmes on air because they don’t earn revenue unless they can make those programmes earn revenue. In which case innovative marketing would become a part of the programme production process. Now, all that means a coordinated, astute, and well-trained system with people in the

right places. ... and, unfortunately, these elements of best business practice have to be received into GBC before we can say anything about being able to do anything, and that system would then have to be led into having a vision, a very specific mission with strategies, steps and procedures for attaining those earmarked goals.....

... Every Director-General who comes has been removed by coups or sacking or something. It means there's something wrong with the system. If after thirty-two million Euros of equipment GBC still looks the same then it means there's no system running the equipment. ...It's not about new equipment but a good system. And unfortunately, there are some good people in there who are completely made irrelevant because being good is not what counts. That's the problem.

Thus, a history of poor human resourcing and a myopic delivery of the 'public as State' broadcasting service have meant that over time there has been a failure to measure performance and consistently improve on organisational outcomes. The poor human resource capacity may have contributed to GTv opening up its channel to private out-house producers, whose ability to provide GTv with both revenue and programming may have falsified the organisational self-perception of service provision. However, that situation may have also deteriorated internal programme production capacity:

*AT:* Can you tell me what percentage of broadcast is produced by independent production houses?

*X5:* Something came up late last year about this and we were not able to [estimate], because if you went to the Audience Research department [they] really can't give you any concrete statistics.

*AT:* What do you think it's likely to be?

*X5:* Let's say probably 40-60, which means that we have more independent producers bringing in stuff than we produce ourselves at the moment.



Unable to use internal competencies to produce commercially-viable productions for its own airtime, using both creative and commercial staff, and GTv has taken the easier route to funding its survival by selling airtime, rather than facilitating access for new productions or using a strategic commissioning processes to enable a plural access to its platform by talent and programme-makers in a manner in which it plays a central management role that serves the public interest. The 'revenue priority' has resulted in a relegation of its own production capacities, as airtime is now simply sold to those who can pay for it and use it in their commercial interest. The situation may also be contributing to respondents disillusion with 'going commercial'. They see themselves becoming less relevant as creative talent that with adequate challenge and resourcing could supply the station's programming needs.

In X8's opinion, another part of the challenge for GTv is a fractured understanding of the role of television within the wider GBC organisation born out of the historic tension between the television and radio departments when television was created and made to seem superior to radio, by inference from the special attention given it by Dr. Nkrumah (Ghartey-Tagoe 2010):

*X8: Three years, no funding for any programme. When vehicles come to GBC they are allocated everywhere else, if one comes to GTv you have to share with somebody else. Every place else is renovated but Television. It's a very funny thing. There is an innate jealousy, the perception that television is what will carry the station and people who are in Television will become arrogant or will have more authority than [others], that kind of thing. Very, very, puerile. There is a tension between Television and the rest of GBC....*

## **The Social Role of GTv**

Being the nation's broadcaster what roles does GTv play in the social and national agenda, especially in the areas that were the prime motivations for defining its legislated role; what affective roles is GTv able to play in enabling social development?

Thus, it becomes important to discover what affectations GTv producers believe they create with their productions, within the existing practices and perspectives of television producers. These social affectations are examined within the concepts of human and social development facilitations through communication practices, guided by the ideas of Halpern (2005) and Lithgow (2008).

## **Social Cohesion, Socialisation**

The News is identified as being important for bringing the national community together, as a mechanism that unifies the nation through the exchange of information from locales and communities; mediating belonging and socio-cultural events within the national space:

*X1:* ... with regards to GTv. For example, just to make sure that we are one country and all that, there are news reporters in all the Regional capitals so news is fairly covered in the Regions and not just in Accra ... This makes it holistic as one nation ... and the reporters in the Regions [are able] to go deep into the communities and send reports from there.

*X6:* Yeah, like I am saying, the helping of national cohesion is key. Whatever we do, we think of not only the story. You get the information, you want to be sure before you put it out there. ... What we do actually is keep us as a people in whatever way.

This perspective is important as News on GTv appears to hold an “authenticity” value and salience for national audiences, promoted, X7 states, by adhering to journalist’ ethics about truth in reportage. However, the nation also listens in different languages and the salience of multi-lingualism on GTv is identified as a social cohesion mechanism:

*X6:* .... In the sense that the six major languages that are spoken are taken good care of in all facets of our production line.

Thus, two ideas emerge from respondents' answers: the use of language as a unifying tool, and authentic news presentation for informing the nation, aiding its stability and continuance as a community. These two ideas are an operational fulfilment of the ethos for local language used in programming on GTv as it envisages to aid national social cohesion by providing current information to the different ethnic groups in languages that make the News accessible, and verifiable, in inter-personal social communication, a key element in Ghanaian socialising (Heath 2001), and thus playing a social maintenance function.

The salience of the educational role of television comes to the fore in several in-house productions, in which education is embedded with a socialising function. X2 articulates that the importance of local language use in programming is salient for public education and learning, and also for the preservation of social institutions and order:

X2: .. *Adult Education* on GTv which takes care of six major languages, from the Northern [to the Southern]; ... is such that you can take any topic.... and they will discuss it and they put forward pictures and demonstration materials...

...And sometimes we do something [programmes in] *Akan* to try and explain the law, simple terms, of the Constitution,..? They call the programme *Mbrasem*<sup>41</sup> [and it helps the Akan-speaking people understand the law in *Akan*], and we have a programme in *Ga* that's a talkshow, so these are some of the things ...

.....now as you watch *Sports Highlights* what you derive out of Sports Highlights is not only the soccer you are watching but there is a culture, way of dressing ..., there's a way of speaking. So .. it is a yardstick that is designed between the way of behaviour of society and the way of learning. ... If we talk like a Ghanaian there's a way of phrasing our talk, now if you [watch TV] and you know that my pronunciation is not right, you can even straighten up, it's a

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<sup>41</sup> Translates as 'Matters of Law'

social problem. Straighten up to look very decent and accepted by listening and understanding what kind of words are pushed out of your mouth, ...

Television is therefore seen as a tool for socialising the public; pronunciation and etiquette. The maintenance of culture and tradition is important for social cohesion as it makes it possible for people to interact within socially accepted norms. In a society that prizes a largely oral mode of communication, the importance of proper-speaking is fundamental to social interaction among citizens. X2's position is not only personal, it is supported as an objective, in the national broadcast standards, to use television to provide a socialising reference for good speech (Appendices 4, Section 4); teaching the skill and knowledge of cultural references in speech, such as idioms and proverbs.

For development and modernisation, the learning of new ideas and contemporary knowledge is a key means of transforming local cultures, practices and understandings about the human condition and availing both individuals and communities with the empowering ability to change lives and society. The data shows that GTv producers consider that the education and information types of programme are salient to their perception of GTv's social contribution.

*X1*: ... I think that information and education is fairly covered, and I think that the programme that does that mostly is our talking programmes, you know, like the *Adult Education* programme, [which] is in the various languages, and if anything is happening, even if it's government that is introducing something or if there's any policy that people don't understand they normally give them slots on those platforms so that they don't only speak in English but get to the people through those languages.

The Presidential Special Initiative (PSI) on Distance Learning programmes provide formal instruction in Science and Maths to upper year secondary school students, and are a part of the weekly schedule, given approximately two hours a day in the working week days, apart from Friday. There are no other formal learning programmes in the schedule. Other educational programmes focus on a wider range of social issues and

include such programmes as *Talking Point*, which focuses on the economy and legal issues; and *Stand Point* and *Mmaa Nkommo* which focus on feminist social issues.

GTV's actual output of formal education is therefore limited, although producers seem to believe that a wider range of educational programming is aired. This may be because of the educational values embedded in a wide-range of output that also includes genres in entertainment programming (X7). While such programmes do provide education, the amount of formalised education through television is actually limited to the PSI Distance Learning programmes.

Thus, apart from the PSI and *Adult Education* programmes, it is much more difficult to define precisely which programmes contribute directly to the improvement of human capital; in knowledge and skills, in the samples of the schedule used in this research. Respondent X5 did state that previous programmes in areas such as health and agriculture have been farmed out to out-house producers. None of such programmes which were aimed at teaching occupational skills were noted in the broadcast sample.

## **Making Change?**

X6: ... Whatever story you have you are mirroring society so the society is now moving on, there is modernisation, acculturation, definitely you have to portray such characters also. So it is there,....

X6 takes the view that television is able to reflect social changes and progresses. It is difficult, from this response, to ascertain the degree of engagement that producers have with understanding their social development role. While it suggests an ideological departure from the view that television should look to the preserving of existing social forms in cultural and traditional practices as heritage (Appendices 2 and 3), perhaps to be used for latter socialisation purposes, it does not emphasise the creation of dramatic tensions that explore social changes in relation to aspirations and new ideas.

The ability of television to influence social change, developmentally, has been argued in this thesis to be dependent on the degree to which it engages with ‘new’ ideas in the mediated public sphere; the notion of the ‘new’ regards the facilitation of ideas and information that challenges social conventions. ‘New genres’ of television are arguably facilitating this social dialogue and in ways that depart from the ‘traditional’ television model (see for example Lunt 2009)<sup>42</sup>. The ideological and creative freedom available to producers, through incentives and guidelines, are important for realising such innovation and forming dialogical channels between programmes and the public.

For X3, there is an ideological imperative to respond to social challenges while being conscious of the social environment; and writing stories that resonant with this. That consciousness is derived from conversations with friends, and reading social stories from local newspapers. All dramatic productions therefore are intended for social education purposes, however, writing for English language dramas present a different set of challenges to writing for local drama:

X3: What I’m saying is that stories are shaped by language, from language you get culture so I cannot do something that would not be recognisable from the tribe, that’s what I’m talking of.

In X3’s explanations, citing examples of drama stories written, there appears to be a representation of middle-class issues in English language dramas, and a representation of working class social issues in local dramas. However no matter the language used, X3 considers a transposition of Western genre elements into Ghanaian dramas a transgression, and puts forward an argument that narrative authenticity is required in story situation. In this way a producer is able to address social problems in a relevant way:

X3: ... I hate people copying things from abroad because it doesn’t fit. It’s just [not authentic]. Like someone trying to do James Bond, it doesn’t work.

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<sup>42</sup> Lunt discusses PSB programming challenges in the social convention of being a mass medium through the growth of personalisation in content to a more diverse and niche audiences in features that reflect social changes through the personal and individual as a way of reflecting and marking the changes that are occurring in the larger society

X3 and X2, pointed to their own work as mirrors of both social change and new ideas that attempt to educate society about the need to change regressive social perceptions (excluded in this text to preserve their anonymity). Their examples, however, cited programmes that worked as unidirectional communications embedded with social education values. All respondents were in agreement that educational content contribute positively to social and economic development:

X1: Well, in my production work as far as the social aspects, as for the political I'd leave it aside, but social and economic, fine, .... sometimes some of the programmes that I do are things that can get people interested in bringing people together, depending on their culture, depending on what they are doing, and it entertains them, and sometimes it could be on particular activities that women are doing and when you [as a producer] highlight more on it and the benefits they can get economically it can help some people.

X7: Yeah, and a programme like *Obra* also educates, they do educate. Normally the story line has some educative element.

The educative elements in such programmes tackle social issues that are, often, on the public agenda, gender discrimination in education, disease control, etc, and also serve a socializing function in promoting traditional social values; community, marriage, the importance of family ties, the importance of individuals regardless of status, etc.

Thus producers are comfortable with considering social change through communication, and believe that they predominantly work in this arena, without offering resistance or challenge to power-bases, especially the political. What is obvious is that without organisational guidelines and policies that would work to ensure creative freedoms and security, producers do not consider themselves to be as effective as they could potentially be if they worked within normative guidelines:

X4: Policy guidelines that, I would say is written, is that you have to educate, entertain and inform. That is first and foremost. ... but really, really, on paper there is nothing. ...we are just using our own heads.

Within such a context, how does GTv play a role in the strategic transformation of Ghana towards the mass social consciousness that changes social direction through a response to socially articulated aspirations?

In this area, it appears that GTv producers and the organisation are not able to articulate a positive response that reflects a strategic response to social aspiration, nor does the organisation appear to have envisaged a strategic application of resources to aiding social development. The evidence, from X1 specifically, is that direct engagement, especially with politics, is a conflicted area, and X4 suggests that challenge, to directly engage with contentious current issues, is not taken up because of inherent organisational inertia:

*AT:* So you have your current affairs programmes, does that not talk about social and political issues?

*X4:* Not too much.

*AT:* Why is that?

*X4:* I think it all depends on who is P3 or P4 and what the producer wants to talk about.

Thus, the willingness of senior producers to sanction a production limits the ability of the producer to venture into creating new forms of programmes that may address not just the political but even current social and topical issues; and senior producers have been cited as the barriers to changing content forms from the 'safe' areas traditionally accepted within GTv.

## **Feedback**

Thus, the public, and what its interests may be, is dislocated from the traditional centre of public broadcasting television; the public interest is filtered by the organisation's reflex mechanisms that support its self-preservation, and the 'culture of silence' (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998). The audience is also not able to influence the production of content, and may only have a marginal contribution to the



character of programming in some genres. Their contribution is not systematically assisted by a frequent canvassing of opinions and suggestions; it is shown to be limited to critiquing what has ready been produced, depending on an audience member's individual ability and willingness to give feedback, or a direct relational connection to a producer:

*X1:* .... People call, sometimes some people see you, at times when the programme is on, and someone who knows you might call you to say "this programme is on" and that they like[d] it and [this, that and the other]. ... Mostly the comments I've heard have been good, maybe once in a while somebody will say "you dwelt more on this and it could have been this", fine, and I take that into account.

*X3:* You do it, if it's good you know it's good, ... nobody calls to complain ... I mean, [the way things are<sup>43</sup>] if there is a problem everybody will phone.

....I get feedback from the audience, the actors; because the actors will tell you what the people told them.

Critically, the absence of a formal survey mechanism exposes the deficit in public participation and contribution to programmes:

*AT:* There's no formal process of getting feedback then?

*X3:* No, sometimes your colleagues will also give you feedback.

The contention from respondents is that GBC's Audience Research Department does not feedback to them information that may help them work more closely with the public, consequently, it is not possible for them to appreciate in a significant manner the social significance of their work without audience-based research that specifically addresses this:

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<sup>43</sup> A reference to the public's uninhibited use of mobile phones to call into programmes or stations to register protests

X4: ... we don't know if we are satisfying the public, but, GBC, I don't think they even [realise] that because they've been enjoying this monopoly for so long that it is still stuck up in their heads.

The lack of input from an organised system of audience monitoring and engagement means that producers rely on the informal contact processes to judge the audience reception of their productions. X1, X3 and X4 (see pg x) all confirm that their means of judging audience appreciation of productions are through screen talent, or private citizens, who being resident in communities would feedback audience interests or criticisms. X4 also indicates that some newspapers may publish reviews.

Yet, all who responded to the question indicated that a good feedback mechanism would be desirable for better engagement with social issues in the public interest; as X1 puts it:

X1: I think there should be a lot of dialogue, so that people who want things to be done can let you know. If you do something they can comment on, you can talk to them. I think there should be a lot of 'in and outs', not just from one side; you [producer/GBC/GTV] asking for things and all that from them.

X1's response is in relation to use of community-resident individuals as research information sources. Some genres of production, such as documentaries, lend themselves to some degree of public/community participation. However, in this regard the involvement is secondary as the participants are essentially subjects and not content originators, however, it can also be a positive way to build involvement when producers allows human subjects to dictate the information and experiences shared, broadening plurality in the communication and programme-making process. The antithetical position is a stasis that strengthens the centre to periphery mode of communication and undermines the social participation of communities and individuals in the creation of representative productions.

## Stasis

The problem of stasis is not limited to the lack of public participation and plurality, in production. Within GTv as a creative organisation, stasis results from the cultures of production that have existed for years, from the absence of enabling guidelines for production, and from the fear of management and senior producers of the consequences of taking risks to produce new programmes that engage more directly with changing social dynamics in the nation-state:

*AT:* So basically, you can only push boundaries depending on whether P8 or P9 is able to cover for you.

*X4:* Yes, if you have a good P8 or P9 who would understand and you are convinced within yourself that you want to do a programme on “this”, if it proves that it’s too critical then P8 or P9 would then go to P1 to discuss the topic before you handle it.

....You do things and then maybe a political leader will tell you that your station is anti-government and that is all that we can do. So [with] everything you have to make sure that you are towing the government in power’s line and make sure you don’t step on anybody’s toes. So political issues, we in the production side we hardly add them to our productions.

The result is that GTv is comfortable with reproducing ‘old’ programmes, or making new programmes that are related to specific social issues that are not aligned to governance politics; for example, *Stand Point* and *Mmaa Nkomo*. These programmes are also pre-recorded and therefore offer producers more control over the final broadcast content.

The preservation of the social status quo, therefore, plays a significant role in the content production processes at GTv. Social stasis is maintained as producers are encouraged by socialisation to disengage from making content that might be perceived to challenge the political relationships in society. State authorities are seen to be the determinants of the social structures that underpin social power

relationships, and thus further receive legitimation from the non-contesting environment in the State-owned media. Should the State-owned media engage in content-making that does not “tow the government” line, it will be perceived as challenging the legitimate authorities who, ostensibly, serve in the best interests of the public, and who may perceive the questioning of their authority as potentially destabilising, and leading to social unrest, or chaos. The history of political unrest therefore may serve as a factor in the willingness of GTv to provide further legitimation to political authority by offering little resistance to the communication agenda of government.

There are, therefore, constraints on a producer’s ability to work with conviction and authority on subject matters that may be ‘controversial’, although X4 concedes that producers could be more creative in developing content that is challenging. However for the most part, producers are willing to engage with productions that could challenge social cognitive processes. These productions may however pose little resistance to hegemonic cultures and social values, unless they are a part of a broader government agenda for public education or are of a dramatic nature, in which case modernity values in a production are subject to a producer’s “idiosyncrasies” (X7), that is, to suggest dramatic intent:

*X4:* It depends on whom you are targeting at a particular time and the subject that you are talking about. So if the subject is a dicey one you need to do enough research. If you think it will be a problem you find a way of taking it out of your script or production, you don’t go there, because there are certain things that may be you do [and] at the end of the day P1 will not back you. If somebody writes an article P1 [will say] “it’s up to you”, or somebody calls from somewhere [then it’s like] “why did you do this, why didn’t you consult?” And then it starts causing havoc. So most of the time we always want to pave a way, to make sure [we] are within some parameters which will not cause any problems,

.... when it was female genital mutilation that was a governmental issue so we could make so much noise about it, and *Trokosi*<sup>44</sup>. [With] those things there was a national outcry so we could easily do programmes on them, but if it is something really, should I say minor, you will find your way if it is possible, if there are no issues, if there's no [objection] to it then we go ahead and do it.

X6: We have specific programmes for our cultural, traditional set up. We have been collaborating with the Centre for National Culture<sup>45</sup>, where we have specific programmes meant for our cultural and traditional heritage sort of things, ..

AT: These are programmes that teach some of the traditional practices that we have.

X6: Yes.

AT: Do you think that our programmes are socially conservative and do not tend to challenge conservative values of our society? Is there any attempt to looking towards influencing society towards modernity, western values, that sort of thing?

X7: Not always. That depends on the writer of the script, the director or producer. Most of these are based on the writer's idiosyncrasies, what they want to portray. So depending on what the writer feels, if they thought people are being more conservative they may want to put in a slice of that, then they would do it, but then if the producer or director thinks this would do for his or her target audience then they film the part.

Established programmes have a format that is already approved and the programmes present fewer challenges to producers; cosmetic changes are the challenges a producer would have to deal with in an attempt to keep audience interest in the programme:, and thus they are aligned with established organisational culture and social hegemonies:

X4: So far for all the programmes that I am doing they are long time ago programmes in the corporation so the concepts are already there. So all that we

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<sup>44</sup> The practice of indenturing young or female relatives to shrines to mitigate wrongs.

<sup>45</sup> Dwabrem is a programme of history, cultural music and dance produced in collaboration with the CNC

do is that once a while we want to change the face of it so we remove something and add something, yes, so as not to make it too boring.

On the other hand, ‘new’ programmes that lie outside formatted genres have a more challenging creative trajectory that are much more aligned with a producer’s interests, while still working within the socialised norms of ‘acceptable’ programming at GTV, such programmes tend to be of a historical or cultural nature (X3, X1) with an education emphasis, and may be signifiers of producers assimilation of attitudes to the degree that they have become cultured to the corporation’s interests, which they now assume to be their own:

*X1: I think I’m actually culturally-biased. I get more attracted to things that are national, that are cultural, could be for the national, could be for a particular region, a tribe, you know, that’s what I really get attracted to. So could be a history of the people, a particular culture, festival or dance.*

An illustration of such ‘acculturation’ is in X2’s response to questions about the imagination process in programme ideation which shows a desire to align with organisational purpose, values and aspirations:

*X2: My influences come first and foremost from the people that I am going to show the thing to, my viewers. That is the major influence that comes to me. What kind of package should I give to them so that they would enjoy, they would sit and learn, [be] informed and entertained? ...maybe the second would be the people that I’m going to cover, the people who are at the centre of the documentary I’m making or the project I am making. The third aspect is my corporation, the development of my corporation towards the whole nation, whether it’s bringing something to develop the nation, whether it’s bringing something to add to the role that it is playing in the nation as the leading broadcaster in the country.*

Respondents’ answers, thus, show an undercurrent of creative tension in the work of producers; a striving to make ‘new’ productions while working within established ‘formats’ – based on a socialised ‘guide to programme-making’. The conflict is

resolved differently depending on the type of project that producers find themselves engaged with. However, all producers work in conformity to established traditions and do not take risks. In the opinion of X8, the characteristic of public broadcasting at GTv is summed up thus:

*X8: .....so GBC only achieves public service goals by following the President, ...ensuring that anything government wants to say is heard, just so everybody keeps quiet. But actually delving into issues ... actually looking at strong change factors, the encouragement of people to have a certain sense of national well-being, selfless kind of thing, the attitude of boosting, bolstering the national psyche, those things that you can do so well with television have all been [forsaken].*

How then do respondents perceive the functioning of GTv, particularly, in resolving these problems that challenge the organisation's social performance roles, and what future scenario did they envisage?

### **Ideological Producers?**

Producer-directors at GTv are trained both in-house and at the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) in Accra. However, the training is biased towards developing technical skills the crafts basic to moving image productions<sup>46</sup>. At NAFTI, there is a de-emphasis on academic theories that underlie the ideological foundations of moving image production, and even less so on developing an integrated post-colonial studies reference. A broader education would imbue an understanding of the mutual dependence of media products on the history and culture of media consumers, strategically enhancing the social affectation possibilities of media productions. For example, respondents did not understand references to the public broadcasting benchmarks or 'development communication', although they had a greater affinity for the latter as it follows from cultures of learning at GTv:

*XI: Ok, during the training at NAFTI I don't think I did, I don't remember, but communication for development, yes, within GBC, yes, we need to communicate to get development, yes, that term I have heard.*

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<sup>46</sup> [www.nafti.edu.gh](http://www.nafti.edu.gh)

*AT:* Were there any guidelines supplied to suggest how you could communicate to develop?

*XI:* No, they just said that the tools that we have, we need to use to develop the nation.

*AT:* Do you think that it is something that stays with you when you are producing?

*XI:* When I am producing it doesn't stay, but I think within me I have it but when I am producing it's not consciously on my mind but sub-consciously it is there. So that whatever you are doing you hope that you are communicating to help development in that area.

Thus, there remains an ingrained consciousness of the responsibility implied in working as a communicator for the nation, even though practical constraints would drive these values into the background. Communication values therefore need to become part of a strategic approach to production in order to create latitude and opportunity through which the strategies and tools for development communication can be realised when producers are encouraged to consider the 'public' as the centre in developing production content. Training and education of producers also needs to be assessed in terms of the narrow perception of "educate, inform and entertain" as the purpose of public broadcasting in relation to developing cognitive connections to production ideals in communication roles and objectives for the larger society.

## **The Future Organisation**

In the changed market environment that the GTv now finds itself, it becomes important for the organisation to see a future towards which it can grow and continue to have social relevance. That future scenario, ideally, should be conceptualised to address the current failures, re-capitalise on strengths and position for changing technology and practices. Respondents were quite aware of the need to change for the future:



X8:....The fact that we reach the widest audience in Ghana is a big sell now, in a few years when digital is completely out there it will deteriorate.

Respondents indicated a desire to see the organisation adapt to its new environmental realities. They suggested ways through which to improve GTv's service for the future, and described presents challenges due to organisational inertia. The systemic culture was blamed; a 'civil service' attitude that sees 'public service' or 'government service' institutions as wage paying occupations within which staff can disregard the performance and outcome measurements that are vital to defining organisational successes with X4 and X8 especially indicating this. While X4 suggested that logistics and transportation problems needed to be addressed, X8 saw a need for closer collaboration between the production and commercial departments to streamline the 'selling' of programmes to advertisers in more structured, efficient and creative manner.

New broadcast technology was also indicated to be a vital part of making changes for the future. Part of that change has been a government-led initiative to aid GTv's migration to digital broadcasting to create a distribution platform from which all broadcasters will work. GTv has rolled out new digital channels. The broadcast, media market and social benefits that would have informed such a strategic move seems to not have been explained beyond the Boardroom; respondents were not able to discuss the rationale for new channels beyond the obvious utilisation's proposed:

*AT:* Can you sum up for me why it was decided to have these six channels,...I am asking if there is a certain strategy behind the choice of how the bouquet is made up?

X5: Well with this one I really don't have the information on it. .. as to the decision why I can't really say, that came from the Executive Directors... GBC will have six television channels, in all, ... The present GTv will be under Public Service and Parliament, and then we have GTv Plus which is sports, we will have GTv Entertainment, we will have GTv Local which will be only local languages, all the various local languages that we handle in

GBC, and then we will have GTv Religion and Culture and then we will have GBC 24 which will be the News channel, and with all these we are hoping that in time all of them will run twenty-four hours.

However, it can be deduced that the changes are hoped to make it more feasible for GTv to provide a more diverse range of programming to achieve a better service remit that is more relevant and appealing to Ghanaians. GBC has also launched an online presence, albeit with some operational problems:

X5: .. it was only yesterday that I went [unto the web-pages] with a colleague of mine and we were wondering [because] sometimes it takes them a long time to update it. We had criticisms during the [elections] about how the whole thing is being managed and stuff like that, and in my view, me and my colleague, we felt that it should have been updated every day. The amount of information [available], with reporters going out and stuff, and, in my view, I don't see the reason why sometimes sports [journalists] quote Joy Online<sup>47</sup>, .... it seems that those who are handling that aspect of our operations are not updating the website everyday .....

There had also been a move to re-organise aspects of operations, organically, to achieve greater efficiency, and an internal report on recommendations for cross-platform use of content and resources was submitted to the Board, as part of an effort to “re-position” (X5) GBC in the media market. However, the organisational changes done had been primarily to the News department, perhaps in recognition of the central role of the News function for the corporation; including re-training journalists into multi-skilled professionals able to news-gather and submit reportage independently. While this is good in itself; it would generate greater productivity per head, it leaves out other departments like Television Production which handles the non-News aspects of broadcasting content production. Considering producers' perceptions of bias against their department, it will become important to engage them also in a wider effort to re-build the corporation.

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<sup>47</sup> Joy Online is the web portal for Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation, in which GBC has shares.

However well-intentioned these new changes being made may be, it appears that producers have a different anxiety. X2 and X3 suggested that the corporation has become much too focused on its commercial operation to the extent that it is changing the character of its broadcasting heritage with commercialism. X3 would like to see a de-commercialising of prime airtime and increases in the broadcast of local programming. X2 was concerned that the financial basis of the corporation is what needs attention, and that an answer would be in reforming the revenue model GBC works on:

X3: Before we never had adverts in the News, it was like a holy hour, then just within the past year or so they started showing commercials in the News... like I was talking about adverts I think we also have too many foreign programmes... and it's Chinese, Korean, Spanish, too many. Nigerian, it's all for commercial reasons so a lot of our local work is not shown as it should be.

AT: Nothing from Europe and America?

X3: Well American movies, but you see acquisition rights are cheaper for Korea, for Asian and South America the acquisition rights are cheaper, so with the American ones we don't really see them, just once in a while.

Most productions were African in origin and off-continent productions were marginal (Fig. 5), and a significant presence of 'foreign' programmes was not found. However, the concern that 'commercialism' is influencing broadcast output was reflected in many responses and a strong suggestion was that this needed to change:

X2: My own view is that it needs to change its way [with regard to] finances... The current reliance on Government is too ambiguous for now because the Government is over-burdened and they should help GBC to find other ways of getting resourced in terms of the quest of delivering the public service ...planning without money is vague, it's no planning. You are virtually thrown over-board if you need the quality and you don't have money to pay for it, you go for mediocrity, and that's what I'm talking about. So a way of sourcing for funds, that's the biggest thing that has to happen to ....

With regards to a longer term envisioning of the public television service, X5 was of the opinion that the new digital broadcasting platform increases the quantum of revenue to be made from airtime sales as well as the opportunity to deliver both new programmes and public service programming, especially on the dedicated local language channel, and as such GTv would become a much more financially robust organisation.

X8, however, suggested that splitting the corporation into separate commercial and public service functions and down-sizing the public broadcasting service section, which the State would have to pay for, while the commercial division would be run solely on a for-profit basis. However, X8 was emphatic that public service broadcasting was integral to nation's social development project and rejected the liberal market view that proposes government disengagement from services provision in order to allow market forces to determine better economic efficiency:

*AT:* .... you have stopped short at saying that GBC should be sold.

*X8:* ... the deal is that, no country, no matter how gung-ho it is about freedoms of [expression] and so on, has ever given up its public service. We made the mistake with GBC Radio 2, [the] GBC extended service, on which the whole [African] liberation struggle fed. We closed it down and left a sizable part of the African Union, African Unity, remit which GBC was the head of. We trained their broadcasters, we encouraged their governments, and at the end of the day we threw it away by simply not buying the transmitter to continue or developing a different way of reaching them. If we shut down the public service we might as well kiss ourselves goodbye. Not even France has switched it off. So they told us not to subsidise our farmers but they subsidised the banks so I'm not following anything any Western, you know, Bretton Woods conceptualism, no. We are thinking about ourselves. We do need the public service and it can be done properly. The fact that there is failure now doesn't mean that we throw up our hands. We have to just get to grips with it and deal with it, you understand? ... I think GBC can be the leader and be remodelled in terms of developing proper public service broadcasting.

GTv, as public service broadcaster, is important for the advancement of social development in Ghana. It can contribute to development through its programming in public and civic education and in the provision of information for economic activity. However, in order for that to continue in its future it needs to address some specific issues. There are several observations to be made from the views expressed:

The first is that the situation that confronts GTv in its current form, and for the future, remains as much an economic argument as it is also a social one: primarily, the provision of an efficient public service that is underscored by the maximising of public value. Therefore processes of efficiency within production, need to be matched to competent staff that are able to deliver content based on a specific social and general development agenda.

Secondly, the determination of that development communication agenda must result from a closer understanding of the public interest and its intersection with the government driven socio-political agenda. Knowledge facilitation and debate on courses of action for delivering development goals should be at the nexus of Gtv's public service within a participatory communication mode that serves to 'conscientize' (Lehrer 2002; O'Shaunnessy and Stadler 1999; Tufte and Mefalupolous 2009; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997).

Thirdly, GTv must situate its continuance in the future with providing a service that really addresses the cultural plurality of the nation through the sharing of cultural and other entertainment experiences that have national relevance. Creating new digital channels gives it the opportunity to provide new content that addresses the various sections of the national audience in a 'disaggregated' manner, and also provides the opportunity for better addressing the funding structures of programming. Revenues and savings from popular programmes can fund non-popular but culturally or socially essential programmes, as well as seeking funding from the public purse, to ensure that programme provision is truly diverse and not pinned to purely commercial incentives.

The bedrock of ensuring such a paradigmatic shift occurs, from current practice, lies in GTv's ability to enable audience-research and public participation to play

significant roles in the shaping and origination of content that is in response to identified social needs and public interest. Thus, the validation of an economic model for GTV, now and in the future, should be conceptualised in terms of a socially funded enterprise with ability to prove a socially beneficial economic argument to the national society, and to the government since it is responsible for its efficient operation as a public organisation. Its commercial efficiencies may make it unnecessary in the future for the public purse to substantially fund its operations but some degree of public funding will still be required, as provided in its current structure, for the acquisition of new technologies.

## **Chapter V: DISCUSSION**

That GTv is nominally a state-broadcaster is moot, however, this research focuses on discovering the degree to which its aspiration to be a 'true' public service broadcaster is realized through its structural dependencies and its agency, and thereby to observe its contribution to national social change. The discussion of the data analysis that follows, therefore, joins theoretical perspectives to that data analysis from previous chapters. It considers the structural mechanics of GTv in positing 'television as a place' constructed through a remit, considers its agency through the actions of producers as a result of their perceptions and then attempts an elaboration of its social role in social development.

Data analysed showed that producers notionally defined 'public service' as service provided to both State and the national community of citizens, as represented by public institutions and social structures. The 'audience' is understood to be the television-viewing mass population, an aggregation of individual media service users who were a part of the nation that exist within the social structures of tribes, religious affiliations, and administrative Regions of the State. The dominant conception of 'public service broadcasting', therefore, linked to notions of State and nationhood in a manner that equated the 'public interest' with the national interest, thus justifying the belief that 'education, information and entertainment' of the nation was the modular objective of public service television in Ghana.

The data also showed that while producers did not immediately identify with the public service broadcasting benchmarks of *universality, plurality, distinctiveness* and *independence*, as set out in Banerjee and Seneviratne (2005); it was still possible to evaluate these concepts, through the qualitative method of the research. Notional understandings were found to be present in the interview data. Also, The National Media Commission's Media Policy document was also found to present some discussion on the salience of these factors, although it does not mention distinctiveness as an aim, for achieving a public broadcasting service in Ghana. The document, importantly, recognizes the interdependence of these factors in shaping the public broadcasting service. However, these factors were not similarly represented in the decree establishing the GBC as a public institution, although equations to mediating political plurality and cultural diversity were represented.

## **Placement: Tv as a 'place'**

Television as a non-geographically subsisting 'place' (Berrigan 1979) carries the notion of an imagined location that is very much real, into which people can come and participate, actively, in decoding and interpreting textual messages that are socially created in a 'space'. It therefore takes a virtual form that exists very much like a classroom, bureau and theatre. It can therefore function very much as these in its core offerings of education, information and entertainment. However, the success of those functions will be shown, by the discussion of the data, to depend on how the space is created and its perceived integrity in responding to the needs of those participating in its social construction. Thus, the experience and presence of television is a dynamic that is provided through the exercise of social institutions, legal and normative, public participation and the actions of mediators. The 'location' of that space is important for providing these interdependent factors the capability to achieve the mediation purpose intended.

In the imagined space of communal social reality, GTv is a freely and nationally available service and therefore capable of drawing the nation into a national public sphere. This *universality* of GTv places it not only 'within' the social communities of Ghana, participating in its cultural exchanges, but also 'around' the society, in having the capability to reflect society back to itself. Its services are freely accessible and usable without restriction, as the compulsory license fee has effectively been waived. Participatory access to it is, however, restricted by financial barriers and production processes. It is, thus, a media sphere that can be experienced largely through its offerings; only a few programmes had direct public participation in its format. Thus, its location and manner of operations are outside the public's immediate reach for contribution to the determination of content and service goals. This 'placement' removes it from being a public platform that is freely accessible, and although it may be accessible at the minimum affordable cost of a phone-call or letter to producers, there is not a system in place to encourage such initiative from the audience, but some organized groups with sufficient motivation are able to participate in some programming.



The many years of militarist interventions have formulated a culture of production that has resolved into an enduring organisational disregard for an ethos that would be more orientated towards facilitating national public aspirations. Even the fact that the establishing act was under a military junta suggests that the decree may wilfully have chosen to ignore a more centralised role for citizens. The National Media Policy (Appendices 3) espouses an aspiration to change this state of affairs yet fails to comment on the lack of harmony between the decree and the Constitution (Appendices 1), where it makes specific reference to the responsibility of the State-owned media to build a socially inclusive media, and does not suggest a legislative amendment. An amendment process should trigger an organisation-wide assessment of roles and functions and create an awareness of the dissonance between current organisational conceptions and the internationally benchmarked standards for delivering a true public broadcasting service. Thus, the basis for an amelioration of GTv's failing is in the legal structure of its 'placement' as a public broadcaster.

## **Legal and Normative Structures**

This 'location' of GTv predates its inauguration as a service. In locating the precursor to GBC within the government service, Sir Arnold Hodgson was signifying the importance of control over programming, and the intended use for electronic media, as a social control mechanism. In the post-independence emancipation projects the media continued to be seen as an auxiliary tool for social control, and although the recognition was made of social change capability, the control over messages and content was deemed to be the preserve of trained and professional social elites who could operate its machinery and understood within its craft the ideologies desired in broadcast content. Nkrumah with this understanding did not create a law to change the institution passed-on after independence, but continued it as originally operated, changing its content to suit the ideological purposes of Pan-Africanism, Ghanaian nationalism and national social development.

Consequently, in reforming the GBC to cast off its association with Nkrumah's heritage, the NLC 'placed' GBC as a public corporation, and merely changed its legal status, but leaving it essentially as it was, a government-controlled department of the State. The establishing law, NLCD 226, correctly writes in the aspirational uses for

education, information and entertainment for GTv. However, it effectively created a government-operated service aimed to give the national public broadcasting services that were deemed to be important in facilitating a cause-effect notion of social development based on the adoption of some of the more liberal ideologies that came from acceding to the global media concepts that were part of the ‘dominant’ paradigm in the 1960’s. The hypodermic effects paradigm were not much different from Nkrumah’s intention for state broadcasting; the government, through GBC, would give to the nation what it needed in terms of educational and instructive content that would facilitate the government agendas for development. The law therefore is very specific in its treatment of the government information service duties that were required of GTv. In its liberal adoptions, the corporation would now have to earn some revenue by providing services that it could charge for. Thus the legal placement of the GBC was formed.

In the current era, the terms of that structural placement has not changed. The legal status of GBC is inimical to the 4<sup>th</sup> Republican Constitution. The NMC’s media policy intends to correct this dislocation of the organization from a public, as nation, and citizen-centered approach to service delivery, but it is yet to provide an impetus for an internalized framework that situates specific outcomes, measured and communicated widely within the organization, to serve as a baseline for purpose achievements. The construction of GTv is, therefore, as a ‘public-funded’, not ‘public-owned’ organization, and the historical and practical alignment of GBC with government has over-shadowed its significance as an organization that was set up to be ‘public’-spirited; that is, to serve the ‘public interest’ as well as government’s. Thus, in the data, it is observed that respondents recognized and responded to these dual notions, but each respondent tended to favour one notion over the other, yet both notions were equally represented.

## **Funding**

The funding model of GBC, and consequently GTv, proved to be the most problematic outcome of this research; the normal actions of producers were much affected by the lack of adequate funding for productions that would both improve plurality, give programming access or even adequate logistic input into production

routines. This was claimed by all respondents. There is thus a need for management, government and the public to engage in a broad consultation that would address the status of GTv in the matters that relate to its funding, and is outside the scope of this thesis.

### **Social Roles:**

Thus, GTv is a public television service only in name and legal status, but not wholly in its service delivery, and this has ramifications for its social roles:

### **Social Capital**

Gifford (2004) suggested that Ghana as a nation exhibits low social capital, in consideration of the politicization of its public sphere and tribal identities. However, this is very much debatable since almost all political traditions stem from the same nationalist root, splintered into social democratic or liberal democratic traditions. It can be assumed that citizens of Ghana, who identify with its history and desire its progression, are nationalist and express their nationalism through political factions. Thus, while governments may represent differing traditions, the notion of a nation, construed as Ghana, which extends beyond tribe is not in dispute. Cohesion is the bedrock of social capital theory, and it is manifested in many ways through hegemonies of patriotism, religious faith and cultural expression. The cohesiveness of Ghanaian nationhood is thus function of 'trust' that all nationalist political factions, no matter how divided, have at various times worked towards national socio-economic development through the exercise of political power. The belonging to factions of political traditions dissects across tribal and ethnic lines and therefore suggests that 'networks' of cohesiveness through political affiliations exist across the country, ensuring that the broad mass of the nation is engaged with a concerted nationalist social development consensus that differs only in policy positions and political ideology.

### **Communication and the Nation**

The location of GTv, however, within that social reality is a problematic. In envisioning social capital as 'glue' that creates 'togetherness' in the commune, Putnam's (Halpern 2005) usage of the term 'social capital' provides a theory that explains social synergy as agency that produces results in cohesion and goal

achievement, and thus makes sense in its attributive claim. In reflecting the diverse range of cultural and linguistic differences that are attributable to Ghana as a nation, GTv plays a role as a visual signifier of national social cohesion. Through the use of Ghanaian cultural forms; symbols, language, manners of expression and behaviour that signify the national cultural (X1), GTv gives cues to standards of social propriety. It thus contributes to socialising the nation through acculturation of ‘Ghanaian social attributes’ by signification (Hall 1997). In using specific cultural forms of expression from within the nation it serves as a signifier of cultural attributes that audiences can learn from and identify. In this way GTv aids ‘Ghanaian’ identity choices and is therefore salient to nationalist identification (Noelle-Neumann 1981; Kellner 1995).

Projecting such ‘national expressions’ of culture contributes to national social cohesion and nationalism by alluding to the interconnectedness of the nation’s disparate ethnic segments with the unity of the nation-state, joining them in the on-going ‘struggle’ for national social emancipation (Mihelj; Cox 2007). GTv is therefore important in the national emancipation project as it serves to reflect the national community in its growth, development and cultural evolution. Thus, its role in mediating national cohesion is not only in reflecting the present character of the nation but also connects to an enfolding history that validates ‘togetherness’ that conjoins all tribes and ethnicities in the process of nation formation. It thus provides a cultural product of the continuum of history that cues pre-colonial history, is recorded in the present in its production archives, and marks unfolding history.

As one of a set of key cultural artefacts, language, especially, was found to hold salience indicative of GTv’s role in national cohesion. GTv employs multiple languages, a marginal percentage of which are local indigenous languages. However, the significance of the use of six local languages as a means of development communication was found to be inadequate. The data indicated that far greater use is made of English than any other language. The limited social significance of English has already been analysed in the previous chapter. However, it is important to reiterate the social significance of the high percentage of English-based communication as its use, as a language, is a suggestive cue of social elitism (Boateng 1978; Falola 2004). It therefore indicates the fundamental separation between social classes, and militates against the intention for GTv to serve as a wholly national

socio-cultural platform. The limited use of local languages on GTv means that the largely semi-literate audiences, that form the majority of the nation, will naturally gravitate towards the few segments of programmes broadcast in local languages where textual and ideological access will be easier, and to popular entertainment programmes which offer more opportunities for audience-originated meaning construction and fewer barriers to ‘sense-making’ (Barker 1997; Baran and Davis 2000). It, thus, offers less opportunity wide social participation and sharing in the televisual experience across all demographics in the almost 80% of programming that utilises the English language and singularly, is the most militating factor against the achievement of a universally accessible public media platform.

The marginal airtime allotment for indigenous language use also means that GTv is working in resistance to the natural language culture in what is essentially a multilingual society (Fardon and Furniss 2000). The narrow approach also resists the evolution of Ghanaian society because it does not mirror the natural employment of multilingualism in most of the population (Laitin 1992; Heine and Nurse 2000), and the favourability of multilingualism as a strategic tool in promoting broadcast content access (Salawu 2006).

To the extent that the Akan language has a marginal ascendancy over other languages, however, is more the consequence of giving access to out-house producers whose popular entertainment programmes are more in tune with a social reality<sup>48</sup>; the growth of ‘Akanisation’ in most aspects of Ghanaian culture (Gifford 2004). Thus, a multiplicity of ‘new’ and diverse cultures are being created with similarities to *Akan* traditions and *Akan* assimilation could be creating new culture-hybrids. As a national institution GTv could be seeking to avoid a direct association with the promotion of any one culture or linguistic group. It therefore needs to invest more resources in creating a fairer language policy operation.

Thus, the notion that offering programmes in a default lingua franca, only taught through the formal education system, would offer content messages to the broad mass without unambiguity is to ignore that the vast majority of the nation only has passable

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<sup>48</sup> See also Table 3 on pg. 150

acquaintance with the language, and also ignores the fact that the mass society operates a broad array of that is evolving through on-going socio-economic circumstances (Boateng 1978; Falola 2004).

## **Agency**

The data further showed that creativity and production control processes in the television production department – which is responsible for non-News productions – are based on a set of routines that are the result of socialization into the production work group; a set of sanctions and rewards that form part of attitudinal acquisition of ‘apprenticeship’ during the in-house socialisation of producer-directors. These work routines are documented in stages that require sign-off for production ideas and logistics from line-managing staff. However, there is a largely unwritten part that is culturally constructed and is acquired from learning to ‘know’ (X4; X1) what ideas and products are permissible. This socialization process produces a “trust” (X1) relationship between senior and junior production staff. Trust is the foundation for gaining responsibility in the production department, and the foundation for the working group’s social capital. It is also partly the result of mastering the organizational ‘house-style’ and editorial ‘culture’ on the technical accuracy and aesthetic quality of content production. Producers who earn trust may also earn a degree of autonomous authority, which simply means that their productions may not go through the normally instituted production control mechanism – the ‘preview committee’. Prior to gaining such authoritative freedom, key decisions are consulted with and taken by Executive Producers and Chief Controllers of Programmes.

Within the Television Production department, ‘trust’ and other socialization factors produce social capital that enables the department to function to meet objectives despite departmental difficulties with logistics and funding (X4, X8). That level of social capital, and the social networks embedded in it, did not extend to other departments with which Production should work; especially, the Commercial and Audience Research departments. These departments were seen to be responsible for some challenges to the producer’s work. Trust therefore allows the department and its producers to get things done – doing productions without engaging with the politics in the State or government, with vested interests, could be seen to be challenged. It is

this 'avoidance' factor that, singularly, presents the most challenge to GTv's ability to meet the benchmark requirements of a true public service broadcaster:

The first constraint is a proscription on productions and creativity caused by fear and mistrust of political power, that has historically demonstrated a willingness to curb media freedom, has created a 'culture of silence' (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998) on socio-political debate in GTv productions. The culture of silence responds to the organizational need for 'self-preservation' (Asante 1996); keeping jobs (X7) and the existence of the organization as a social entity, rather than focusing on the delivery of a nationally valued public broadcasting service. Respondents saw management as the gatekeeper that tacitly censors production content on behalf of government; the relay that represents the wishes of government in keeping productions in line with government agenda in a country that is very much steeped in political traditions and faction-polarisation of socio-political events. GTv has institutionalized, through socialization and practice, control mechanisms intended as a firewall against incendiary content that may damage the relationship between GBC and government. It is a relationship that is an evolution, within the current constitutional democracy, from a previously coercive relationship into one based on apprehension and uncertainty (X8), but which still works, as before, to align GTv with government. GTv, as a public media institution, therefore finds itself unable to occupy a central, mediation, role between government and society. The private media is, however, able to express the full extent of the judicially guaranteed freedom of the press, while GBC and GTv remain muzzled and undermined in institutional capacity. Trained staff, therefore, have left for the private sector in order to better realise their professional potential (X8).

That relationship between GBC and government is therefore undermining the public broadcaster's social role and relevance. Its lack of involvement in socio-political debates, juxtaposed to the performance of private commercial media means that the latter are filling the gap in the socio-political and developmental debates within public interest, and it is these stations that are dictating the forms of debates in the public sphere. This situation erodes the industrial leadership and national role of the public service broadcaster. Hence, the public only expect GTv to only produce content that

‘tows the government line’ (X4), and therefore use GBC News, more likely, as an indicator of tensions in the political status quo.

On the other hand, GTv’s entertainment programmes also appeal to audiences for whom they provide another socializing function; their conservative values reiterate dominant social notions and a sense of Ghanaian culture and conduct (X2, X3, X5 and X7) and confirm GTv’s social performativity role in social identity choices and association (Noelle-Neumann 1981; Kellner 1995).

The value of *plurality*, which is noted to be the presentation of equivocally diverse views on national issues (Banerjee and Seneviratne 2005), in order to create a free public sphere, is undermined. The public service broadcaster is charged with representing a balanced and fair opportunity for diverse voices to enable the full representation of the public interest through the broadcaster (Appendices 3). However, the data shows that the State has greater salience in the operational translation of service provision. Respondents indicated that government and political influence plays an important part in the functioning of GTv (X3, X5, X7, and X8). This salience makes it difficult for producers to do work that may be seen as unfavourable to government, and limits the level of political plurality that would otherwise be possible. Respondents stated an outright avoidance of political issues in programme in order to avoid confrontations and fall-outs that would “create havoc” (X4, X1).

This limited plurality is therefore partly the result of an infringement on the *independence* of GBC by government, and is also linked to a history of media suppression by previous political regimes. Respondent perceptions of the influence of political power is thus seen to be a product of post-colonial history and contributes to the perpetuation of a ‘culture of silence’ and co-operation with governments which use the GBC as a mouthpiece. Self-censorship was thus observed to be practiced at the ideation stage of programme-making, when producers avoid some subject areas, as well as at the editing and proofing stage, where a culture of ‘trust’ works to produce productions that reinforce the culture of silence.



On the other hand, broadcast plurality is not limited to ensuring political diversity. The level of out-house productions measured in the data was about fifty-percent of airtime; X5 had estimated this at between sixty to forty percent, in favour of out-house productions. The data therefore confirmed an assumption that GTv was broadcasting more out-house content than it produced. However, the bulk of this was in filmed entertainment and Christian Teaching. Christian religious teachings outweigh all other religious programming by more than a factor of ten. Islamic programmes are done by GTv, while Christian programmes are out-house productions funded by church organisations. There is thus an over-representation of the Christian voice, even though it is largest religious identity in the nation, and does not reflect the fairness criteria in the statute establishing GBC as a public corporation. A strategic and rationalised approach to balance the representations of differing religious opinion and teaching is, therefore, required as a matter of policy from GTv.

Most programmes on air do not interact with the general populace, and do not center public participation at the core of programmes. Some programmes use studio audiences, expert panels and phone-ins to discuss issues; however these programmes focus mainly on economic and social hygiene or feminine gender-specific issues. Thus the diversity of opinion; the plurality of voices representing different views in programmes made by Television Production department, which produces the bulk of in-house productions, is limited. This means there is a failure to champion the public interest in programming decisions, and results in a dislocation of the citizen's voices from the core of GTv's broadcasting. That dislocation is also the result of a lack of ability to conduct audience research that could facilitate programme-making decisions with a genuine polling of public opinion. Such data would be useful for the development of content directions for specific programmes, genres and the overall constitution of programme types on air. It also impacts the ability of producers to create more elaborate productions, and to allow greater participation from diverse groups and talents from within the national community.

The situation is primarily due to the failure of GTv to generate enough revenue to fund its operations from its mixed funding model. GTv is unable to sufficiently fund its production requirements (X4, X8, X7, X6), and thus cannot fund regular research exercises. The lack of funds has led to an increasing reliance on out-house producers

to both purchase airtime and provide programming. Low funding was also seen to cause some producers to rely on the ‘generosity’ (X4) of some social groups and persons who, having the financial capacity to partly fund production activities, have annexed some productions and could be directly contributing to the reduction in plurality and diversity within programmes. That specific factor underlies has resulted in the opportunity for a minority in the Christian population to become over-represented on a national media platform to the detriment of other groups in the society, contributing to a mediation of a hegemonic ‘Christianisation’ of the national public sphere which does not reflect the dominant national social structure in its religious structure (Shanahan and Jones in Demers and Viswanath 1999), neither does it reflect what could be conceived as a dominant social point of view (Burgoon, Dillard et al. 1983). GTv, therefore, fails to fulfil the requirements of its remit (Appendices 2) and the ethos of the national media policy (Appendices 3), to providing a public service medium that does not over-represent sections or factions in the nation-state.

Thus, the ‘agency’ of GTv needs to be re-situated in a comprehensive set of procedures and production attitudes that allows it to exert control over the social outcomes of broadcast content and determine the purposive intent of all programmes; understanding that not all programmes will be interpreted or received as producers may intend. Such procedures and production attitudes therefore need to be founded on a communication mode that allows broadcast to play a mediation role within a cultural communication context that is interactive with the public sphere. Producers need to understand that mediation for social development does not happen by assumption of institutional relevance when, in reality, the content of programming is determined from outside direct engagement with the public interest. It is in striking a balance in the centrality of mediation between the public and ‘official voices’ that a functional representation of ‘the public’ can be resolved, leading to an establishment of credibility and therefore institutional relevance to society.

## **Social Development**

Thus, how does a medium that is, in its core social affectation aspects, not in tandem with public interests perform in the facilitation of social development, considering the

disengagement from the public interest between the producer, as messenger, and the audience, as receivers (Umberto Eco in Alvarado, Buscombe et al. 1993)? This tension is especially salient if social discourses are in subjects other than what the government's development communication agenda intends to achieve through public broadcasting (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari 1998; Garnham 2000; Harriss 2002; Gifford 2004; Burton 2005; Gocking 2005; Hastings 2005).

The data showed that Christian Teaching and the News; together forming about 21% of the broadcast sample, dominate education and information type programmes on GTv. In addition Learning and Factual contributed 5.86% and 17.90%, respectively. Thus, a third of broadcast sampled, adding Christian Teaching, News and Factual data, present hegemonic and potentially subverted content, leaving the minimal contribution of formal and informal learning in the Learning genre to represent potentially bias-free content. The levels of public participation in these genres are, arguably, minimal as the programme events recorded with these genres all presented no opportunities for public participation.

Respondents held the view that television could have a direct effect on social development and social consciousness. This was the dominant ideology informing the core of creative ideas for production of producers, who, therefore, considered their role to be important for social development communication. This observes a continuation of the 'dominant paradigm' notion that formed the basis of development communication thinking during the 1960's, at the time of GTv's creation, which suggested the power of broadcasting communication could lend a 'hypodermic' impetus to development. This view of communication was found to still form the basis of socialisation into producing work at GTv. Respondents particularly related to the 'nationalist' project intentions relating to the establishment of GBC as a public broadcaster: social cohesion and national social development. Respondents saw a direct fit between these concepts and key programmes such as *Adult Education* and the News in local languages.

However, the data findings and analysis suggest strongly that GTv has a minimal content output that is directly salient to enabling aspirations, knowledge and skills acquisition, or the creation of a public sphere for social debate. Social development

facilitation intentions would require for all these factors to be present in the structural processes of content creation and programme participation. Its outcomes should also be represented in measurable evidences of public satisfaction and dependence of GTv as a source of development communication programming.

### **Conscientization, Consciencism and Social Praxis**

In the given that ‘participatory’ approaches to development communication would offer more opportunities for the community voice to determine the content of educational programming (Mefalopulos and World Bank 2008; Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009), what does the data suggest to be GTv’s contribution to evolving a public sphere that is engaged with social development?

Applying the notion of Freirean ‘conscientization’, understood as “education is a cultural act” (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997, pg. 23) to the levels of public participation, and education and information facets in the data suggests that GTv has some programmes that genuinely provide a ‘collectivist’, dialogical, education to both participants and audiences, when the audience are deemed to be represented by their peers involved in programme participation. An exemplar programme was *Mmaa Nkommo* (Women’s Conversation), and local language dramas, assuming they are typically imbued with a participatory logic due to utilizing talent from within the community who contribute to producer’s decisions in fashioning the messages and cultural codes in programmes, and are noted to be a site for social values education, that are based on modern African values. These programmes can be presumed to inform ‘praxis’ as they are both popular and informed by community beliefs and contemporarily resolved notions of social realities. These programmes are therefore important for not only socialization but for social development as they meet the threshold criteria of mediation, expert facilitation, public participation and are instructive as well as dialectical. Such programmes are important in providing cues to a social ‘conscientization’ process in also connecting to the logic of “philosophical consciencism” (Nkrumah 1964) offering opportunities for the expression of the contemporary ideologies that form the underpinnings of the modern Ghanaian society; they reflect contemporary values from the sections of society that are represented,

even though such representations may be more likely to be from within dominant social groups and likely to represent hegemonies.

However, it also means that the vast majority of programmes do not effectively contribute to social development through dialogical formatting; when participation, language use and content ideation, usually derived from producers' instincts or narrow research methods and further mitigated by a socially non-representative organizational production culture, are considered all together. This is the gap that presents a challenge in institutional relevance for the social role of GTv, and needs assessing and validation to reconnect the organization to society.

If *mediation* is understood to be the conductivity of a media system's messaging relationship with its society, then there are key elements that need to be assessed in terms of GTv's affection and contribution to Ghanaian society. GTv was shown to be engaged in a "paternalistic" mode of development communication (Frank Gerace and Hernando Lazaro in Dagron and Tufte 2006, pg. 64). The importance of Freire's "conscientization" is in the collective and dialogical communication of mediation as an aid to the public sphere engagement of citizens. GTv therefore needs to integrate development work, which refers to its productions in social education and information genres, with community-level actors (McPhail 2009) to assert a more inclusive and socially relevant role in social development. A closer interconnection of culture and a changing of the communication mode, as well as the significance of language and symbolic communication would be necessary to communicate effectively to the public. Since development is directional, retrogressive or progressive, mediating goals and aspirations in concert with social relationships (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1997; Wilkins 2000) are fundamental to social change through creating a more affective social agency role. The social relationships implied are those embedded within the social capital (Grootaert and Bastelaer 2002; Castiglione, Deth et al. 2008) and human capital factors within communities. Social capital can be aided by fostering a socially collaborative and cohesive public sphere in which goals can be identified. GTv's mediation should also recognise the importance of power relationships (Grootaert and Bastelaer 2002) in social decision-making processes; class and status distinctions are important to the functioning of social structures, and it

is in the harmony of relationships between social structures that effective collaboration can occur.

The facilitation should also recognise that human capital can be enhanced by identifying and filling knowledge gaps within the communities that limit their ability to perform. Thus, working jointly with the public in identifying and crafting knowledge teaching material that fits into a community's cultural contexts – such as using language and metaphoric symbols that fit in various Ghanaian milieux would enhance organizational agency. Gocking (2005) also wrote about the integration of symbolism and its centrality to Ghanaian life. These are communication concepts that ought to be central to programme-making as it affords a replication of cues that are socially evident and relevant. Also within the national context, the milieu is inhabited by many distinct groups, which must be “disaggregated” for effective communication targeting. Thus, a strategic operation that centres on the public interest would produce a much more *diverse* array of programmes in the schedule to a disaggregated audience, based on social demographics and programming interests from the audience point of view. Disaggregated groups will also be in different cultural and language settings and this necessitates the development of a culture-matching matrix for similar groups to be matched to specifically targeted content, with communication access provision characteristics that align to the cultural forms of these ‘media communities’ to avoid the ‘scatter-shot’ approach of a universal targeting.

It thus, also becomes necessary for GTv, and the NMC, to develop a broadcasting operations policy that reflects the historical context of Ghanaian cultures; the traditions of the people who use its services, as well as the contemporary public institutions that are changing the ways of interaction of people within contemporary Ghana; judicial, economic and political (Hooghe and Stolle 2003) in enabling a crafting of content that properly reflects cultural transformations in the modern state. This would better reflect changes from the old communal, village-centred, small-group interaction to an increasingly media-fed and urbanised community in which social distances are increased as more and more people migrate into non-native spaces that remove them from older social networks that were essential to pre-existing structures of social capital. Thus by providing socially relevant forms of mediation

new structures can be created through mediation to rebuild the social capital necessary for development.

John Harriss (2002) argues that there are analytical failings in the arguments of Putnam's version of social capital as the key to development, and criticizes the World Bank for latching onto impecuniousness in the concept to explain the lack of development in developing countries. However this thesis considers that the impreciseness of the theory is not a failing; communities that "trust" in the mutual benefits of a development objective would work together, given the right impetus and ability to accomplish goals, therefore social capital theory is relevant in helping to formulate communicative strategies that bind people together in a community in which they see mutual benefit. The idea of social capital is reflected in understandings of collectivism or communalism that is inherent in African societies. The lack of progress in such societies may have more to do with historical disruptions that occur in all societies and provide impetus for changing social forms and making social change; colonialism was such a disruption, and military interventions and poor governance have also been disruptive (Haferkamp and Smelser; Gocking), and thus Harriss is correct in identifying history as causative to development, or the lack of it.

Also, as Navarro (2002) counters, the evidence of the 'capital' claims of the theory is much harder to prove. Governments, in the development project geared towards socio-economic emancipation, have through most of the post-independence years enlisted GTv in development communication following the prescriptions of the 'dominant paradigm' (Schramm 1964) and Nkrumah's 'philosophical consciencism' (Nkrumah 1964) before that. GTv has produced programmes to inform and educate the nation, yet its per capita output steadily declined for many years till much recently, at the beginning of the present decade when oil production improved the national budget balance sheet.

Thus, the 'participatory paradigm' of development communication (Midgley 1986; Madzingira 2001; Dagron and Tufte 2006; Sparks 2007; McPhail 2009) may evoke a sense of rightness in suggesting that development should be based on grassroots goal-setting. However, development goals are, necessarily, different at local and regional levels, although there may be an over-lap. Mediation of goals and consensus building

in order to satisfy the needs of the national public on matters that affect all in society therefore becomes the test for the national media platform – its ability to facilitate the national discussion of ‘ends and means’ is vital to cohesion and consensus building for development. In this area, GTv fails to deliver the promise of social change through media use for two major reasons. In the first, this is because it still relies on a ‘hypodermic’, and thus, unidirectional mode of communication, and secondly, because its close affiliations to all government have eroded any credibility it may have had in terms of providing an opinion mediation function in the public sphere that puts the ‘public interest’ at the core of its communication functions (Gifford 2004). And taken alongside its affiliations with governments, it would have lost credibility as to the integrity of its programming agenda as this would be seen as products of the socio-economic policies of existing governments; where that credibility would be intact would be with programmes known to be unrelated to government agenda, hence the popularity of its local dramas such as *Obra* and *Cantata*, which are entertainment and are likely to be seen as being un-subverted for nationalist causes.

Furthermore, GTv, in practice, caters specifically to a family audience; programmes for youth and children being as much *family-friendly* as others. It assumes that the audience is primarily interested in entertainment (X7), but believes that a public broadcasting service should attach more salience to information and education programmes in the effort to play a role in the development aspirations of the nation. The low discrimination in programme targeting, and the high emphasis on educational content in programming (X7) assumes a homogenous national population and culture (Shanahan and Jones in Demers and Viswanath 1999), differentiated only by tribal languages, and hence justifying the high usage of English and *Akan* as bridging languages. It has also led to the construction of the public as a recipient, universal, mass for which an essentially ‘hypodermic’ public education service is being provided in order to aid a development process. Programming therefore may be overlooking contemporary development communication techniques and utilization of programme formats that blend information, education and entertainment in ways that the audience would find more accessible, to produce more diverse forms of television genres suitable to the audience (Lunt 2009). Considering the absence of strategic guidelines, and structured communication production objectives or measured



outcomes, that could be used to validate or correct the manner of functioning of the media system, it is more likely to be the later logic.

That logic, together with the low participation of the national public in programme-making strengthens the center to periphery mediation and undermines GTv's plurality and diversity; considering also that the station offers limited opportunity of access to its platform, only those who can afford to buy its airtime, or are invited to programmes, are able to participate in the process of making programmes. It therefore fails in the role of being a mediated public sphere-enabling tool.

The criticism of social capital theory as being centred on the suggestion of 'capital', as an intangible social attribute, that is a transmutable to an economically physical phenomenon (Navarro 2002), this thesis would argue, offers a narrow conceptualisation that is not reflected in the theoretical development of 'social capital'. The essence of the concept suggests that it should not be considered merely an economic measurement, as the terminology is constrained to mean. Theoretically, 'capital' is a resource that gives ability to perform at social, economic and political tasks. Thus, changing social structures requires capital – knowledge and consensus, in order to establish and achieve goals. In this way it can be seen that social capital is useful as a theory that seeks to explain the abilities of communities to get things done. All of the criticisms and theoretical positions concede that there are elements of progress to be gained from conceptualising a theoretical foundation that seeks to explore the existence of 'social glue', a culture product, that ties people in a community together to produce mutual benefits in social development. Whatever features are ascribed to it, the dominant ones should include networking, cohesion/togetherness, trust and political will; a motivation that should be embedded in a mechanism to reach consensus. Understanding the ability for people to work together is the thrust of the theory, and thus its usefulness as a perspective to understanding the functional communities. People cannot achieve 'development' together if they do not express a willingness to work together. Such expressions may be intangible – in networks and social trust, or tangible in expressed civic choices and engagements.

Mediation has a place in building and fostering social capital when the defined role of the medium is the creation of a safe public sphere. It is then useful as a social capital

engineering mechanism, in a modern world in which people tend to live, increasingly, disparately; over-taken by consumerism, urbanisation and mediated global cultures, even in the rural districts of a nation like Ghana.

Thus, the essential factor of ‘communication for development’ emerges from understanding the fostering of communal actions towards development; the centrality of plurality and unfettered public sphere actions are relevant. Plurality makes it possible for a media system, such as GTv, to encourage and foster social capital when it creates a safe public sphere within which political power and social segments are enabled to contribute to issues through debate. On the nation-wide stage there must be an ability to truly represent the broad plurality of views and voices. GTv would therefore become a stronger and socially relevant institution when it is able to follow through on facilitating social development by enabling the dialogic opportunities that would make it possible for consensus formation on development objectives and goals. Media technology affords the ability to make such wide consultations possible – moderated phone-ins, moderated online spaces, and in-studio or out-studio programme participation in which the public, whose voice in the public sphere are central to the exchange and debate of ideas necessary for modernist development, is enabled to participate fully. Contributions must be evaluated for their relevance and diversity and not be censored except where they fail value tests for ethical behaviour within the society.

## **Social Control**

The data also showed that producers have ideological beliefs about the socialisation influences of their programmes, assigning to them ‘standards’ of propriety in making sure that content not only reflected best behaviours in speech and conduct, but also correctness in representational values in culture. Thus ideologies of identity are central to programme-making decisions based on reiterating the social values communicated to producers through their social interactions with talent, and as a result of their in-house training; which is based on the values included in the establishing decree of the NLCD 226. As a structural element of society; in aiding the imagination of what is and the way things are, the media play a vital role in social maintenance and disseminate ideological messages based on social conservatism that

are fundamental to stasis and assurance for the mass population in that the messages confirm and reiterate social identities (Kellner 1995; Noelle-Neumann 1981; Barker 1997; Rosengren 1981; Garnham 2000), and the structural maintenance of power relationships in society that serve to convey as sense of 'normalcy' (Gripsrud 2002). In this theoretical trajectory, the data and historical review in the literature shows that GTv, and other state-owned media corporations, has been fundamental to the social maintenance of Ghanaian society, primarily as a result of years of domination of the mediascape. The media messages of state media have been important for ordering society, primarily through their news functions. This explains the large percentages of the News and information genres in the broadcast sample analysed. The historical reliance of the nation on that function has confirmed a vital social role of the corporation in providing assurances of social order and events in which the government, as legitimate power, shows direction and leadership, connecting naturally to the social expectations of authority in the 'cultural imaginations of power and praxis' (Hastings 2005) and normalities (Gripsrud 2000). The structural function is, thus, very much embedded in the production culture of the organisation, which respondents indicate is yet to adjust to its competitive and plural media environment.

Hindman in Demers and Viswanath (1999) suggested that a lack of plurality contributes to the formation of hegemonies, as alternative opinions are excluded from the public sphere, and serve to confirm the status quo and the reproduction of social class structures and stasis. In the case of GTv, the constriction of the public voice can be suggested to be contributory to social stasis; the affirmation of governing legitimacy and public authority through diminution of critical voices in the public sphere forces a state of 'normalcy' in the status quo, resisting opportunities for mediated social change. This may have contributed extensively to the history of social instability, where only those with the coercive power to change the status quo have had the opportunity to make changes to governance and the structures of public authority; the post-independence military and Nkrumah's populist pre-independence social insurgencies inciting the mass population. Thus 'revolution' has been the slogan of governance changes when those changes had resonated with the mass population, especially in the Rawlings eras (Asante 1996). The use of GTv to reflect that voice of legitimacy, especially through the News, in that it focuses on

government activity reportage, may thus suggest a ‘normalcy’ in the social and governing status quo, but may be under-serving society in not allowing a free public sphere to present its concerns and indicate its preference in government and development agenda. Muzzling the public voice and enforcing stasis is in opposition to the tendency of societies to not only change but reform their social structures and objectives in order to naturally grow (Nisbet 1969; Nkrumah 1964).

Opining that modern media’s social agency role is realised through overcoming censorship and control through the use of instant messaging technology, Hindman (*ibid.*) advocates that technology can aid the transformation of conditions of stasis that are contributed by organisational cultures of regulation through subverting those very tendencies to self-regulate. However, developing such a new culture may be much easier for private commercial media, where the sensational ‘quick-to-publish’ cultures are essential for competitive survival. The public broadcasting service must be more adhesive to high standards of reporting in order to build and maintain the social trust that is critical to ensuring its role in maintaining social cohesion, as well as providing industrial leadership.

However, the research data does suggest that beyond stasis in political debate, GTv in allowing its platform to over-represent dominant hegemonies in religion and *Akan* cultural forms is contributing to a formation and redefinition of Ghana society as a largely ‘charismatic’ Christian and *Akan* society that is ‘new’ in terms of the evolution of the character of broadcasting, but also static in that it reflects already established cultural traditions – the changes in the Christian demographics are not changing the ratios of Christians to Moslems, for example. More importantly, it reflects a lack of growth in modernist ideologies about development in a society that naturally is rooted in ‘supernatural’ cause and effect anticipations of social growth, and the agency of authority and patronage as answers to development problems (Assimeng 2007; Hastings 2005).

## **Reforming GTv**

The continuance of the social role of GTv depends very much on its strategic vision for the future, as well as the expectations and aspirations of its producers. The data strongly suggests that the tension between public service broadcasting and commercial operation needs re-balancing to situate the corporation's business model in a paradigm that is less problematic for producers and management, and the summarised views indicate that:

1. Funding for programming needs to be tied to specific types of programmes and genres in which education for development and entertainment exert different values. Producers want the social values in output to be emphasised and properly resourced to enable them realise satisfaction and worth in their work,
2. A repositioning of the organisation's outward image is desired to enable them also to realise a more definitive engagement with the social relevance of the corporation to the nation, and
3. There was an indicative belief in the ability of the organisation to positively affect social change direction in the future when digital terrestrial broadcasting allows the delivery of segmented programming streams on different channels.

Peter Lunt agrees that such modifications would be necessary to respond to changing audience uses and producer approaches to modernising public broadcasting in order to locate the changing pattern of the individual as a media consumer at the core of programming; a response that would create the 'new' genres of programmes that focus on the individual within the mass audience as an active interpreter (Barker, 1997; Baran and Davies, 2003) as opposed to the traditional view of the public as a singular un-segmented audience, and thus creating a more purposive media system (Indrajit Banerjee and Kalinga Seneviratne 2005).

## **Chapter VI: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The analysis of the data makes it possible to draw several conclusions and to make observations about the social roles of television based on contextual history and structural mechanisms of agency. The conclusions that follow consider these issues of context and structure, building on the outcomes of analytical synthesis in the previous chapter. The over-arching conclusion from that discussion is that GTv was shown to have marginal relevance in the process of enabling real social development; it was mostly focused on its role as a communication vehicle for government propaganda despite an assumption by most respondents that it was fulfilling a much wider social agency role in development communication. The contextual problems are discussed below in terms of the antecedents of organisational historicity; considering supportive and structural mechanisms in legal frameworks, and the development of a purposive public service broadcasting ethos that is based on the connections that are common between African ideologies of cultural social democracy that could enable development, social capital, as a social science theory, and media and communication theories. A summative argument is presented to show the interconnectedness of these themes to ‘**producer agency**’, which is the starting point for content creation in aid of social change/social development agency in television production.

### **Tv and the Ghanaian Public Sphere: Historicity and Power**

The first conclusion from the research is that there is a policy weakness in addressing the importance of the national public service broadcaster within the historical development of the media. The national media commission’s policies that apply to GBC recognise its location in the history of media development in Ghana yet fails to acknowledge the implicit social results that are an affectation of this historicity. In a nation that has suffered human rights abuses of media practitioners for decades, and now noted to have grown in free expression within the plurality of media (Heath 2005, Ansu-Kyeremah 1998) as a result of constitutional provisions, mechanisms for the realisation of public media’s freedom is not provided in legal frameworks in a manner that removes susceptibility to political power, and its potential, to threaten from among GTv staff. Respondents’ perception that political agents commanded irreproachable power shows the fundamental limitations to the willingness, and ability, of GBC to exercise and build a public media platform that meets the benchmark values of a true public service broadcaster as discussed in Banerjee and

Seneviratne (2005). Also respondents' perception that political power was a naked, silent, presence was found to be a structural impediment to the functioning of GBC as a 'public', **national**, organisation that answers to the nation and not to its administrators, and that apprehension is transferred to the public through the uncritical culture of production. The consequent social affectation could be distrust for GTv as it may be seen as having been, and continuing as, an extension of the political power that has had a socially dysfunctional relationship over time with the public (Thompson 1995). NMC policy therefore fails in not establishing an external, and public, mechanism for the protection of the 'public trust' for media even though it advocates that the vigilance of the national public is important for such protection and suggests "public accountability" (*ibid.* pg. 25) by the public media to demonstrate their 'public value'. In acknowledging that the vast majority of the public fail to connect with their central role in public media accountability and yet failing to institute a periodic inclusive mechanism, the policy does not do enough to advance the growth of Ghana's media into a socially accountable public sphere.

Thus, a better structural mechanism, for the supervision or exercise of oversight of GBC, is should be provided for in an institution that embodies the plurality of Ghanaian voices. The constitutional provisions for the empanelling of the NMC did not foresee a situation in which a one-party State effectively emerges from a coalescing of ideologically similar political traditions and, thus, does not guarantee an unbiased media commission evolving over time. With five out of fifteen commissioners currently appointed by the Executive and Parliament, there is a proportional prevalence of political appointees on the Board of the NMC and this, perceptually, will militate against the freedom of the NMC itself from political motivations (for a broad discussion see Article 19 2003). The NMC's policy framework acknowledges that the safe-guarding of media freedom lies within civic vigilance among citizens, therefore, it infers that the safety of the nation's media lies where the nation is best represented; in its parliament, as suggested by Principle 35.1 of Article 19's *Access to Airwaves Broadcasting Standards* (Article 19 2003) and traditional power institutions. Appointments to the commission should, thus, be in a manner that reflects the diverse nature of the national polity. Chieftaincy, as represented by the National House of Chiefs, reflects a tradition of stable power, which when joined to a representative Parliamentary sub-committee could produce a

mechanism to balance the representation of social and political plurality in monitoring and supervising the performance of GBC. Ideally, the appointment of Board persons to State-media should also be independent of the Executive, and such a mechanism should instigate a removal of the clause for Presidential approval of such appointments in light of an embedded tendency to perceive heads of State-media as sources of political manipulation.

### ***Legal and Normative Documents***

The second conclusion of the research is that the substantive legislation defining the functions and responsibilities of the GBC are no longer consonant with the current Constitution. The legislation needs Parliamentary amendment to reflect changes in the political climate and rule of law in the country. The National Liberation Council, and all military juntas as outlawed entities, should not have legislative legacy in creating public institutions for a constitutionally ruled State, as this undermines the ethos of republican democracy.

The undermining of plurality and diversity is also created by the absence of documented guidelines to ensure that content is made to standards that reflect exiting law and policies on public broadcasting services. Normative documents need to be created by management to ‘disaggregate’ the national community in relation to tribe, gender, ability, education and learning, as well as other orientations in social life that are consonant with social realities and can be mirrored on television to reflect the character of the nation, as well as its social achievements and progresses. The absence of commissioning and operational guides that are written in to ensure the operational achievement of key features of public broadcasting, as well as the policy quotas for broadcasting standards, into the programme-making process should be a concern to both the NMC and the Board of GBC. The failure to realise this is not only weakening the ability of the GBC to meet a public value test, it perpetuates the ‘culture of silence’ that militates against the development of the nation. Its constituted public sphere is weak in reflecting ‘diverse voices’ and programming lacks a reflection of the true national character of the nation’s social development.



The National Media Policy needs to include an active monitoring provision that enables the commission to judge the degrees of compliance with the policy framework with a view to strengthening the relevance of its provisions and the conformity of media institutions in the country. To the extent that the policy seeks to encourage the growth of media plurality, generally, and diversity within the national public media services, especially in the area of electronic broadcasting, there ought to be such a mechanism requiring, especially, the national public media broadcaster to report its compliance to the policy. This would make it possible for further strategic policy interventions to encourage institutional development in identifying challenges and best practice innovations.

### **An Ideology for Media in Development**

Thirdly, it is also concluded that the purpose of the GBC was to serve as a form of ‘**conscientization**’ tool, based on Nkrumah’s ‘**philosophical consciencism**’ and the inherited traditions of the European public broadcasting model for the social development aspirations of the post-colonial Ghanaian State. There has been a dislocation of that ideological purpose from GBC’s performance through political instability and short-sighted legal provisions that only partly provide for the visionary realisation of the post-colonial aspirations of the nation’s founding fathers, and the emancipatory imagination. Rootedness in traditional social forms such as ‘communalism’ have been a part of the growing culture of media practices at GTv, but have yet to yield results through ‘conscientizing’ the public for development and this has contributed to the inability of the public broadcasting service to advance the **national social development project** through media use. There, therefore, needs to be a concerted and strategic effort to connect communities to development goals by enhancing social and human capital through the use of local languages, and other forms of content access facilitations such as audio translations and sub-titling. This also needs to occur in a greater diversity of programmes in development communication with an understanding of the contribution of ‘active audiences’ to content co-creation or ‘meaning-making’, as well as the centrality of television viewing within communities, and the importance of facilitating idea exchange in order to grow culture and enable social progress.

It needs to be understood that ‘**communalism**’, ‘**conscientization**’, ‘**consciencism**’ and the public service ethos of ‘education, information and entertainment’ are ideological constructs that proceed from a socialist worldview, striving for an egalitarian ideal that equips the mass society through televisual content values. However, these ideologies are now in tension with the neo-liberal context of social development and the progression of Ghana’s contemporary society towards Western social formations that are more individualist, competitive and consumerist. While the basic forms of traditional society still exists in fraternal small groups, clans and tribes, the dispersion of the population through modern economics and aspiration brings tensions into conceptualising discrete ethnic or tribal formations. Thus, GTv needs to respond by changing its foundational principles to fit in an environment where programme popularity is a lynchpin to ‘getting ahead’ and being relevant; public television must now reflect the different ‘public interests’ that exist in the national society and that also reflect growths in **modernity** and *ideological differences*. It must do so in order to better provide a socially relevant service; not continuing in the assumptive positions of its paternalist approach to programming. Programming on the basis of ‘popularity’ does not suggest ‘going commercial’ and succumbing to commercialism. It is in developing an approach that factors both mass-appeal programming, and the need to compete for advertising sources of revenue, with making programmes for social minorities and niche interests. The test for all programming should always be a justified connection to public service values:

Such reforms must always be guided by the principle that a public broadcaster works for the community, and thus belongs to the whole rather than a few interests – advertisers/sponsors, government or social elites and organisations. In doing so, notions such as plurality, diversity, universality and independence contribute to enhancing both human and social capital and facilitating the continuous growth of emancipation through the exchange of ideas and shared ideals in public sphere discourse.

## **General Conclusions**

Within the post-colonial worldview of social changes, the results of this study show wider implications for social development:

Firstly, the social role of public broadcasting was found to have perceptual salience to national development, as a social development construct. That salience, however, appears to be more determined by sentimental values and political ideologies than as a result of the application of tested communication, media and economic theories.

Secondly, the salience of such public broadcasting institutions is in their connections to national histories; their developmental history is in tandem with national histories and thus contributes to their sentimental salience, which can have the effect of overstating their economic purpose. More, importantly, they can provide a record of political history that may not be achievable by private media. Also, as social signifiers, national public media are symbolic institutions of nationhood, like a national flag; Cox (2007), for example, argues, concerning ethnosymbolist ideas of nationalism, that nationalism is a sentiment that produces social institutions and cultures through which are manifested the collective empathies of the nation.

Lastly, the increasing capacity of **post-colonial** public media for institutional agency indicates growth and changes in modernity and social governance. As a microcosm of society, such post-colonial public media institutions more intensely reflect changes in politics and culture. The perceptions of staff influence their actions within the organisation and indicate the extent of liberalisation, modernity and political change within the nation. Hyden, Leslie et al. (2003) suggest that media development has been critical in shaping the growth of political modernisation in Africa. Thus, as GBC evolves and develops stronger institutional structures and processes for achieving its remit, reflecting society and acting as a social agent, it will be a signification of evolving social development and social change in Ghana.

## **Further Research**

The research exposes a gap in understandings about social ideologies within television content and the historical underpinnings of the practices of public broadcasting in a post-colonial country such as Ghana. In as much as the attempt has been made to provide an academic contribution to communication and media

research, in terms of understanding the structural underpinning of a post-colonial heritage industry, it also shows the gap identified by Hyden, Leslie et al. (2003) as existing in the literatures that focus on understanding the role and structures of the media industry between post-colonial and transitional countries and the developed West. There is no doubt that there have been transformations in both practice and ideas regarding the making of 'the message' in television content between these two geographical and social spheres. The result can only be that different programmes have different impacts on different societies, and programming also reflects, in differing ways, the salient aspects of these globally disparate societies. Thus, while cultural theory accepts the importance of local cultural factors in theory building, more general theory has often over-looked these considerations and assumed that Western-based research is applicable in generality to the rest of the world.

The African Media Development Initiative (BBC World Service Trust 2006), and the African Broadcasting Policy (Article 19 2003), are indicative of the attempts to close this gap in understanding the mechanics that are important for new theory-building. There, however, needs to be further research, similar to this thesis, to deepen understanding about the contributions that programme-making, production systems and specific programmes make to perceptions of the broadcasting media. Such research is needed to understand audience perceptions of institutional roles and the social functions of specific programmes, as well as to understand developments in internal cultures. There is also a need to understand these developments in relation to changes in social attitudes. This would facilitate cross-discipline understandings between media and communication theories and social anthropology in efforts to better understand social changes as they occur with developments and growth in the media.

Again, there is a need to close the research gap with regards to understanding the role of the audience and patterns of media consumption within both the social and individual use contexts. With a fifty-percent urban population and large tracts of agrarian populations segmented into small villages and townships across Ghana, the transference of modernity ideas and cultures in message negotiation that are the result of demographic differences should be important for informing programming in development communication.

Another aspect for further research, and theory-building, would be to improve the framework for understanding *modernity representations* in televisual content in relation to theories about culture transmission, industry organisation and regulation, as well as media nationalism and mediated social development. This would extend the envelope of the theoretical field by including work on the suggestive effects of the ideological transmission of 'what modernity looks like', especially to developing societies with aspirational objectives.

### **Mediating Social Change in the Post-Colonial Context**

The socio-political context of post-colonial nation-states is often one that exhibits political tensions between factions of political power. While coercive power, through military regimes, had also contributed greatly to the structures of government for many decades, there are changes in many of these states, and they have progressively adopted Constitutions and varying forms of democratic governance. This has often been in the hands of the social elites who inherited the politics and governance methods of colonial powers and the post-independence traditions of political ideology (Falola 2004; Fanon 1963). In many of these states, there are also contestations for power between elite groups, and between elites and lower social groups. The result of these tensions have been most evidenced over the last two decades in parts of Africa, and the Middle East in recent times. Most importantly there are, in many of these states, national Constitutions that guarantee press freedoms, that make it possible for public media and their media personnel to function within some protective legal frameworks, and other human rights.

Ultimately, the thrust of media freedom is to guarantee protection of what is in the public interest. The public interest is, in ideal, constructed as the enablement of citizens to participate fully in their nation's "political economy", as well as in its ordinary social topics and consumerist gratifications; and these can be realised when facilitated by access to information, education and entertainment through the media (McCauley, Peterson et al 2003, pg. xix).

Thus, what results as values and representation of modernity and modernisation in television, is an embedding of cultural ideologies and representations of modernisms in televisual content through the agency of the television producer. The role of the producer is to command and control, to persuade and to determine what becomes content (Ettema and Whitney 1982). The challenge for the producer, therefore, is to realise their role within the constraints that are imposed by limited resources and organisational imperatives that proscribe what is possible to do.

It is the outcomes of the producer's work that define the social role and agency of the public television service. Thus, the agency of the organisation rests on the agency of the producer. Consequently, the validity of outcomes of agency depend on the degree to which broadcast programming is based on knowledge of the public interest. In order for such public interest claims to be valid, they must be founded on well-researched constructions of social realities; which are authentic not only in scientific constructions of fact, but in measurements of perceptions of truths among the public.

This therefore means that the public's participation in the production process is critical to establishing a basis for validating the public service broadcaster's work. Through such participation, the plurality and diversity of public interests can be included in broadcast programmes (Shanahan and Morgan in Demers and Viswanath 1999). However, the producer must recognise that hegemonies are present in socialised worldviews, and it is the inclusion of the various social realities of social segments, among the public, that would constitute a facilitation of the public sphere in media. While hegemonic values and voices are represented within the public sphere, the agency of the producer is also to ensure a fair and balanced representation of all views (as required in Ghana's Media Policy and the NLCD 226) and, thus, facilitating balanced social debate is critical to facilitating the public sphere and the kind of development communication that is possible by the communication processes of television.

The producer must also realise that development communication is dependent on their understanding of the communication processes that occur through television use, and should therefore create programmes within appropriate cultural frameworks of representation – language, symbols, etc. This is needed to facilitate understanding or

meaning-making, between viewer and programme, necessary for social discussions to occur within cultural contexts of appropriation that can result in ‘conscientization’ (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1998; Barker 1997). Also, producers need to understand that television does not instantly imbue knowledge in citizens, but could facilitate a cultivation of understandings and values which are filtered by belief systems and experiences (Gripsrud 2002). Hence, modernisation, constructed as national social development is a functional result of indeterminate communication processes in which the media, and television especially, may not be able to provide opportunity for catalysis.

However, the extent of a producer’s agency is a function of their ideological pursuits and institutional ability to provide a supportive mechanism for the producer’s work. Thus, Constitutional provisions, legal structures and media policies, remain the underpinning supportive mechanism for making the public interest representation within the public sphere possible, where a media system forms the basis of the public sphere. Thus, there is a continuum of progress and facilitation for social development through development communication in a publicly-owned media system: Constitutions must provide for the freedom of expression in media, and such provisions must provide safety to the media organisation, and hence to the producer, who in return must act in respect to serving the public interest, equitably, and in respect of development objectives represented within the interests that are represented in the public sphere.

Thus, producers are the functional points for development communication and it is their competence, knowledge and understanding of their social environment, as well as their ability to resist hegemonies and media cultures of production, that is salient to ensuring that efforts towards social development are representative of the public will.

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# **APPENDICES**

# **APPENDICES 1:**

## **CHAPTER 12 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

## **CHAPTER TWELVE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE MEDIA**

162.

(1) Freedom and independence of the media are hereby guaranteed.

(2) Subject to this Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana.

(3) There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a licence as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information.

(4) Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media shall not be subject to control or interference by Government, nor shall they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions and views, or the content of their publications.

(5) All agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana.

(6) Any medium for the dissemination of information to the public which publishes a statement about or against any person shall be obliged to publish a rejoinder, if any, from the person in respect of whom the publication was made.

163.

All state-owned media shall afford fair opportunities and facilities for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

164.

The provisions of articles 162 and 163 of this Constitution are subject to laws that are reasonably required in the interest of national security, public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons.

165.

For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of this Chapter shall not be taken to limit the enjoyment of any of the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed under Chapter 5 of this Constitution.

166.

(1) There shall be established by Act of Parliament within six months after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of this Constitution, a National Media Commission which shall consist of fifteen members as follows -

- (a) one representative each nominated by
  - (i) the Ghana Bar Association;
  - (ii) the Publishers and Owners of the Private Press;
  - (iii) the Ghana Association of Writers and the Ghana Library Association;
  - (iv) the Christian group (the National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council, and the Ghana Pentecostal Council)
  - (v) the Federation of Muslim Councils and Ahmadiyya Mission;
  - (vi) the training institutions of journalists and communicators;
  - (vii) the Ghana Advertising Association and the Institute of Public Relations of Ghana; and
  - (viii) the Ghana National Association of Teachers;
- (b) two representatives nominated by the Ghana Journalists Association;
- (c) two persons appointed by the President; and
- (d) three persons nominated by Parliament.

(2) The Commission shall elect its own Chairman.

167.

The functions of the National Media Commission are-

- (a) to promote and ensure the freedom and independence of the media for mass communication or information;
- (b) to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media;
- (c) to insulate the state-owned media from governmental control;
- (d) to make regulations by constitutional instrument for the registration of newspapers and other publications, except that the regulations shall not provide for the exercise of any direction or control over the professional functions of a person engaged in the production of newspapers or other means of mass communication; and
- (e) to perform such other functions as may be prescribed by law

not inconsistent with this Constitution.

168.

The Commission shall appoint the chairmen and other members of the governing bodies of public corporations managing the state -owned media in consultation with the President.

169.

Editors of the state-owned media shall be appointed by the governing bodies of the respective corporations in consultation with the Public Services Commission.

170.

The Commission shall appoint the officers and other employees of the Commission in consultation with the Public Services Commission.

171.

The administrative expenses of the National Media Commission, including salaries, allowances and pensions payable to or in respect of persons serving with the Commission shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund.

172.

Except as otherwise provided by this Constitution or by any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, the National Media Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority in the performance of its functions.

173.

Subject to article 167 of this Constitution, the National Media Commission shall not exercise any control or direction over the professional functions of a person engaged in the production of newspapers or other means of communication.

## **APPENDICES 2:**

**GHANA BROADCASTING CORPORATION DECREE**

**1968 (NLCD 226)**

## **Section 1 - Establishment of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation.**

- (1) There is hereby established a body corporate to be known as the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, in this Decree referred to as "the Corporation".
- (2) The Corporation shall have perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in the name assigned to it by sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.
- (3) The Corporation shall have power, for the discharge of any of its functions, to acquire and hold any movable or immovable property and to dispose of such property, and to enter into any contract or other transaction.
- (4) Where there is any hindrance to the acquisition of any property under sub-paragraph (3) of this paragraph, the property may be acquired for the Corporation under the State Property and Contracts Act, 1960 (CA 6) or as the case may be, under the State Lands Act, 1962 (Act 125), and each such Act shall, as the case may be, apply with respect to any such acquisition with such modifications as may be necessary to provide for the vesting of the property acquired thereunder in the Corporation and for the cost of acquisition to be defrayed by the Corporation.

## **Section 2-Objects of the Corporation.**

- (1) The objects of the Corporation shall be—
  - (a) to undertake Sound, Commercial and Television broadcasts;
  - (b) to prepare in the field of culture, education, information and entertainment programmes reflecting National progress and aspirations;
  - (c) to broadcast the programmes prepared under sub-paragraph (b) in the main Ghanaian languages and in English and such other foreign languages as the Corporation may determine;
  - (d) to carry on an external service of sound broadcasting;
  - (e) to enter into agreement for the utilisation of programmes prepared in other countries; and
  - (f) to carry on such other activities as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of all or any of the foregoing.
- (2) Without prejudice to the general effect of sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph, the Corporation shall have power to carry out all or any of the following activities:—
  - (a) to erect, maintain and operate transmitting and receiving stations;
  - (b) to install and operate wired broadcasting services;



- (c) to enter into arrangements for the purpose of obtaining rights, privileges and concessions;
- (d) to produce, manufacture, purchase or otherwise acquire films, television, gramophone and other mechanical or electronic records, and materials and apparatus associated therewith, and to use them in connection with the broadcast services;
- (e) to provide to and to receive from other corporations and persons matter to be broadcast;
- (f) to organise, provide and subsidise public entertainment for the purpose of broadcasting;
- (g) to collect news and information in any manner that the Corporation deems fit in any part of the world and to subscribe to news agencies and services;
- (h) to acquire copyrights;
- (i) to publish printed matter that may be conducive to the discharge of any of the functions of the Corporation;
- (j) to do such other things conducive to attaining the objects of the Corporation including the provision of facilities for training and education for the purpose of advancing the skill of persons employed by the Corporation and the carrying out of research to improve the efficiency of the equipment of the Corporation and the manner in which that equipment is operated.

### **Section 3-The Board.**

- (1) The governing body of the Corporation shall be a Board.
- (2) The Board shall consist of—
  - (a) a Chairman;
  - (b) the Director-General of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation referred to in paragraph 6 of this Decree; and
  - (c) eight other members.
- (3) The Chairman and the other members of the Board to be appointed under sub-paragraph (2) (c) of this paragraph shall be appointed by the National Liberation Council on the recommendations of the Commissioner and shall hold office for a period of two years:

Provided that of the first members to be appointed under sub-paragraph (2)(c) of this paragraph four shall hold office for one year and such period shall be specified in their instruments of appointment.

- (4) Persons to be appointed Chairman of the Corporation or as members of the Board

under sub-paragraph (2)(c) of this paragraph shall be persons who have recognised public standing in the community or persons who have had experience in and shown capacity in any of the following fields of endeavour that is to say:— industry, trade, finance, science, administration, education, public entertainment, social service, journalism, broadcasting and law.

(5) No person shall be qualified to be a member of the Board—

(a) if he has been sentenced to death or to a term of imprisonment exceeding twelve months without option of a fine or has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty and has not, in each case been granted a free pardon,

(b) if he is a person who, having been declared insolvent or bankrupt under any law for the time being in force in Ghana or in any other country is an undischarged insolvent or bankrupt,

(c) if he is a member of any Legislative Assembly or other body having for the time being authority either alone or in conjunction with any other body to enact laws which have effect throughout Ghana,

(d) if he is adjudged to be of unsound mind,

(e) if in the case of a person possessed of a professional qualification, he is disqualified or suspended, otherwise than at his own request, from practising his profession in Ghana or in any other country by order of any competent authority made in respect of him personally,

(f) if he is an officer of the Corporation other than the Director-General or is a public officer where there are already not less than three public officers on the membership of the Board.

(6) Without prejudice to sub-paragraph (5) of this paragraph, a member of the Board other than the Director-General may be removed from the Board by the National Liberation Council on the recommendation of the Commissioner—

(a) if he suspends payment with his creditors,

(b) if he is absent from three or more consecutive meetings of the Board without such ground as appears to the National Liberation Council as reasonable,

(c) if he is guilty of unethical behaviour or if he is guilty of any serious misconduct in respect of his duties as a member of the Board and such behaviour or misconduct is certified in writing by not less than seven members of the Board.

(7) Any member of the Board other than the Director-General may resign his office by notice in writing addressed to the Commissioner.

(8) Where the office of a member of the Board becomes vacant prior to the expiry of his full term of office the National Liberation Council shall, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner and subject to the provisions of this Decree

appoint another person in his place to hold office for the unexpired portion of his term.

(9) All persons ceasing to be members of the Board shall be eligible for re-appointment to the Board.

(10) The Board may pay to its members and also to persons co-opted under paragraph 4 of this Decree to attend any meeting of the Board such subsistence, travelling and other allowances and at such rates as the Board may with the joint approval of the Commissioner and the Commissioner responsible for Finance determine either in relation to any particular member or generally.

(11) The Chairman and members of the Board while holding office on the Board shall not—

(a) hold any office in or be a member of any committee of any political organisation;

(b) offer themselves as candidates or nominate any other persons as candidates at any election of members to any Legislative Assembly or other body having for the time being authority either alone or in conjunction with any other body, to enact laws which have effect throughout Ghana or to a Council within the meaning of the Local Government Act, 1961 (Act 54);

(c) indicate publicly their support for or opposition to any political parties or candidates or to the political programmes of such parties or candidates;

(d) publish or cause to be published any article or other matter of a partisan political nature;

(e) canvass on behalf of political candidates;

(f) speak in public or broadcast on any subject of a partisan political nature;

(g) allow themselves to be interviewed or express any opinion for publication on any subject of a partisan political nature,

and any contravention of the provisions of this sub-paragraph may be certified to be a serious misconduct in relation to the duties of a member of the Board for the purposes of sub-paragraph (6) of this paragraph.

(12) There shall be a Secretary to the Board who shall be an officer of the Corporation and who shall, subject to such general directions as the Board may give and subject to the other provisions of this Decree, arrange the business for, and cause to be recorded and kept the minutes of all meetings of the Board.

## **Section 4-Meetings of the Board**

(1) The Board shall ordinarily meet for the despatch of business at such times and at such places as the Chairman may appoint but shall meet at least once in every month.

(2) A special meeting of the Board shall be called by the Secretary to the Board upon a request made to him for that purpose in writing signed by not less than four members of the Board including the Director-General.

(3) At every meeting of the Board at which he is present, the Chairman shall preside and in his absence, a member of the Board appointed by the members present from among themselves shall preside.

(4) Questions proposed at a meeting of the Board shall be determined by simple majority of members present and voting and in the event of an equality of votes, the person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

(5) The quorum at any meeting of the Board shall be four so however that no quorum shall be formed unless the Director-General is present at the meeting.

(6) The Board may at any time co-opt any person or persons to act as an adviser or advisers at any of its meetings so, however, that no person so co-opted shall be entitled to vote at any such meeting on any matter for decision by the Board.

(7) The validity of any proceedings of the Board shall not be affected by any vacancy among its members or by any defect in the appointment of any of them.

(8) Any member of the Board who has any financial interest in any company or undertaking with which the Corporation proposes to enter into any contract or who has any financial interest in any contract which the Corporation proposes to make shall disclose to the Board in writing the nature of his interest and shall be disqualified from participating in any deliberations of the Board on the contract or voting in any decision of the Board on such contract.

(9) Any contravention of the provisions of sub-paragraph (8) of this paragraph may be certified to be a serious misconduct in relation to the duties of a member of the Board for the purposes of sub-paragraph (6) of paragraph 3 of this Decree.

## **Section 5-Role of the Board**

(1) The Board shall be responsible for the broad direction of the affairs of the Corporation, the conduct of corporate relations with the Government and its agencies and the authorization of the annual report of the Corporation's activities.

(2) For its deliberations, the Board may utilize Finance, Programme Advisory and Staff committees which may deal with such matters as the following which are not necessarily limiting in scope:—

(a) establishment and revision of bye-laws and other instruments made under paragraph 19 of this Decree;

(b) establishment of basic policies and directives deemed necessary for the guidance of the Director-General;

(c) establishment or approval of objectives with respect to administrative, coverage,

finance and control, management, programming and sales;

(d) consideration of bi-annual reports of accountability by the Director-General;

(e) advice and guidance with respect to any aspect of the affairs of the Corporation.

## **Section 6-Director-General and Deputy Directors-General**

(1) There shall be a Director-General of the Corporation who shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall be responsible to the Board for the day-to-day administration of the Corporation.

(2) There shall also be two Deputy Directors-General of the Corporation who shall, subject to the provisions of this Decree—

(a) be charged with the performance of any of the functions of the Director-General when the Director-General is absent from Ghana or is otherwise incapacitated from performing that function, and

(b) otherwise assist the Director-General in the discharge of the said functions and perform such functions as the Director-General may delegate to any of them,

and accordingly unless the context otherwise requires any reference in this Decree to Director-General shall include reference to a Deputy Director-General.

(3) The Director-General and the two Deputy Directors-General shall be appointed by the National Redemption Council and shall hold and vacate office upon such terms and conditions as the National Redemption Council may determine.

(4) A person to be appointed Director-General or Deputy Director-General shall be a person who has had experience of and has demonstrated competence in one or more of the following fields of endeavour, that is to say, public utility operation and practice, industry, broadcasting, trade, finance, science and administration.

(5) The Director-General shall exercise supervision and control over the acts of all employees of the Corporation and shall be responsible for disposing of all questions relating to the pay, privileges and allowances of the Corporation's employees as laid down by the Board.

(6) The Director-General is responsible for the implementation of the Corporation's policies, bye-laws, other instruments and objectives in the day-to-day operations of the affairs of the Corporation. [As substituted by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Decree, 1975, (NRCD 334) s. 1a].

## **Section 6-(A) Directors and Regional Directors/Managers.**

(1) There shall be in charge of each division and regional office of the Corporation a Director and Regional Director/Manager respectively.

(2) The Director or Regional Director/Manager shall be appointed by the National Redemption Council on the advice of the Director-General.";

## **Section 7-Staff.**

(1) The Board may from time to time appoint such employees as may be necessary for the proper and efficient conduct of the business and functions of the Corporation.

(2) Employees of the Corporation shall hold and vacate office upon such terms and conditions as the Board may determine.

(3) The Corporation may also engage the services of such consultants, advisers and other persons as the Board may determine and upon such conditions as the Board may prescribe.

(4) Public officers may be transferred to the Corporation or may otherwise give assistance thereto.

(5) The Corporation shall have an Internal Auditor and the appointment and dismissal of any person to or from the post of Internal Auditor shall be made by the Auditor-General. [As inserted by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Decree, 1975, (NRCD 334) s. 1b].

(6) Subject to the provisions of this Decree, an Internal Auditor shall be responsible to the Director-General for the performance of his functions.

(7) As part of his functions under this Decree, an Internal Auditor shall, at intervals of three months, prepare a report on the internal audit work carried out by him during the period of three months immediately preceding the preparation of the report and shall, as soon as practicable after the preparation of the report, submit the report to the Director-General.

(8) The Director-General shall, as soon as practicable after receiving any report submitted to him under sub-paragraph (7) of this paragraph, forward a copy of the report to the Chairman and also a copy thereof to the Auditor-General.

(9) Without prejudice to the general effect of sub-paragraph (7) of this paragraph, an Internal Auditor shall make in each report such observations as appear to him necessary as to the conduct of the financial affairs of the Corporation during the period to which the report relates.

## **Section 8-National Requirements of the Corporation.**

(1) It shall be the duty of the Corporation to provide as a public service, independent and impartial broadcasting services (sound and television) for general reception in Ghana.

(2) The Corporation shall in collaboration with such departments of State as may be appropriate provide an external sound service through transmission for general reception in countries and places outside Ghana.

(3) The Corporation may engage in commercial broadcasting through the sale of paid advertisements scheduled at prescribed spots in its programme service.

## **Section 9-Output Requirements.**

(1) In its public service broadcasting, the Corporation is expected to provide for—

(a) Government pronouncements, that is, speeches by members of the National Liberation Council and Commissioners responsible for departments of State consisting of statements of fact or explaining the policies and actions of the Government;

(b) party political speeches dealing with the views and policies of the various political parties (when they come into being);

(c) speeches expressing different points of view on matters of controversy;

(d) matters of any kind (including religious services or ceremonies) representing the main stream of religious thought or belief in the country.

(2) In its broadcasting of the items mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph the Corporation shall allocate and apportion air-time equitably between the parties, points of view and religious bodies according to their respective claims upon the interest of members of the public of Ghana.

## **Section 10-Funds of Corporation.**

(1) The funds of the Corporation shall include—

(a) grants made by the Government to the Corporation;

(b) loans obtained on the guarantee of the Government from the National Investment Bank or such other Banks as the Commissioner responsible for Finance may approve;

(c) any moneys accruing to the Corporation in the course of the discharge of its functions.

(2) All moneys received by the Corporation shall be deposited to the credit of the Corporation in the Ghana Commercial Bank or such other bank as the Commissioner

responsible for Finance may approve.

(3) No loans shall be raised by the Corporation except with the prior approval of the Commissioner responsible for Finance.

## **Section 11-Accounts.**

(1) The Corporation shall keep proper books of account and proper records in relation thereto.

(2) The Corporation shall prepare, in respect of each financial year, a statement of account which shall include—

(a) a balance sheet, a statement of income and expenditure and a statement of surplus containing such information as had the Corporation been a company registered under the Companies Code (Act 179) would be required to be laid before the company by the Directors at an annual meeting, and

(b) such other information in respect of the financial affairs of the Corporation as the Commissioner or the Commissioner responsible for Finance may require.

(3) The Corporation shall, as soon as possible but within three months after the termination of each financial year, submit to the Commissioner an annual report which shall include the statements of account specified in sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph and the Commissioner responsible for Information shall as soon as practicable cause it to be laid before the National Liberation Council.

(4) The Corporation's financial year shall end on the 30th day of June in each year.

(5) For the purposes of this paragraph the period extending from the commencement of this Decree to the 30th day of June, 1968, shall be deemed to be a financial year.

## **Section 12-Audit.**

(1) The books and accounts of the Corporation shall be audited each year by the Auditor-General or an auditor appointed by him.

(2) The Auditor-General shall, not later than the 30th day of September in each year, forward to the Commissioner a copy of the audited accounts of the Corporation for the financial year ending the 30th day of June immediately preceding and his report thereon.

(3) The Auditor-General or the auditor appointed by him shall report annually to the Board the result of his examination of the accounts and financial statement of the Corporation, and the report shall state whether in his opinion—

(a) proper books of accounts have been kept by the Corporation;

(b) the financial statement of the Corporation:



- (i) was prepared on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year and is in agreement with the books of accounts;
  - (ii) in the case of the balance sheet, gives a true and fair view of the state of the Corporation's affairs as at the end of the financial year;
  - (iii) in the case of the statement of income and expenditure, gives a true and fair view of the income and expenditure or profit and loss of the Corporation for the financial year;
- and the Auditor-General or the auditor appointed by him shall call the attention of the Board to any other matter falling within the scope of his examination which, in his opinion, should be brought to the attention of the Board.
- (4) The Auditor-General or the auditor appointed by him shall, from time to time make to the Corporation such other reports as he may deem necessary or as the Commissioner responsible for Finance may require.
  - (5) The annual report of the Auditor-General or the auditor appointed by him shall be included in the annual report of the Corporation.

### **Section 13-Power of Corporation to Authorise Entry of Lands.**

(1) Subject to the provisions of this paragraph any person authorised in that behalf by the Corporation for the discharge of its functions under this Decree may enter and remain on any land—

(a) for the purpose of erecting, maintaining and inspecting any installations belonging to the Corporation (such as its wired broadcasting installations) or for the purpose of repairing, altering or removing any such installations;

(b) to cut and remove on the site of any proposed or existing installation all such trees and underwood as may interfere or be likely to interfere with the construction or proper working of any installation; and

(c) for the purpose of carrying out any other work or activity reasonably necessary for giving effect to the principles and purposes of this Decree.

(2) Except with the consent of the owner or occupier of the land or of his authorised agent no person shall enter upon any land under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph except by day or unless the owner or occupier or his authorised agent has been given reasonable notice of the intention to enter the land and of the purpose of such entry:

Provided that where the condition of any installation is such as to endanger life or property a person authorised by the Corporation may enter any land on which the installation is situated at any reasonable time for any of the purposes set out in sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph.

(3) If the owner or occupier of any land to be entered under this paragraph or his

authorised agent cannot be found after reasonable enquiry it shall be sufficient for the purposes of sub-paragraph (2) of this paragraph if the notice referred to in that sub-paragraph is put into writing and affixed to some conspicuous place on the land proposed to be entered for a reasonable length of time.

(4) Any person authorised to enter any land under this paragraph shall, in discharging any function under this paragraph do as little damage as possible and the Corporation shall pay compensation in respect of such damage and where the surface of any road or street has been disturbed in the discharge of any such function, the Corporation shall, as far as practicable restore it to its former condition.

(5) The amount of any compensation to be paid under sub-paragraph (4) of this paragraph shall, in the case of difference, be settled by arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Arbitration Act, 1961 (Act 38).

### **Section 14-Interference with Wires, Etc. of Corporation by Other Person.**

Where any Government Department, local authority, statutory corporation or any individual or other person undertakes any repairs or alterations of any road, street, railway, wharf, pier, bridge, waterworks or of any telegraphic, telephonic, or electric power cables, entailing the removal of or any injury to any wired broadcasting output or plant, works or equipment belonging to the Corporation, the expenses of the repair, removal and replacement of such wired broadcasting output, plant, works or equipment shall be borne as the case may be, by the Government Department, local authority, statutory corporation, individual or other person concerned.

### **Section 14-(A) Unauthorised Connection to Broadcasting Output, etc. of Corporation.**

Any person who with intent to receive or disrupt any broadcasting service of the Corporation and without the authority of the Corporation, makes a connection to any part of the wired broadcasting output, network, plant or equipment, of the Corporation commits an offence and shall be liable on a first conviction to a fine not exceeding fifty new cedis, and on a subsequent conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred new cedis or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months or to both such fine and imprisonment. [As inserted by Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Decree, 1969 (NLCD 385)s.1].

### **Section 15-Radio and Television Receiving Set Licence Fees to be Fixed on the Recommendations of the Corporation.**

Where power is granted by any enactment to any authority or person to fix the fees to be paid for obtaining a radio receiving set licence or a television receiving set licence the power shall only be exercisable upon the recommendations of the Corporation and the Telecommunications Act, 1961 (Act 112) and the Television Licensing Decree, 1966 (NLCD 89) shall have effect accordingly.

## **Section 16-Corporation Exempted from Provisions of Act 112.**

The provisions of the Telecommunications Act, 1962 (Act 112) shall not apply so as to require the Corporation to obtain any licence under that Act.

## **Section 17-Exemption from Income Tax.**

The Corporation in its commercial and ancillary business operations shall be exempted from the provisions of the Income Tax Decree, 1966 (NLCD 78).

## **Section 18-Emergency Power of the Government.**

(1) Where at any time the National Liberation Council is of the opinion that a national emergency has arisen in which it is necessary in the public interest that the Government should control broadcasts made by the Corporation, the National Liberation Council may so declare by notice published in the Gazette or by such other mode of public announcement or notification as the circumstances may permit.

(2) Where an emergency has been declared under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph—

(a) the Commissioner may give such directions to the Corporation as the National Liberation Council may deem to be necessary to meet the requirements of the emergency so declared, and the Corporation shall give effect to such directions,

(b) the Government may take over the Broadcasting Service of the Corporation, so, however, that it shall only do so by specific demand made in that respect by the Chairman or in his absence by the Deputy Chairman of the National Liberation Council.

## **Section 19-Power to Make Bye-laws and Other Instruments.**

The Corporation may by the Board make bye-laws and other instruments not being inconsistent with the provisions of this Decree for the purpose of regulating its business or any matter falling within the scope of its functions and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, such bye-laws or other instruments may regulate the application of the Corporation's seal to legal documents and may also regulate the conditions of service of the employees of the Corporation.

## **Section 20-Interpretation.**

In this Decree, unless the context otherwise requires—

"Corporation" means the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation established by this Decree;

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner responsible for Information.

## **Section 21-Dissolution and Transfer of Assets and Liabilities.**

(1) The body corporate known immediately before the commencement of this Decree as the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation is hereby dissolved and consequently the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Instrument, 1965 (LI 472) is hereby revoked.

(2) All assets, rights and liabilities of the said body are hereby transferred to the Corporation.

(3) The Director-General, the Deputy Director-General and all employees of the said body holding office immediately before the commencement of this Decree shall continue in office subject to the provisions of this Decree.

(4) Any instrument made under Part X of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Instrument, 1965 (LI 472) and in force immediately before the commencement of this Decree shall continue in force as if made under paragraph 19 of this Decree.

(5) Any reference in any enactment in existence at the commencement of this Decree to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation shall be construed as a reference to the Corporation established by this Decree.

**APPENDICES 3:**

**NATIONAL MEDIA POLICY**

**OF**

**THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

National Media Commission

**NATIONAL  
MEDIA POLICY**

A 05 - 04958



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The National Media Commission, set up on July 7, 1993 by an Act of Parliament, National Media Commission Act 1993, Act 449 in pursuance of the provisions of Chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution is enjoined among others, to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media, including the investigation, mediation and settlement of complaints made against or by the press or other mass media.

Unfortunately, there has not been any consistent yardstick for which the standards are to be measured. It is on the basis of this that the Commission engaged the services of a group of media experts to draw up a National Media Policy, which is to serve as the benchmark for measuring media performance generally.

As indicated, the Policy provides general guidelines for Print, Electronic, Film, Wire Service, Advertising and Public Relations. It equally provides for Public Service, Commercial and Community Media.

These are hortatory guidelines which nevertheless provide for a firm basis for building dynamic, free but responsible media.

**Tim Acquah-Hayford**  
**Chairman**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The National Media Commission wishes to express its sincere gratitude to Messrs. Alex T. Quarmyne, Kwaw Ansah, Berifi Appenteng, K. B. Asante and Madam Dorothy Gordon and Wilna W. Quarmyne; for devoting their energies to the cause of media freedom, pluralism and responsibility in designing the document.

We are equally grateful to Nana Essilfie-Conduah, former Executive Secretary of the Commission for his contribution to the document.

Thanks must also go to Ms. Salome Owusua Osam and Ms. Joyce Irene Okailey Ofei, for typing the document. We are also indebted to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, for accepting to bear the cost in publishing the document.

To them the joy and honour must go. If there are any flaws however, the Commission takes full responsibility for them.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ghana National Media Policy applies to the following mass communication media:-

- Print;
  - Broadcasting; and
  - Film.
- It also covers the following mass communication services:-
- Wire Services;
  - Advertising; and
  - Public Relations.

A fundamental goal of the policy is that the media shall serve the well-being of all Ghanaians, especially the disadvantaged.

The policy places the print, broadcasting and film media as well as the news services into three working categories, ie:-

- Public Media
- Commercial Media
- Community Media.

It regards all media and media services as a public trust. It therefore holds that the public interest shall be paramount in the operation of all media, public, commercial and community.

The policy broadly sketches the main national and global influences that have led to the present development of the media in Ghana. It discusses the issues and principles that arise from these influences and developments. These include, in addition to the principle of the media as a public trust, the freedom and independence of the media,

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media pluralism and universal access. Issues include cultural impoverishment, the marginalization of local languages, education and development, technological competence, human resources, institutional capacity and public accountability.

The actual definition of policy is in two sections: policy that is common to all the media and policy that is specific to individual media and media services. Policy statements and implementation guidelines are given in both cases. The document stresses that the common guidelines apply also to the individual media. The document also identifies areas for which implementation targets need to be fixed.

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## 1. VISION

The well-being of all our people and the continuing vitality of our culture animate our vision of communication.

Our people are the main agents of our national media policy. Their well-being is both the goal of policy and the evidence of its efficacy.

Our culture in all its rich diversity has, through our history, been both the fabric and the product of communication among our people and with others. It is our desire that technologically-mediated communication be similarly interwoven. Traditional and modern communication should interact for our people to build and maintain their own, distinctive many-roomed dwelling within the global village.

The exclusion of large segments of our population in the communication process weakens the foundations of this dwelling. These segments include the great majority of rural illiterate as well as women and children. Policy will be pro-active in fostering their participation as decision-makers, producers and consumers.

Our policy regards communication as a dynamic continuum — guided by the past, responsive to the present and anticipatory of the future. Throughout, it upholds the principles of national unity, cultural pluralism, equality, freedom of expression and access and participation. In this, it is guided by the spirit and the letter of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

All communication actors in all sectors, from origination to transmission to preservation, will have a stake in this vision. The initiatives of each will create synergy for the other.

## 2. MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote and ensure a free, independent, dynamic and public-spirited media that will provide access for all, and not only some, of our people to participate freely, fully and creatively at the community, national and global levels in the expression, exchange and discussion of knowledge, information and ideas and the management and operations of the institutions thereof so as to build a just, prosperous and equitable nation enriched by our diversity and informed by our values and to interact as equals and to mutual benefit with other citizens of the world

## 3. POLICY SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

This policy covers the various mass communication media and services operating or available in Ghana. Specifically, it pertains to the following mass communication media:-

- Print;
- Broadcasting; and
- Film.

It also covers the following mass communication services:-

- Wire Services;
- Advertising; and
- Public Relations.

The *print media* are here defined as comprising *newspapers and magazines* that are printed for mass readership. The policies relating to the print media also apply to newspapers and magazines that are transmitted electronically.

2

The *broadcast media* comprise *radio and television*. They involve the transmission by the air waves, cable or satellite of sound or images for simultaneous reception by a mass audience.

*Film* refers to the recording of moving images and sound on cellulose, video tape, disc or other recording medium for public exhibition.

*Wire services*, otherwise known as *news agencies*, are central organizations which gather and disseminate news covering a large geographical area, both national and foreign.

*Advertising* refers to the presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services paid for by an identified sponsor.

*Public relations* is the distinctive management art and social science function based on an understanding of human behaviour that identifies issues of critical relevance, analyses future trends and predicts their consequences, and establishes and maintains mutual beneficial relationships between an organization or group and its publics based on truth, full information and responsible performance.

## 4. POLICY CONTEXT

### 4.1 The National Scenario

As Ghana enters a new millennium, three major, overlapping sets of influences provide the context and shape the content of this media policy. These are:-

- The pre and post-independence media environment in Ghana;
- The restoration of Constitutional rule in 1992; and
- The globalization of information and communication.
- Information technology.

3

For a larger part of the early years of Ghana's post-independence years, the media have operated in an environment characterized by a combination of inherited colonial practices, statist ideology, political upheavals and economic depression. The legacy of these years have had positive aspects, particularly in the patriotism and value for the commonweal displayed by some media professionals and in the use of the media for national integration, socio-economic development and education. At the same time, this combination of characteristics spawned a number of glaring deficiencies, such as the over-centralization of the media, the stagnation of creativity, the repression of freedom of expression and institutional decay.

The restoration of Constitutional rule in 1992 provided for the liberalization of the media within the context of a democracy and a free market economy. The Constitution also vigorously supports the promotion of local culture as well as affirmative action for the empowerment of the disadvantaged majority of Ghanaians. The expansive spirit of the Constitution still has to be fully translated into other legislation and the development of strong, people-centered institutions. Already, however, the media have provided channels for democratic expression with some beneficial effects on governance.

Liberalization has brought Ghana firmly within the inevitable sweep of the globalization of information and communication. The trend is welcome for its current and potential impact on the increase and spread of knowledge and the efficient response to the technical problems of national development. However, it also brings with it cheaper access to relevant information and technologies which threaten to overwhelm local production and innovation. At the same time, it exerts an almost irresistible force that draws all towards a global marketplace of competition where information is valued as an economic commodity and not as a social good. Hence, there is the danger that the globalization of information and communication may only intensify

the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor as well as distort or even arrest the development of local culture.

The possibilities and tensions inherent in these three overlapping sets of influences present themselves amid a vacuum in media policy. They also create the impetus and rationale for such a policy. Thus, a major function of media policy is to help resolve the contradictions between these influences and to enable the selection and enactment of the best trade-off among them. In the process, it is guided by the belief that the test of policy is the quality of life of all Ghanaians.

#### 4.1.1 General Media Scenario

##### 4.1.1.1 The Print Media

Newspapers played an important role in Ghana's independence struggle in the late 40s and early 50s, but the post-independence development of the print media was slowed by political and economic policies that favoured state control and by a series of political upheavals. The print media were, for all practical purposes, limited mainly to state-owned publications and a few, embattled privately owned newspapers. The effort starting about the mid-80s to move the country towards a more liberal political and economic system led to the launching of a number of privately-owned newspapers and magazines as well as to a new buoyancy to the newspaper industry as a whole.

Nevertheless, the development of the print media continues to be limited. Although more than 100 periodicals are registered with the Registrar-General's Department, only about 30 newspapers and magazines are regularly produced and in circulation. Of these, only four are dailies.

Three of the four dailies, the *Daily Graphic*, the *Evening News* and the *Ghanaian Times*, are state-owned newspapers in the process of being commercialised as part of the government's programme of divestiture of state-owned enterprises. Along with their sister weekend editions, the *Mirror* and the *Weekly Spectator*, the three state-owned dailies are the only publications in the country that enjoy relatively large circulation nationwide. The fourth daily, the *Pioneer*, is privately owned and is distributed mainly in the Ashanti Region, where it is produced.

The other private newspapers appear weekly or bi-weekly and are circulated mainly in the urban areas, notably the capital city, Accra. Magazines are generally produced at monthly or longer intervals and their distribution tends to be even more urban-based. Ownership is currently in the hands of individual Ghanaian entrepreneurs, journalists or church groups and other non-governmental organizations.

The professional standards of much of the print media are low, both in terms of journalistic practice and technical considerations. Language use, breadth of content, depth of coverage, ethical practices as well as design, layout and reproduction need substantial improvement. The quality of information is also compromised by a combination of bureaucratic resistance to public disclosure and of administrative self-censorship.

Despite their limited development, the print media play an important role in information dissemination and especially in setting the agenda for debate. The present more democratic political climate also encourages the establishment of even more newspapers and magazines and thus the presentation and discussion of a greater diversity of facts, experiences, perspectives and opinions.

However, the large majority of the population is left out of this debate. Apart from their largely urban circulation, not one mass publication of note is printed in a local language. The potential utility and impact of the print media are also constrained from the onset by the high level of illiteracy.

Still, overall there is the sense that the greater pluralism of the print media has been for the good and should be nurtured in the interest of national development. This will require, in addition to the continual development of the requisite human resource base, addressing other basic problems of the industry such as the high cost of production, low capitalization, obsolete or inappropriate technology and the lack of a distribution infrastructure.

An even more a fundamental issue is the ideological basis for the growth of the newspaper industry inherent in the move towards a market. At stake is the real possibility that the promise of greater diversity for equitable national development may be severely compromised by allowing an industry that is also a vital public service to be guided purely by market forces. While democratization is potentially well served by a free economy, in practice the market has a tendency to leave out the majority of the population who are not, and without appropriate interventions may never become, players of significance.

#### 4.1.1.2 The Broadcast Media

Radio broadcasting was introduced to Ghana in 1935 as a monopoly of the British colonial government. The monopoly structure and public service cast of broadcasting was maintained at independence in 1957 and through the introduction of the television service in 1965.

The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) decree of 1968 converted

the service into a public corporation. The decree did not explicitly proscribe private broadcasting, but was simply silent on the issue. However, no frequencies were allocated to private applicants.

Broadcasting in Ghana remained a de facto monopoly of the state for nearly 40 years after independence. It suffered from the weaknesses of a monopoly, especially in a one-party or military state, and was perceived, and often performed, as more of a government mouthpiece than an instrument of the people. Yet it also took seriously its responsibility as a national educational and development tool and, especially in the decade or so immediately after independence, discharged it creditably. GBC relied in its early years mainly on government subvention, but has come under progressively greater pressure to generate commercial revenue while retaining its public service structure.

In 1996, in line with the relevant provision of the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, authorization was extended to a number of privately-owned FM radio stations, free-to-air television stations and cable television services in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani and Sekondi-Takoradi. A year later, authorization was given to a number of privately-owned radio stations to operate from the rural areas. As of mid-1999, 31 stations were in operation, with several more authorized and making preparations to go on air.

The brisk transition to deregulation occurred and continues to take place in the absence of clear guidelines. In 1995, in anticipation of deregulation, the then Ministry of Information commissioned a committee, and subsequently a consultant, to prepare a set of guidelines on independent broadcasting. However, the guidelines could not be implemented before, or even after, the actual introduction of private broadcasting. Subsequently, in 1996, a National Communications Authority Act covering all technical

communications infrastructure, including broadcasting, was passed by Parliament.

Thus, the conduct of private broadcasting, both commercial and community, has been largely unregulated, both in technical and journalistic terms. At the same time, the current operational character of GBC is loosely defined, compromising its role and effectiveness as the only national broadcaster.

The new, open practice of broadcasting has beneficially broadened the arena of public discourse, albeit it is still mainly confined to the urban areas and urban issues. The unaccustomed pluralism is also insinuating new life to a national broadcasting system that had become lethargic from lack of competition, dispirited from years of external direction and that was slowly winding down from fiscal neglect.

In the absence of clear norms other than those of market competition, deficiencies and excesses arise that undermine the ethos of broadcasting as a public good:-

- The inadequate planning and regulation of the frequency spectrum permits the use of excessive transmitting power by better-endowed, usually urban-based, stations. This threatens to crowd out actual or potential channels for weaker voices, particularly of the rural poor.
- The gradual withdrawal of government subsidy from the state-owned broadcaster has been done on an ad hoc basis and without regard for costs relating to the provision of public services. The prospect arises of a broadcasting landscape with no identifiable service that focuses on the perspectives and concerns of the nation as a whole.

- The absence of effective regulation raises the danger that erstwhile statist monopoly may be replaced with a market oligopoly that serves vested interests.
- Programming tends to be urban-oriented and foreign, if not in origin and content, then in style and inflection. Local production is limited, facilitating the non-selective infusion of foreign programming and curtailing the potential for broadcasting to reflect and nurture local culture.
- The use of local languages is marginal resulting in the exclusion of the majority of the population from expressing and representing themselves and their way of life and participating in the national discourse.
- The broad array of Ghanaian talent, traditional and professional, is provided insufficient exposure and scope, resulting in a further impoverishment of Ghanaian culture. At the same time, the few who have access to the airwaves are often inadequately trained for the professional demands and societal responsibilities of broadcasting.
- In the absence of a clear national vision and strategy, local broadcasting development is either swept aside by or swept along with the fast pace of technological development and globalization and commoditization of information.
- National frequencies are widely used for the relay of foreign broadcasts and foreign broadcasting organizations have been allowed to operate on national frequencies.
- Audience have been conditioned to playing a passive or, at best, a limited participatory role and need to be educated to take up the operational challenges of broadcasting.

#### 4.1.1.3 Film Industry

Film exhibition in Ghana (the then Gold Coast) started as a private business with the opening of the first cinema in Accra in 1925. Film production, however, started as a government activity which eventually led to the establishment of the Gold Coast Film Unit in 1948. As film developed worldwide, film in Ghana also grew steadily and provided much support for government information campaigns during the colonial period.

With independence, the new Government saw film not only as a tool for disseminating information but also as a powerful communication instrument to be exploited for national integration, for social and economic development and for the preservation and further enrichment of the cultural heritage of Ghana.

To provide an institutional base for the development of film and its utilization for these purposes, the Government in 1962 established the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC). For the following 28 years, the GFIC grew considerably as it produced films and undertook the distribution and exhibition of both local and foreign films. This growth was accompanied by equally impressive advances in all other sectors of the film industry.

The most remarkable growth has been in "video-film" production where growth has been phenomenal over the past decade and where the private sector has played an outstanding leadership role. Much of this growth is attributed to the electronic revolution which has led to major technological changes in the film industry worldwide and has made it possible for film makers of varying degrees of experience to attempt productions and experimentation which would have been out of reach a decade ago.



The film industry lost a major anchor in 1996, when as part of the divestiture programme of the government, the GFIC was sold to a private company which abandoned film production and converted the technical facilities into a television station.

Although the film industry continues to grow and the number of local productions continues to rise, the industry is plagued with a number of problems which mitigate against the achievement of quality in productions and economic viability in the industry.

Poor technical, artistic and ethical standards associated with most of the current generation of films made in Ghana are attributed to the inadequate training of film personnel. The National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) is recognized as a major professional institute training film personnel not only for Ghana but also for other African countries. The inadequacy of facilities, staff and financial resources, however, do not allow the institute to expand its training programmes sufficiently to address the vast training needs which have arisen from the growth of the industry.

While there are extensive and powerful international networks for the distribution of foreign films, no such facilities cater for African film productions. The absence of effective film distribution systems both within and outside the country has been a major constraint to the achievement of economic viability in the film industry. Locally produced films do not have adequate exhibition throughout the towns and villages in the country and major local productions which have sought markets in other African markets have fared rather poorly.

Almost all films currently produced in Ghana are made on videotape. This is partly because of production costs and partly because of the lack of the relevant equipment. Cellulose equipment and other items required for complex productions are expensive and are usually hired for productions and not purchased.

A major constraint in the development of the film industry in Ghana has been the lack of funds for the purchase of equipment and materials, for laboratory charges and for other production costs. The loan facilities available elsewhere for film productions do not exist in Ghana.

Although the 1992 Constitution proscribes censorship, this is generally not regarded as incompatible with the monitoring and control of film content. However, the Film Censorship Board is not as effective as would be desired and a large number of films, both foreign and local, of questionable ethical standards are being distributed and exhibited.

#### 4.1.1.4 The Wire Services

The Ghana News Agency (GNA) was established in 1957, soon after independence, and has the distinction of being the first news agency in sub-Saharan Africa. It was created as part of the country's nationalist and Pan-Africanist agenda and its operations were infused with the heady idealism of that vision.

It established regional offices in Kumasi, Ho, Takoradi, Cape Coast and Koforidua as well as a number of district offices throughout the country. It also opened a number of bureaux in the main capitals of the world. In 1960, the agency was made a corporate body and in 1965, it moved to its permanent head office in Accra.

GNA produces domestic, foreign and daily news summary bulletins. Despite being a state-owned service, it maintained a reasonable degree of professional independence in its early years and commanded considerable respect, particularly on the African continent. It is also, through its stringers, the most widely represented media service throughout the country.

The economic decline of the country was reflected in the deterioration of the operations of the agency. The period coincided with the limited utility of its equipment both because of age and the rapid changes in the technology of news collection and dissemination.

Subsequently, as part of the liberalization of the economy, GNA was slated along with the other state-owned media for divestiture. Even now, however, it is expected to market its services and generate maximum revenue to fund its operations. In addition to providing local and national news, GNA is the major supplier of foreign news under various agreements with international agencies like Reuters, DAP, PANA and Xinhua. Its clientele has expanded considerably with the deregulation of the media and the consequent increase in the number of newspapers and broadcasting stations.

Still, GNA is unable to generate sufficient revenue for its operations. It is also under-capitalized and under-resourced to meet the contemporary demands of a national news service, let alone compete in what has now become a global marketplace of news. In particular, the agency requires the extensive installation of computer-communication technology that has now become a staple of news collection and distribution. Its staff also need re-orientation and training not only on the new technologies and their corollary processes but also on the democratic ethos and practices that are central to the credibility and effectiveness of the agency.

Yet the original rationale for the creation of GNA remains, if anything, even more valid today. Its objectives of promoting national unity and nation-building continue to resonate. A national wire service is also a cost-effective way of connecting the entire nation, and particularly the rural areas, to the information grid, thus serving the priority goal of access. In addition, it provides the equally vital

service of presenting the experiences and perspectives of the nation through its own stories.

#### 4.1.1.5 Advertising

The 1990s have witnessed a surge of advertising in Ghana.

Although advertising was being practised for decades before then, advertising in Ghana only began to take off since the liberalization of the economy under ERP in the 1980s. Several small and medium-sized advertising agencies sprang up at that time. The volume of business in the industry was, however, relatively low until the move early in the 1990s towards divestiture and increased commercialization of the state-owned media and, subsequently, the deregulation of the media as a whole and the increase in the number of newspapers and broadcasting stations.

Perhaps even more than the other media and media services, advertising highlights the tension between the benefits of the market in a growing economy and its tendency to neglect the social dimension of development, particularly the questions of equity and cultural autonomy. This is even more true with the globalization of advertising.

The positive aspects of advertising are premised on its potential to assist consumers in exercising their right of choice in the market. While this right needs to be upheld and nurtured, it is largely abstract where the majority do not have the resources or the ability to participate fully in the market, making it even more "imperfect".

At the same time, the presentation and content of advertising do not enhance choice. Indeed, often they suggest that certain lifestyles or products are musts rather than options. Often, also, they prescribe

ways of life which may not necessarily be the desirable direction for the nation and that potentially diminish the valuation of national culture.

An issue of particular concern is the targeting of advertisements to children, who may not have developed sufficient filters to evaluate their content. Another is the effect of projecting urban consumer wants to rural populations living at subsistence levels, and especially their impact in shaping the aspirations of the youth among them. Still another is the tendency of many advertisements to promote stereotypes, especially of women and their roles. At the same time, the power of advertising is used insufficiently to propagate socially desirable ideas and behaviour.

The industry urgently requires direction and more effective regulation. Local advertising agencies need to produce output of better quality, higher ethical standards and of local character in content and formats. The products of foreign advertising agencies, on the other hand, are not subject to even the limited norms applied to local advertisements.

Advertising takes place through many media. Its overall guidance and the monitoring and enforcement of codes of ethics and standards straddle many public as well as private institutions. Policy therefore needs to be vigilant at the same time that it fosters dynamism and creativity.

#### **4.1.1.6 Public Relations**

One critical element missing from our national development effort is a comprehensive communication strategy to compliment these efforts. Targets and plans must be communicated effectively to stakeholders to enable them know what role they would be expected

to play, what sacrifices are to be made and the benefits of such sacrifices.

At the same time, a mechanism will be found to evaluate public perception of issues and feed them into the policy formulation stage right at the conception stage. This makes public relations central to the success of the policies and processes necessary for development.

In spite of its pivotal role, however, public relations practice in Ghana suffers from a lack of appreciation of what public relations can do or must do to enhance corporate and national interests and objectives.

Among the constraints that faces the practice as a result of the above are the following:-

- 1) The inability of the public to use professionally qualified practitioners skilled in the specialised function of public relations.
- 2) The absence of a regulatory body to ensure that the profession is practised in line with internationally recognised standards and the code of professional practice.

Given this scenario, it is incumbent upon us as a nation to use policy to address these difficulties in order to ensure that the nation gets the best from its public relations professionals to perform the critical task of ensuring enlightened public capable of making informal discussions on national issues and contributing to the decision making process in a meaningful way both at the corporate level and at the national level.

#### 4.2 The Development Of The Media

The development of the media in Ghana reflects the three major sets of influences cited. The print and the broadcast media have, in particular, been greatly susceptible to these influences.

Until the restoration of Constitutional rule in 1992, the dominant media in the country were effectively state-owned monopolies. These included the three national daily newspapers (the *Daily Graphic*, the *Evening News* and the *Ghanaian Times*), the national broadcasting service (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation), the national wire service (Ghana News Agency) and the national film production company (the Ghana Film Industries Corporation). Their dominance was brought about not by express legal mandate but by the political and economic order of the period. Advertising and public relations have traditionally been private sector activities in Ghana. However, the growth of the two sectors was largely inhibited during the post-independence period of state control of the economy.

Constitutional rule joined with the shift to a market economy and the availability of modern technology to bring about or accelerate a number of factors that have significantly changed the character and the operations of the media in Ghana. These factors are the legal guarantee of the freedom of the press, the deregulation of the broadcast media, the entrenchment of a profit orientation, the divestiture of state-owned enterprises and the promotion of private investment. The main outcomes have been:-

- The increase in the number of privately owned newspapers and magazines.
- The proliferation of privately owned radio and television stations and services.

- The increase in video film making and exhibition.
- The requirement of existing state-owned media and services to generate revenue.
- The divestiture, actual or planned, of state-owned media.
- The withdrawal or reduction of government subsidies for the media not yet divested.
- The advent of foreign investment in the media.
- The emergence of media controlled by foreign interests.
- The burgeoning of advertising and public relations activity.

All these outcomes have occurred within a short period, alongside increasing mutual access to the sources and purveyors of global information content, practice and technology.

The net effect is a media environment in great flux with few clear and consistent guidelines. The resultant vacuum provides ample opportunity for arbitrary decisions and practices with, at best, uncertain implications for national development, the evolution and promotion of Ghanaian culture and the well being of all Ghanaians, especially the disadvantaged. This makes the need for a media policy even more imperative.

## 5. ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES

In formulating a media policy a number of key issues arising from the development of the media in Ghana need to be addressed.

### 5.1 *Media As A Public Trust*

The operation of the media is a *public trust* regardless of ownership. The strengthening of *public service media* is even more vital in a profit-oriented operating environment. The difference in *social responsibility* expected of a commercial as opposed to a public service media operator should simply be a matter of degree.

### 5.2 *Freedom And Independence Of Media*

The relevant Constitutional provisions notwithstanding, the *freedom and independence of the media* remain fragile. Because of their historical antecedents and reflexes, state-owned media continue to require vigilant *insulation from government control*. The deregulation of the media also opens up the possibility of *undue influence by other interests/groups*. At the same time, other legislation do not sufficiently safeguard, and indeed encroach, on the freedom and independence of the media and therefore need to be revised or enacted. The impact of any legislation is realized at the first level through the *active and responsible practice by media practitioners of their rights*. In the end, however, the final guarantee of the freedom of the media is the *extent to which the public values its freedom*.

### 5.3 *Media Pluralism*

*Pluralism of the media* similarly needs to be safeguarded and encouraged. *Ownership* needs to be distributed and regulated such

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that state monopoly is not replaced by other monopolies. This should be true both vertically, with respect to the number of media organizations owned by any individual or entity, and horizontally, with respect to cross-media ownership. While non-Ghanaian participation in the media industry can be desirable, the principle of the media as a public good serving national interest necessitates *majority ownership and decision-making control by Ghanaians*. To ensure diversity, the registration of ownership needs to be a *transparent* process and a matter of public record.

### 5.4 *Universal Access, Especially Of Disadvantaged*

Media pluralism is an integral part of the democratization process. It therefore requires and must be characterized by a genuine *diversity of viewpoints and voices*. This is severely constrained by the production and distribution of the media that are largely confined to the urban areas or urban interests. Diversity requires not only more equitable *geographic distribution* but also, and even more important, *universal access*, particularly of *marginalized groups*. The use and development of *local languages* as well as the promotion of *literacy* are critical factors. For such groups to be suitably addressed, and indeed empowered, by the media, levels of marginalization need to be *disaggregated*, as for example, women among the generally disadvantaged rural majority or the urban poor among the relatively affluent urban community. *Community media* have a vital role to play in this process of empowerment.

### 5.5 *Cultural Impoverishment*

The deregulation of the media has brought with it the *increasing primacy of market forces*. This has, in turn led, to the fast-growing *prominence and potential dominance of foreign content*, particularly in television and film. A very real corollary is the *diminution and*

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## 5.7 Education And Development

The power of the media to address the educational, health and other basic development needs of the country remains grossly untapped. Great numbers, particularly girls, continue to be out of school, while many of those in school do not receive an education of quality or relevance. The pattern is repeated at the secondary and tertiary levels, undermining the country's development ambitions to rise to a middle-income country. A majority of the population is non-literate, the greater number of them women. The same, or greater, numbers are engaged in menial activities or farming at subsistence levels. The projections for "health for all by the year 2000" will need to be extended well into the next millennium. Yet the proven efficacy of the media in distance education, or formal pedagogy in support or in place of classroom teaching, is still not being harnessed. At the same time, media efforts at non-formal education are far too meagre and insufficiently attractive, creative and audience-or-learner-centred.

## 5.8 Technological Competence

While some media organizations in Ghana, both new and old, are saddled with obsolete equipment, others, particularly some of the private broadcasting organizations, are equipped with state-of-the-art technology. Efforts in the past and the present at local manufacture of media equipment have received little support. At the same time, the lack of current technical expertise precludes the selection not only of appropriate technology but also of relevant applications of technology. It also undermines the proper maintenance of equipment. The combination of circumstances maintains and deepens the technological dependence of the media in Ghana.

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impoverishment of local culture. Manifestations include lesser consideration for the vulnerability of children and the dignity of women and the adoption of violent themes and sensationalist formats. The propagation of inappropriate content becomes even more problematic with the use of non-traditional technologies, for example satellite broadcasting and the Internet. In terms of culture, content in the mass media has been generally limited to projecting imagery and symbolic representation that promote positive national identity and confidence. However, the sustenance and growth of local culture additionally require the inculturation of the media, whereby not only content but also production processes and formats are innovatively informed and transformed by local cultural norms and practices to create distinctively local forms. Of particular importance in this regard is the documentation and adaptation of rural practices which are sources of local culture.

## 5.6 The Marginalization Of Local Languages

In terms of language, the media are characterized by the domination of the English language. There is not one local-language newspaper and English is the only language used by the national news agency. Until very recently, films were also produced only in English. GBC radio has had a local-language programme service dating back to the colonial days, but the multiplicity of languages against its highly centralized operation meant that only a smattering of air time could be allocated to only a few languages. The marginalization of local languages results in the exclusion of the majority of the population from participating in the national discourse. Since language is one of the major instruments for expressing and nourishing the soul of a people, the marginalization of local languages also contributes to the atrophy of local cultures.

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## 5.9 Human Resources

Even more than in other fields, the *quality of human resources* is critical to the development and performance of the media. A common component of the shortcomings of media and media services in Ghana is the *inadequacy, or outright lack, of training* of media personnel at all levels. The situation is compounded by the growth in certain media sectors, resulting in many more personnel entering the profession. There is the *need for continuing training and re-training* across the board, given the pace of developments and the multifaceted roles of media personnel as brokers of information, purveyors of culture and agents of change. At the same time, the media suffer from the *attrition of media practitioners with the requisite training and competence*, who tend to seek employment in better remunerated or more challenging positions outside the media. A separate issue is the *lack of representativeness* of the staff of the media and media services. As in other sectors, women continue to be under-represented, especially in the higher levels of management and in the so-called "hard" areas of media work. The rural sector is also grossly under-represented, as are the physically challenged and other disadvantaged groups. It cannot be over-emphasized that the present policy can only be satisfactorily implemented and maintained with appropriately trained, motivated and representative human resources.

### 5.10 Institutional Capacity

The ability of the media to perform their demanding and multifaceted roles is undercut by the *weak capacity of media and media-related institutions*. The private media are extremely limited in their ability to play a developmental role. On the other hand, the state-owned media have not resolved the requirements of their hybrid status as public service and income-generating institutions. Another particularly critical need is for the *strengthening of regulatory*

*authorities*, including national agencies and the various professional associations. The *inadequacy of training facilities*, for media training, are also major constraints. Also of concern is the *harmonization of the mandates* and efforts of various media-related institutions to address the totality of the training needs of the nation and the industry. Overall, there is a great need to *build the capacity* of media and media-related institutions. Part of this process involves *orientation and training in building a democratic culture* and developing skills in providing for access and participation. It also requires *effective mechanisms for monitoring performance*.

### 5.11 Public Accountability

The best guarantee of the Constitutional safeguards for the media is a public that treasures the freedom of the media and, at the same time, demands media accountability. Yet the appreciation of the public for their critical dual role is extremely shallow, particularly among the great majority who have traditionally had little access to the media. The *media need to build a constituency* by demonstrating the benefits of their greater freedom to the concerns and aspirations of the media public. At the same time, *media education* is a broad-based responsibility that needs to be taken up by a variety of institutions.

## 6. POLICY GUIDELINES COMMON TO ALL MEDIA

The issues and principles arising from the development of the media in Ghana suggest a number of policies common to all the media.

Policy specifics may differ from medium to medium or media service. Still others pertain only to a particular medium or media service, depending on their individual characteristics.

Policy guidelines common to all media and media services are

defined in the section immediately following. Policy statements are presented first, followed by policy implementation guidelines.

## 6.1 Common Policy Statements

6.1.1 **The challenges faced by the media, as well as the emerging institutional framework, recommend their division into three working categories:-**

- **Public Media**
- **Commercial Media**
- **Community Media.**

i. All three categories of media shall work together in the national interest and in pursuance of the vision, mission and principles of this policy.

ii. However, they shall necessarily have different roles, on the basis of which they may have different prerogatives.

6.1.2 ***All media and media services shall be regarded as a public trust. The public interest shall therefore be paramount in the operation of all media — public, commercial and community.***

i. The public interest shall be defined in broad terms by the spirit and letter of the Constitution and the vision, mission statement and issues and principles expressed in this policy.

ii. The public interest is served by individual choice. The media shall accordingly provide for individual choice at an economic price. The provision of such choice shall be guided by the concerns of this policy.

iii. At the same time, the operations of the media shall take into account the limited ability of the majority of the population to exercise any choice at any price due to their socio-economic deprivation. All media shall therefore have the obligation to provide for the interests of this population.

iv. For the maximum discharge of the public trust, there shall be at least one public institution of national scope in the print, broadcast and film media and in the wire services.

v. All media shall co-operate in the public interest. Together, they shall enact the role of the media to inform, educate and entertain in pursuit of dynamic, equitable and culturally endowed national development.

6.1.3 ***The freedom and independence of all media shall be upheld and protected in full measure in consonance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution.***

i. The freedom and independence of the media shall be the condition for the people to exercise their democratic right to information. It shall also be the operating environment for media professionals to carry out their work with integrity and creativity.

ii. The freedom shall be exercised responsibly and ethically. In particular, the media shall exert with care its influence in shaping the sensibilities of children and minors.

6.1.4 ***A range of media representing a diverse plurality of social, cultural and economic interests and perspectives shall be encouraged and promoted. These interests shall be carefully balanced to preclude dominance by, or neglect of, any one sector.***



- i. Ownership and control shall be transparent. They shall be spread to discourage monopolies and safeguard pluralism. Accordingly, chain ownership and cross-media ownership shall be allowed only when it is clearly in the national interest.
- ii. In keeping with the nature of the media as a public trust, majority ownership and control of the media shall be held by Ghanaians. The percentage of foreign ownership allowable shall vary depending on the medium or media service and is reflected in the pertinent section of this policy. Foreign shareholders in media enterprises shall be guided by the same principles as their Ghanaian partners.

**6.1.5 Access to the media shall be ensured and promoted at all levels and in various forms. Access shall be taken to mean not only consumption of the media but also participation in their ownership, management, production and distribution.**

- i. The provision of access shall compensate for geographic and linguistic constraints, especially for disadvantaged sectors and groups. It shall also address constraints based on social and economic relationships, for example gender or rural against urban disparities.
- ii. Community media dedicated to empowering disadvantaged groups shall be provided the necessary support to flourish.

**6.1.6 The power of the media shall be used proactively to encourage the promotion and growth of local culture.**

- i. Accordingly, a prescribed proportion of the output of all appropriate media and media services shall be allocated to local content.

- ii. Local content shall both preserve traditional heritage and encourage contemporary works. It shall unearth, project and reward a wide range of local talent and expertise, both traditional and professional. The promotion of local content shall also be taken to include retrieving appropriate indigenous technical knowledge and restoring it to the mainstream.
- iii. Another aspect of fostering local content shall be the interaction of mass, technological media with traditional channels and media of communication. A welcome offshoot of this process shall be the development and promotion of media production methodologies that are shaped by Ghanaian cultural norms and practices.

**6.1.7 Local languages shall be used prominently on all media.**

- i. Ghanaian languages shall be used widely to promote national unity and development. Additionally and concurrently, in the provision of media channels and outlets, care shall be taken to ensure that all languages are catered for to realize the ideals of diversity and multiplurality.
- ii. The use of Ghanaian languages in the media shall demonstrate oral and written competence. The documentation and study of oral literature and traditions shall be integrated wherever possible.

**6.1.8 All media shall be expected to provide support to the national educational effort.**

- i. All media shall be expected to contribute to non-formal education, particularly in the fields of socio-economic development, health and the environment.

- ii. All media shall also contribute to civic education, particularly in the areas of family life, good governance, human rights and gender justice.
- iii. Media channels and technologies shall be used to support formal education.

**6.1.9 *The media shall promote technological competence, and self-sufficiency, both internally, in their operations, and externally, through their output.***

- i. As part of this process, they shall judiciously select and apply the most appropriate technology or technology mix.
- ii. As much as possible, such technology shall be indigenously developed.
- iii. At the same time, the media shall keep abreast with worldwide developments in technology with a view to adapting them for optimum local use.

**6.1.10 *The operations and development of the media shall reflect the competent and committed practitioners.***

- i. The development of human resources for the media shall be linked to the total development needs of the country.
- ii. Training shall accordingly take into account, a continued need for media professionals of the highest calibre.
- iii. At the same time, training shall be developed and provided for community media practitioners.

**6.1.11 *The capacity of media institutions of various mandates and forms shall be actively developed to implement and sustain policy vigorously and democratically.***

- i. A necessary first step shall be the reappraisal and redefinition of the mandates of the various media and media-related institutions, particularly in the light of this policy.
- ii. In addition, national regulatory and capacity-building institutions shall be given the necessary orientation and resources to provide an enabling environment for the media.
- iii. Each media organization shall be encouraged to develop to the fullest to play its distinctive role as a contributor to the public interest.
- iv. Professional media associations shall be encouraged to assume first-line responsibility for the development of their members and their observance of policy.

**6.1.12 *The capacity of the public to safeguard the freedom and demand the accountability of the media shall be encouraged and actively developed.***

- i. The public shall hold the media to the responsible use of freedom and the effective discharge of the trust they hold.
- ii. The public shall be engaged as active partners of the media in safeguarding and promoting freedom of thought and expression.

## 6.2 Common Policy Implementation Guidelines

The guidelines shall be implemented primarily through the three main categories of media institutions, ie public media, commercial media and community media.

### 6.2.1 Public Media

- i. The following shall operate as nationwide, public media:-
  - State owned papers.
  - The present Ghana Broadcasting Corporation.
  - The present Ghana News Agency.
  - A film production support facility to be created.
- ii. The public media shall have a special mandate to meet the information, education and communication needs of the nation and especially of the rural majority, the urban poor and sectors, such as women and the youth, on the periphery of the national discourse.
- iii. They shall also have the primary responsibility of preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the nation both in its totality and its diversity.
- iv. Public media shall not only be represented or distributed but also produced, at least in part, on a regional and, as much as possible, district level.
- v. To carry out their special mandate, the public media shall be expected to operate or produce in a variety of local languages.
- vi. Output requirements are outlined under the relevant public

medium or media service but all shall involve the use of at least one local language.

vii. The public media shall operate as independent, competitive, professional establishments and shall be expected to observe the efficiencies of a private enterprise, but shall be not-for-profit organizations.

viii. The public service media shall carry out their mandates by the most cost-effective means.

ix. Ownership of the public service media shall be vested in individual public corporations with state and private organizations and individuals as shareholders. The state shall hold the majority shares. All other shareholders shall be Ghanaian citizens.

x. As part of the cost of effective democratic governance and nation-building, Government shall provide public media with any necessary subvention and indirect assistance, such as tax breaks, access at concessionary rates to relevant government facilities and brokering preferential utility rates. Strict performance or output standards shall be applied for subvention and other assistance.

xi. The level of government subsidy for public media organizations can differ from institution to institution. Infusion of private or commercial funding shall not diminish the first-line responsibility of the designated public media to serve the public interest.

xii. The Boards of the public media shall be appointed, as per the Constitution, by the National Media Commission in consultation with the President.

- vi. Foreign shareholders in media enterprises shall make the same undertaking as their Ghanaian partners to uphold the public interest above all.
- vii. To promote access, various concessions shall be offered to commercial media organizations that establish themselves outside the urban centres.

### 6.2.3 *Community Media*

- i. The ownership and operation of the media and media services by communities shall be facilitated. Such community media shall have the objective of community empowerment and shall provide access to all members of the community.
- ii. District Assemblies shall be encouraged to establish community media centres that shall provide training and reading, listening and viewing facilities.

### 6.2.4 *The Enabling Environment*

#### 6.2.4.1 *Legislation*

- i. All legislation and legislative instruments shall be harmonized with the relevant Constitutional provisions guaranteeing the freedom and independence of the media.
- ii. Such laws as the Official Secrets Act, the Sedition Act and GBC Act shall be revised in line with the Constitution and this policy document.
- iii. A law on Freedom of Information that shall ensure easy access to information from all sectors of the economy shall be enacted.

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xiii. The operational ethos of public media shall be open, based on the right of information to the public.

xiv. Top editorial and management staff shall be appointed by their respective Boards, based exclusively on professional competence and proven social commitment. Remuneration and conditions of service shall reflect the dual mandate and the special qualities required of staff.

xv. In line with the Constitution, under no circumstances shall Government influence the operations or content of the public service media.

### 6.2.2 *Private/Commercial Media*

- i. The commercial media shall, as part of their undertaking to serve the public interest, be expected to allocate a demonstrable portion of their output to this end.
- ii. Ownership of commercial media organizations shall be spread to discourage monopolies and serve the interest of pluralism.
- iii. Cross-media ownership and chain media ownership shall be restricted in terms of numbers of holdings and shall be allowed only if clearly in the public interest.
- iv. At least 51% of the shares in a commercial media company shall be held by indigenous Ghanaian citizens representing themselves or by wholly-owned Ghanaian enterprises.
- v. Majority of the seat on the Board shall be held by indigenous Ghanaian citizens. The chair shall also be an indigenous Ghanaian citizen.

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#### **6.2.4.2 Training**

- i. The national budget shall support the recommendations and efforts to upgrade the present national training institutions, the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana, the Ghana Institute of Journalism and the National Film and Television Institute, as well as future similar institutions.
- ii. The establishment and operation of privately owned media training institutions shall be encouraged through the provision of appropriate incentives.
- iii. The curricula of all three national and future similar institutions shall be harmonized regularly to comprehensively address national development needs and industry requirements.
- iv. Curricula shall provide for training in generalist and specialist areas.
- v. Special curricula shall additionally be developed for the unique requirements of public and community media.
- vi. Curricula shall also address the special expertise required in the use of the media for distance education.
- vii. In addition to their regular courses, training institutions shall run short-term courses for would-be and current practitioners for the various media and media services.
- viii. Individual media organizations and media services shall mount ongoing in-service and on-the-job training programmes.
- ix. A national accreditation scheme shall be developed to cover all media training.

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#### **6.2.4.3 Research**

- i. Research shall be an integral part of the operations of the media.
- ii. Such research shall encompass data for regular output development and evaluation.
- iii. Every media organization shall also take part in regular audience surveys and distribution audits.
- iv. To enable the inclusion of the widest possible population, the use of participatory approaches and tools in addition to quantitative methods shall be encouraged and promoted.

#### **6.2.4.4 Technology**

- i. Technical mastery shall receive more prominence at media training institutions and in-house training programmes and shall be a component of the national accreditation scheme for media training.
- ii. Technical training shall be closely integrated with the operations and current and projected needs of media organizations and media-related institutions through regular consultations and such initiatives as internship schemes that build in cross-feedback.
- iii. Local manufacture of equipment and the local development of software shall be actively encouraged.

#### **6.2.4.5 Institutional Capacity-building**

- i. The National Media Commission shall be pro-active as the

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primary support institution for media policy, practice and output and shall be provided the necessary resources to carry out its mandate.

- ii. National media and media-related institutions shall be strengthened. In particular, regulatory bodies shall be given the necessary orientation and resources both to support the democratization of the media and to ensure their orderly regulation.
- iii. Transparency shall be required in the management and operations of all media organizations and media-related services.

#### 6.2.4.6 *Professional Associations*

iv. All media professional associations shall adopt or revise their charters to reflect the relevant Constitutional provisions. Media associations shall also adopt or revise codes of conduct with the same intention. All such charters and codes shall emphasize the need for the media to be above all partisan interests, whether secular or religious. They shall also reflect the responsibility attendant upon the freedom of the media.

v. The various professional associations shall establish their own internal accreditation systems for their members. Such systems shall take into account not only professional standards but also ethical behaviour as well as the developmental role of the media and the special needs of community media.

#### 6.2.4.7 *Public Education*

i. Fora shall be organized on a regular basis through the media

and in the field to promote dialogue at the community level on the freedom and independence and responsibilities of the media. The proposed community media centres can, where applicable, be a focus for such fora.

#### 6.2.4.8 *Funding*

ii. Among strategies that shall be considered are a special levy on media consumption; the provision of incentives and concessions, such as rebates, tax holidays and the lifting of import duty; and, in the case of public and community media, preferential arrangements such as special or exclusive tax exemptions on equipment, technical assistance from public sources or tax deductible donations from private sources, assistance in training, staff support schemes and priority access to paid announcements from public institutions.

iii. A national fund to support the development of the media shall additionally be considered. Priority areas for the use of such a fund shall include the establishment of media in marginalized areas or for marginalized communities, the local production of culturally-based materials, local manufacture of equipment and training. Recommendations for management and administration of the fund shall emphasize output and transparency. The fund may be separate from or include the film fund defined in the relevant section of this document.

#### 7. **MEDIA-SPECIFIC POLICY GUIDELINES**

The following policy guidelines are specific to the different media and media services. They should be read in conjunction with the policy guidelines which are common or apply to all media.

## 7.1 The Print Media

The *print media* are here defined as comprising *newspapers and magazines* that are printed for mass readership. The policies relating to the print media also apply to newspapers and magazines that are transmitted electronically.

### 7.1.2 Overall Policy Statement

- i. The policy challenge is to encourage and support the development of the printed media in such a way that it sustains the dynamic growth of a diversity of publications that together represent the aspirations and meet the needs of all sectors of the population.
- ii. Policy shall therefore have two parallel strands: first, to grow a reading public by addressing the information and non-formal education needs of the majority of Ghanaians and second, to grow a wide variety of indigenous newspapers and magazines by providing an enabling environment for local entrepreneurship.
- iii. All these initiatives shall be seen to support the promotion of functional literacy and of enriching formal education.
- iv. To encourage the development and sustainability of the print media, measures shall be introduced to make the cost of production and distribution more affordable.

### 7.1.3 Public Newspapers

- i. The state owned media newspaper shall operate as a nationwide, public service publication.
- ii. The newspaper shall carry out its mandate by the most

cost-effective means. These may include, *inter alia*, the publication of Ghanaian-language regional editions or of Ghanaian-language and other special-focus supplements to the national edition.

### 7.1.4 Commercial Newspapers

- i. All basic provisions with respect to private media shall apply to commercial newspapers.
- ii. Local manufacture of inputs shall be supported as part of the objective of capacity-building.
- iii. The publication by commercial enterprises of local-language newspapers or magazines at regional, district or community level shall be actively promoted.
- iv. The establishment of national distribution networks and agencies for local publications shall also be encouraged.
- v. All commercial and other publications of a certain level of capitalization shall be required to undergo an annual circulation audit.

### 7.1.5 Community Newspapers

- i. Small-scale village, community or neighbourhood newspapers shall be promoted. These shall include small format news sheets, wall newspapers, blackboard newspapers and other accessible media that can more easily be managed and sustained by small groups with limited resources.
- ii. Each District Assembly shall also be encouraged to start its

own local-language newspaper or other publications, subject to the proviso that such publications shall be operated as non-profit enterprises free from editorial interference by the Assembly.

- iii. Every school shall also be encouraged to produce its own newspaper within its means.

## 7.2 The Broadcast Media

The *broadcast media* comprise *radio and television*. They involve the transmission by the air waves, cable or satellite of sound or images for simultaneous reception by a mass audience.

### 7.2.2 Overall Policy Statement

- i. The basic resource of broadcasting, be it airwaves or the broad expanse of space, belongs to the Ghanaian people. The policy challenge for the broadcast media is to utilize this basic resource in such a way that value is added to the quality of life of all Ghanaians and to the society and economy as a whole.
- ii. Broadcasting, even more than other media, shall operate on the understanding that it is a public trust.
- iii. In the discharge of this trust in an open, democratic society, public, commercial and community broadcasting play different, but complementary roles. They are distinguished primarily by their specific objectives, the scope of their vision, the nature of their audience and specially by the degree to which they are profit-making. However, all are expected to serve the public good.

- iv. This policy and the principles expressed herein shall apply to free-to-air, cable and satellite broadcasting services. The only differences shall be in degree and manner of application, taking into account the technical and other special characteristics of each type of service.

### Legislation

- v. To create an appropriate legislative environment for this policy, Government shall work towards ensuring that the laws regulating broadcasting are consistent with the Constitution.

### Ownership

- vi. Processes for the registration of ownership shall, in addition to being transparent, take into account the possibility of fronting and disguised ownership.

### Frequency Allocation

- vii. A comprehensive national frequency allocation plan shall be developed for all broadcasting operations jointly by the National Communications Authority and the National Media Commission in consultation with appropriate bodies.
- viii. Criteria for frequency allocation shall be unambiguous and shall include, in addition to technical requirements, comprehensive guidelines on programming.
- ix. Collaboration shall be established with neighbouring countries to co-ordinate frequency allocation plans in order to minimize compromises in spectrum utilization.



- x. In furtherance of pluralism, the national frequency allocation plan shall clearly define the geographical coverage areas of stations to enable maximization of the spectrum.
- xi. The transmission power of stations shall accordingly be limited.
- xii. Frequency assignment shall be transparent and the records accessible to the public.
- xiii. Fees for frequency assignment shall vary between profit and non-profit operations.
- xiv. Frequency assignments shall be properly documented and regularly monitored. Violation of frequency allocation conditions and/or other provisions of this policy shall constitute grounds for withdrawal of a frequency.
- xv. Foreign organizations shall not be allowed to operate on a national frequency.
- xvi. Local FM stations shall not relay foreign broadcasts. They may, however, subject to the guidelines on local content in programming, re-broadcast or otherwise use foreign material.

#### *Programming*

- xvii. Clear targets shall forthwith be met in the area of local content. Percentages shall vary according to, and are defined under, the different types of broadcasting organizations.
- xviii. A certain percentage of local content shall be aired during prime time. As shall be defined by the National Media Commission in consultation with the broadcasting industry.
- xix. It is the duty of the media to protect the identity, privacy and reputation of children.

Where they are involved in court (criminal) proceedings their identity should not be revealed.

In other instances the media should satisfy themselves that their publication will not have adverse effect on the child.

- xx. In addition, all radio and TV stations shall:-
  - a. Devote a specific percentage of air time to public affairs programmes, including national and local news and community information.
  - b. Ensure that programme content reflects and advances Ghanaian cultural aspirations and values
  - c. Promote the use of Ghanaian languages by broadcasting in at least those spoken in a station's coverage area for a defined percentage of air time
  - d. Enhance Ghanaian culture through the use of imagery, symbolism and language that promotes national and African cultural heritage, self-identity and self-esteem.
  - e. Produce programmes that protect children's rights and supports their sound psychological and social development.
  - f. Produce programmes that exhibit high moral values and standards, and consciously propagate the value that crime does not pay and must be punished.
  - g. Show a high sensibility to the dignity and respect of womanhood and defend and protect women's rights and interests.

h. Show respect for the physically challenged.

xxi. The guidelines for programming shall apply to music broadcast by all radio and TV stations.

#### 7.2.3 Public Broadcasting

i. In recognition of the critical importance of public broadcasting to promoting national identity and overall national development, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) shall retain its role as a public broadcasting service.

ii. GBC shall cover and represent the entire nation and in particular, her disadvantaged peoples and less accessible areas. It shall be the frontline support for the country's socio-economic development goals. It shall be the primary showcase for the nation's culture in all its rich diversity. It shall be the arena for the nationwide discussion of issues and policies.

iii. To this end, local content on GBC's regular radio channels shall comprise 80% of total air time. For its regular television channels, it shall comprise 60% of total air time. At least 50% of local programmes shall be aired during prime time.

iv. GBC shall also play a leading role in supporting the country's formal education efforts. To this end it shall operate distance education channels radio and for television.

v. GBC shall receive requisite subvention from Government to enable it effectively undertake its critical roles in support of national development.

vi. An enabling environment shall be provided for the significant investment in local production capacity required by the various public broadcasting services.

#### 7.2.4 Commercial Broadcasting

i. Subject only to their public service obligations and the conditions for the allocation of their frequency, commercial broadcasting organizations shall operate freely as competitive, profit-making enterprises.

ii. All free-to-air commercial radio and television stations shall respectively devote a minimum of 50% and 30% respectively of their total air time to local content, including music. Such music shall also be local.

iii. These percentages of minimum local content shall rise to 75% and 50% respectively for free-to-air commercial radio and television stations within a specific time frame to be determined.

iv. At least 50% of the minimum allocation for local programmes shall be aired during prime time.

v. At least 50% of the minimum allocation for local programmes shall consist of programmes which promote local education, culture and/or development. Disc jockey type programmes shall not count against this requirement.

vi. Broadcasting subscription stations shall operate at least one local channel subject to the same local content conditions as free-to-air stations.

- vii. Special concessions shall be given to commercial stations that establish themselves outside of the urban areas and/or that exceed the minimum quota for development programming.

#### 7.2.5 Community Broadcasting

- i. Community broadcasting stations shall be established in remote areas, economically deprived or depressed geographical and social sectors and generally those areas that are not attractive to purely commercial interests.

- ii. Such community broadcasting stations shall be:-

- a. Not-for-profit.
- b. Non-sectarian, ie not exclusive to any particular religious sect or faith.
- c. Non-partisan, ie not exclusive to any political party, either accessible to all political parties or absolutely closed to all at all times.

- d. Independent of any political or economic authority or institution, national, local or traditional.

- iii. The distribution of community broadcasting stations shall be such that small linguistic communities as well as marginalized social groups are adequately served. Community broadcasting stations, particularly radio, shall provide maximum opportunity for community participation in all aspects of their operations.

- iv. At least 80% of programmes on community broadcasting stations shall be originated by the stations and their target

audiences. They shall draw either on material from their community or, in the case of information, outside material expressly selected for the interests and needs of the target community. Any music making up the local community requirement shall be Ghanaian or African and preferably traditional. The remaining 20% of programmes shall comprise material of national interest, for example relays of GBC news.

- v. At least 70% of programmes on community broadcasting stations shall be in the local language or languages of its target community.

- vi. Commercial advertising shall be permissible on community broadcasting stations for purposes of sustainability and subject to internal codes that are in keeping with the overall policy ethos and the specific objectives of the station. Community broadcasting stations shall also be encouraged through priority access to paid announcements from public institutions.

#### 7.3 Film Industry

*Film* refers to the recording of moving images and sound on cellulose, video tape, disc or other recording medium for public exhibition.

##### 7.3.2 Overall Policy Statement

- i. Considering the potential of film in the development of Ghanaian society, it shall be the responsibility of Government and all institutions, government and private as well as formal and informal, to provide support in all forms as may be required and appropriate for the continuing development and permanent strengthening of a viable film industry in Ghana.

- ii. In this regard, the recent growth in "video-film" production

and in the spread of video centres throughout the country shall be viewed as basically healthy developments which shall be encouraged and channeled into socially useful and culturally validating initiatives.

iii. Recognizing the cultural and economic potential of film, all necessary steps, including self-regulation by the industry, shall be taken to:-

- a. Encourage the production of local films both on celluloid and videotape and the attainment of the highest possible standards.
- b. Provide incentives for the production of such films.
- c. Ensure that productions are in keeping with Ghanaian traditions and mores and promote desirable aspects of Ghanaian culture.
- d. Encourage the extensive use and development of authentic national cultural forms and symbols in film productions.
- e. Encourage productions by and about groups and communities that are relatively under-represented in the national film output.
- f. Exploit the potential of film to establish the common identity and shared interests of all African and black peoples and cultures everywhere
- g. Encourage compliance with copyright and cinematographic laws of Ghana and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

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iv. The exhibition of local films shall be actively promoted.

v. The Film Censorship Board shall be fully functional. Its membership shall be broadened to include media houses, representatives of the National Media Commission, the National Commission on Culture, the National Commission on Culture, and the National Commission for Civic Education as well as representatives of the general public.

vi. A system shall be developed to enable the public, and particularly parents and other guardians of minors, to participate in monitoring the content and regulating the distribution of all film, both local and imported, with a view to attaining the highest possible ethical standards.

vii. Film training shall be accorded a higher order of priority. The resources of the National Film and Television Institute shall need to be enhanced to allow it to expand and further improve the quality of training. All effort shall also be made to encourage the participation of the private sector in film training.

### 7.3.3 Public Film Support Facility

i. A National Film Board shall be established as the national administrative machinery to oversee the implementation of the various policy proposals on the development of film in Ghana and maintain liaison between the film industry and Government.

ii. In addition, the National Film Board shall establish and administer a National Film Fund to serve the entire film industry through:-

- a. Granting of loans to commercially viable

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cinematographic projects which in the judgment of the Board are capable of enhancing the national interest and cultural development of Ghana.

- b. Pro-active funding of productions by communities with relatively little access to mainstream communication of films that enhance both intra-national and international understanding.
- c. Encouraging the production of documentaries and other films of educational nature which are normally considered by the industry to be unattractive investments.
- d. Promoting experimentation in film production.
- e. Collaborating with other agencies or individuals in the funding of economically viable films and film-related projects of merit.
- iii. The specific functions, as well as composition and administration, of the National Film Board shall be drawn up by the National Media Commission in consultation with the film industry and the President.

#### 7.3.4 Commercial Film Production

- i. An enabling environment shall be provided for the growth of the private film industry.
- ii. Comparable incentives and concessions to those for other commercial media shall apply.

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- iii. In particular, private investors shall be encouraged to fund the production of films and to establish film production facilities that shall be available at reasonable rental to all producers.

#### 7.3.5 Community Film Production, Viewing And Support

- i. Community film production shall be promoted through community media centres and other channels.
- ii. Community film viewing facilities shall be encouraged, especially outside urban or peri-urban areas, either as part of or separate from community media centres earlier recommended. Such facilities shall include mobile cinemas.
- iii. Similar concessions and initiatives offered to other community media shall apply to the production, distribution and exhibition of film at the community level. These shall be subject to maintaining the special developmental character and role of community media. Films produced shall tell the stories and advance the interests of local communities. Films exhibited shall be predominantly national or local productions and shall in all cases meet the highest ethical standards.

- iv. The system for monitoring film content and regulating its distribution shall, working through the community media centres and other channels, encourage the development and application of community standards both in the urban and rural areas.

#### 7.4 The Wire Services

*Wire services*, otherwise known as *news agencies*, are central organizations which gather and disseminate news covering a large geographical area, both national and foreign.

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#### **7.4.2 Overall Policy Statement**

- i. The efficient and effective collection and distribution of news and information shall be regarded as key ingredients of the national development effort.
- ii. A national news service that is dedicated to this effort shall be a critical element not only in supporting national development but also in maintaining the country's information autonomy and sovereignty.
- iii. As many other news services as possible shall be encouraged to meet the total news and information needs of the country.

#### **7.4.3 Public News Agency**

- i. The Ghana News Agency (GNA) shall be retained as a national public news collection and dissemination service.
- ii. Like other public media, it shall operate as a modern, professional, competitive service.
- iii. The thrust of its efforts shall be to provide nationwide coverage and, especially, to collect and disseminate news from the remote areas of the country.
- iv. It shall set up well-established regional offices within the country.
- v. It shall also have at least one full-time correspondent in each of the 110 Districts.
- vi. The focus of its news shall be culture, development and

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education, including information, features and analysis. Such news shall be national as well as Pan-African in scope.

vii. For the efficient gathering, collection and distribution of news, it shall be provided with equipment in keeping with the advances of information technology.

viii. It shall distribute news both locally and abroad.

ix. To carry out its important mandate, its main source of revenue shall be Government subvention. It shall strengthen the commercialization of its services to raise additional revenue to supplement its subvention from Government. Such commercialization shall not in any way compromise its obligations to national development.

x. Ownership of GNA shall be a mix of Government and private interests and shall be 100% Ghanaian.

xi. Governance of the GNA shall be as per the public print, broadcast and film media.

#### **7.4.4 Commercial News Agencies**

- i. Commercial news agencies shall be encouraged to operate freely as business enterprises.
- ii. At least 30% of their output shall be on educational, cultural, and development news originating outside the urban centres.
- iii. They shall enjoy the same incentives as for the commercial print media, subject to the same conditions.

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- iv. Special concessions shall be awarded to commercial news agencies that establish themselves outside the urban areas and that use at least one local language on a consistent basis.

#### 7.4.5 Community News Agencies

- i. The establishment of small-scale, local language community-based news agencies shall be encouraged.
- ii. They may operate independently or in conjunction with community newspapers and/or community broadcasting organizations.
- iii. They shall be granted the same incentives as community radio stations, subject to the same conditions.

#### 7.5 Advertising

*Advertising refers to the presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services paid for by an identified sponsor.*

#### 7.5.2 Overall Policy Statement

- i. Advertising shall assist the ordinary Ghanaian to make informed choices based on local values.
- ii. It shall insist on standards that promote high aesthetic and ethical values. An important element shall be the observance of the principle of truth in advertising.
- iii. It shall protect the public against practices that endanger health, morality and cultural values and sensibilities.
- iv. In particular, it shall take cognizance of the vulnerability of

children and promote the dignity of women, as well as of people who may be disabled in various ways.

- v. It shall encourage diversity of points of view in advertising.
- vi. It shall encourage the growth of the industry by encouraging local production..

#### 7.5.3 Specific Policy Implementation Guidelines

- i. Local production of culturally appropriate advertisements using local talent shall be vigorously promoted.
- ii. The production of commercials that provide consumers sufficient information on products shall also be actively promoted.
- iii. The propagation of contrary points of view on advertised products and ideas shall be observed, based on the fairness doctrine. Such alternative points of view shall, depending on the promoter, be carried either free of charge or at preferential rates.
- iv. A national advertising review board comprising representatives of advertisers, advertising agencies and the public shall be established to oversee the development of the industry, monitor standards and review complaints.
- v. Self-regulation shall be vigorously encouraged. To this end, the Advertising Association of Ghana shall adopt a code of ethics and standards that shall be binding on all advertising practitioners. The code shall reflect the concerns of this policy document, especially the affirmation and promotion of national

3) An Examination/Accreditation body be established alongside the regulatory body to test, and accredit public relations professions.

4) Strengthen the Institute of Public Relations to play a lead role in defining field of Public Relations and in enforcing a code of ethics or code of professional practice.

5) The National Media Commission be organised to provide oversight authority for issues dealing with professionalism in public relations.

### 7.6.3 Specific Policy Implementation Guidelines

i. Practitioners shall be expected to have undergone properly constituted formal training by licensed institutions.

ii. The Institute of Public Relations, Ghana shall be strengthened to enable it to play a regulatory role in defining the field of public relations and registering and licensing practitioners through a properly constituted board of examiners.

iii. Local/foreign Public Relations professionals shall only be allowed to practice if accredited by the Institute of Public Relations, Ghana.

culture. It shall also include sanctions, provisions and mechanisms for enforcement.

vi. Foreign advertising agencies shall only be allowed to operate and place advertisements if they are registered members of the Advertising Association of Ghana.

vii. All media houses shall adopt in-house rules for advertising that reflect the spirit and direction of this policy.

viii. The formation of consumer organizations shall be actively encouraged.

### 7.6 Public Relations

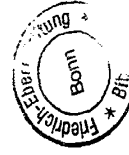
*Public relations* is the distinctive management art and social science function based on an understanding of human behaviour that identifies issues of critical relevance, analyses future trends and predicts their consequences, and establishes and maintains mutual beneficial relationships between an organization or group and its publics based on truth, full information and responsible performance.

### 7.6.2 Overall Policy Statement

i The overall purpose of this policy will be to strengthen the capacity and capability of Public Relations to contribute to the national development effort. This will require the following:-

1) Provide a regulatory mechanism for public relations to enable the public to identify and distinguish between the professionally qualified practitioner who can help resolve problems and distinguish them from the non-professional.

2) Practitioners should be expected to have undergone properly constituted formal training in the field.





# **APPENDICES 4:**

## **GUIDELINES FOR BROADCASTING STANDARDS OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

# **GUIDELINES FOR BROADCASTING**

## **PREAMBLE**

Taking into consideration the importance and sensitivity of the electronic media for the promotion of freedom of expression, democracy, national culture, as well as social and economic development, the following standards shall apply in the preparation, presentation and transmission not only of programmes but also of advertising material on any broadcasting station transmitting in Ghana.

### **1. National Identity of Programming**

(a) In pursuance of the stated cultural and social development objectives of broadcasting in Ghana emphasis shall be placed on the broadcast of local programmes and the development of a national identity as a major priority by all broadcasting stations authorized to operate in Ghana.

(b) Broadcasting stations shall endeavour at all times to reflect and promote national development in their programmes and other output including advertising, protection of the environment, family planning and gender issues.

(c) Broadcasting stations shall, in particular, facilitate the participation of marginalized individuals and communities in national priority-setting and decision-making by providing them access to express their views and share their knowledge in programmes.

### **2. Accuracy, Objectivity and Fairness**

(a) Information given in any programme, should be presented accurately, honestly and impartially.

(b) All issues of public interest should be adequately presented to ensure fairness.

(c) The right of reply should be guaranteed to any person or body with a genuine claim to misrepresentation.

### **3. Good Taste And Decency**

(a) Broadcast programmes should avoid all indecency and incitement to ethnic, religious or sectional hatred and disaffection.

(b) Obscene or vulgar language, expressions and presentations should not be used.

(c) The sanctity of marriage and family values should be promoted and strictly upheld.

(d) Care should be taken not to offend the sensibilities of disabled and handicapped persons.

(e) The use of lewd or profane expressions, except in a specifically relevant context, should be avoided.

- (f) Foreign values should be presented in a manner as not to have a negative influence on the community.
- (g) Ghanaian cultural rites and practices of value should be promoted with accuracy.
- (h) Standards and guidelines set for locally-produced programmes, advertisements and other broadcast material shall apply equally to foreign originated programmes and advertisements relayed or re-broadcast over the airwaves of Ghana.

#### **4. Language in Broadcasts**

Presenters and speakers on radio and television serve as role models, as far as the use of language is concerned. Broadcasting stations should ensure at all times that their presenters and participants in their programmes speak language appropriate to the programme and of the highest possible standard.

#### **5. Authenticity**

- (a) Great care must be taken that broadcasting does not blur the distinction between truth and fiction.
- (b) Fictional events, including reconstructions, shall be identified as such.
- (c) Statements or information that could be ambiguous or misleading should be avoided.

#### **6. Morality and Social Values**

- (a) Undesirable aspects of human nature, such as cruelty, greed, lust, selfishness, and vindictiveness should not be glamorized.
- (b) Drunkenness and robbery should not be allowed in programmes except as destructive habits to be avoided or denounced.
- (c) The use of narcotic substances should only be presented to educate the public on their harmful effects.
- (d) Sex-related crimes, such as prostitution, rape, bestiality, incest, etc., should be portrayed as destructive practices to be avoided or denounced.
- (e) Liquor consumption and smoking should be shown only when consistent with plot and character development.
- (f) Suicide should not be treated as an acceptable solution to human problems.
- (g) Programmes meant for adults of 18 years and above should be broadcast only after 10:10pm.

#### **7. Portrayal of Sex**

- (a) Treatment of sex in all programmes or as part of entertainment should be handled in a manner not to offend the moral dignity, decency and sensibilities of the audience.
- (b) Documentaries or programmes dealing with a variety of sexual themes shall not make public and explicit what should be private and exclusive.

(c) Where a story involves actual sexual relations, it should be presented without undue exploitation of its sexual aspects.

(d) In representing sexual activity in televised or filmed drama, producers should consider whether the degree of explicitness is justified by the context in which it occurs.

(e) Actual sexual intercourse between humans should at no time be transmitted.

## **8. Crime, Law and Order**

(a) Language or scenes likely to encourage or incite crime, glorify war or lead to disorder should be avoided.

(b) Criminal tendencies should be presented as undesirable.

(c) The treatment of the commission of crime in a frivolous and permissive manner should be avoided.

(d) The presentation of techniques of crime, in such detail as to invite imitation, should be avoided.

(e) Law enforcement should be upheld at all times in a manner that affirms that law and order are the universally-accepted norms of society.

## **9. Broadcasts and the Law**

Broadcasters should satisfy themselves that the contents of all programmes are not at variance with the Constitution of Ghana nor infringe laws and regulations such as:

(a) Laws of libel and sedition

(b) The Copyright Law of 1985 (P.N.D.C. L110)

(c) Copyright Society of Ghana Regulations 1992 (L.I. 1527)

(d) Any other relevant laws, regulations, international treaties or obligations relating to broadcasting and the standards set out in these guidelines.

## **10. Portrayal of Violence, Cruelty and Horror**

(a) Broadcasting shall at all times uphold respect for the dignity of human beings and their environment.

(b) All forms of domestic violence should be presented as undesirable.

(c) Excessive or detailed portrayal of physical suffering and pain or images of human and animal parts shall be avoided.

(d) Sexual violence and violence directed at older people or children should be reported with particular sensitivity.

- (e) In representing violent crimes, programmes should not glamorize the criminal or soften their image in a manner which may diminish the ugliness and severity of crime.
- (f) In reconstructing a crime involving violence care should be taken not to over-emphasize the dramatic aspects of the incident nor discuss the weapons used in unnecessary detail.
- (g) Violence should not be portrayed in drama as an end in itself or for the purposes of entertainment.
- (h) Care should be taken about the intrusion of violence into locations regarded as places of safety such as hospitals, places of worship and homes which may threaten some people's sense of security and seriously reduce the quality of their lives.
- (i) Violent crimes should not be presented to the extent that they will have a "copycat" effect.
- (j) TV stations should avoid repeated exposure of their audiences to violence, which will desensitize them and make them indifferent to the plight of victims.
- (k) The degradation of women as objects of male violence should not be encouraged.

### **11. Children's Programmes**

- (a) Materials likely to affect adversely the sensitivities and sensibilities of children should be avoided.
- (b) Any programme which contravenes social values, shows disrespect for law and order, or departs from an honourable life-style should be forbidden.
- (c) Programmes with "adult" content e.g. sexually-explicit scenes or language should not be broadcast when children are likely to be watching or listening.
- (d) Swearing or blasphemous language of any kind should be avoided.
- (e) Children should be protected from ethnic or other complexes resulting from careless or deliberate comparisons or information.
- (f) Violence and crime should not be glamorized but should be portrayed as punishable.
- (g) Foreign folklore and values should be identified as such and treated with caution to prevent undue influence
- (h) Ghanaian culture, folklore and values should be promoted. Popular superstitions should be handled with discretion.

### **12. Quiz Programmes**

Programmes such as contests of knowledge, information, skill or luck should be absolutely genuine and not contrived through collusion with, or amongst, contestants, or any other action which will favour one contestant over another. Results shall not be the product of any malpractice.

### **13. Music**

- (a) In the choice of music for all applications in broadcasting, emphasis shall be placed on African music particularly Ghanaian music.
- (b) Ghanaian and African music shall constitute a minimum of fifty (50) percent of all music broadcast by any radio or television station in any particular week. Care should also be taken to have a fair representation of local ethnic talent.
- (c) The provision covering good taste and decency, morality and social values, shall also apply to music, particularly lyrics and visual presentation.

### **14. Schools Programmes**

- (a) All Stations must endeavour to broadcast instructional educational programmes to support the work of the Ministry of Education. Such programmes are referred to in this code as Schools Programmes i.e. educational programmes based on a specific curriculum designed for systematic teaching of a subject with an object of preparing people for an examination at any level of the educational system.
- (b) Schools programmes must be of high quality and broadcast in consultation with appropriate educational authority
- (c) The integrity of schools programmes must not be compromised or influenced by sponsorship or advertising considerations.
- (d) Advertising in school programmes should be in conformity with the theme of the programme and should give useful and relevant information with credits for the Sponsors. Sponsors' advertisements shall only be allowed at the beginning and at the end of schools programmes.
- (e) People who present schools programmes must have the appropriate qualification in the subject(s) they present.

### **15. Drama and Film**

- (a) Film and Drama programmes must serve as important means of education, promotion of national consciousness, entertainment, as well as vehicles for promoting the social, economic and cultural objectives of the Nation.
- (b) As far as possible, broadcasters shall devote at least 50% of their airtime to local productions.
- (c) Television broadcasters are encouraged to show Ghanaian and African films.
- (d) An internal mechanism of censoring local and foreign films and radio programmes should be established to safeguard Ghanaian values and interests.
- (e) Films and radio and television programmes with adult content should not be broadcast when children are likely to be watching or listening.
- (f) Violence and crime should not be glamorized in films but should be portrayed as punishable.

(g) Pornography and copying of foreign values and expressions, which are likely to impact negatively on Ghanaians, should be discouraged.

(h) Upgrading of the quality of local productions should be encouraged and promoted.

(i) The scheduling of all films and television programmes should be guided by existing classification policy.

(j) Discretion should be used in the portrayal of women in film and drama to avoid presenting a consistently negative and stereotyped image.

## **16. News and Current Affairs Programmes**

(a) In order to promote diversity, broadcasters should endeavour to have regular news programmes in their broadcast schedules.

(b) All news reports should be truthful, accurate and impartial.

(c) News commentaries and analyses should be clearly identified as such.

(d) Programmes devoted to the discussion of controversial public affairs should ensure fairness and balance of views.

(e) Commercials and paid-for items in news and current affairs programmes should be placed and presented in a manner that will make them clearly distinguishable from the programmes.

(f) All transmissions intended to supply information and help form public opinion should be thoroughly researched and assertions of fact should be verifiable.

## **17. Political Broadcasts**

(a) All broadcasts in support of political parties or candidates whether paid for or on free air-time basis shall be clearly identified as such.

(b) Coverage of political activities must include the aim of collecting and disseminating truthful, unbiased information on political parties and their activities to the public.

(c) Broadcasters must provide the public with information that would enable the electorate to make intelligent choices during elections.

(d) Stations are to ensure that coverage of political activities is comprehensive and fair to all and that the information gathered is presented also objectively and impartially as possible.

(e) Broadcasting station operators shall maintain a logbook with detailed records on all political broadcasts. Such records shall be made available on request to the to the National Media Commission and members of the public.

(f) Details to be recorded in the log-book shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

i. Date, time and duration of broadcasts;

ii. Personalities involved, and

iii. Subject matter.

(g) Media practitioners must remain neutral in partisan politics and avoid all associations and activities that may compromise their integrity as journalists or damage their credibility.

(h) The host of any political programme who is identified with a particular political party should be required to be fair to all parties.

(i) Presentation of government activities during elections should be weighed carefully to ensure that the incumbent party does not gain unfair access to the media. Bona fide news should be covered without giving the impression of bias.

(j) All political broadcasts should be in decent language.

(k) Controversial or offensive references to opponents must be avoided, if at all possible, unless there is clear justification.

(l) Conditions for broadcasting political and party candidates programmes should be the same for all political parties.

## **18. Religious Programmes**

(a) The opportunity for religious broadcast presentations should be made available to the various religions in the community, but caution should be applied that the expectations of listeners and viewers are not abused.

(b) Religious broadcasts that relate to religious doctrine exclusively, should be presented by responsible representatives of the religion.

(c) Religious broadcasts should not contain any attack on, or ridicule of, any other religion.

(d) The content of religious programmes shall be prepared with due regard and respect for the beliefs and sensibilities of all religions.

(e) Conditions for broadcasting religious programmes should be the same for all religious groups.

## **19. Advertisements**

(i) Advertisements shall be clearly identified as such and distinguished from normal programmes. There shall be not more than ten (10) minutes of advertisements in any one (1) hour.

### **(ii) Legality**

(a) No advertisement shall be broadcast in connection with a product or service, which is illegal.



(b) It is the responsibility of broadcasters to ensure that all claims made on behalf of a product or service can be substantiated.

### **(iii) Programme Sponsorship**

(a) Sponsorship shall be allowed for entire programmes or parts of a programme, except the news and programmes dealing with current political or industrial controversy. However, sponsorship may be allowed for specialist reports, e.g. financial news, weather, traffic and sports.

(b) No political party will be allowed to sponsor any programme other than a political broadcast.

(c) Sponsorship conditions shall not interfere with the integrity of the programmes. However, commercial breaks may be allowed in such programmes.

(d) Editorial responsibility for sponsored programmes remains with the broadcaster.

(e) Sponsorship of a programme or part of a programme by a promoter of a product or service shall also be considered as advertising.

### **(iv) Unacceptable Advertising**

(a) No advertisement shall cause those who see or hear it unwarranted anxiety. Neither shall there be an appeal to fear.

(b) No advertisement shall promote stereotypes or in any way denigrate any individual or group in society, religions, faiths and philosophies of life.

(c) It is unethical for certain professions to advertise. They are Physicians, Lawyers, Dentists, Osteopaths, Chiropractors, Occultists, Optometrists and others of a similar nature.

(d) Advertising of tobacco products should not be allowed.

### **(v) Advertising and Children**

(a) When children are likely to be viewing or listening, no product or service may be advertised and no method of advertising should be employed which takes advantage of their natural credulity and susceptibility.

(b) Advertisements should not exhort children to purchase or to ask parents/guardians to purchase items/services.

(c) Advertisements for the following should not be transmitted during children's programmes or adjacent to them:

i) Alcoholic drinks

ii) Medicines

iii) Contraceptives

iv) Trailers of films with adult content, that is sex, violence, nudity and bad language.

v) Any other items that could pose a danger to children.

(d) Advertisements, which may frighten or cause distress to children should be subject to appropriate restrictions on time of transmission.

(e) Children in advertisements should be well mannered and well behaved.

(f) Raffles and lotteries should not be advertised in or juxtaposed to children's programmes neither should advertisements for such events be targeted at them.

**(vi) Alcoholic Drinks**

(a) Advertising of alcoholic drinks should not be directed at persons under 18 years in contravention of the Liquor Licensing Act 1970 (Act 331). Presentation of advertisements on alcoholic drinks likely to be of particular appeal to children should be avoided.

(b) Children should not be seen or heard in an advertisement for alcoholic drinks.

(c) In advertisements for drinks containing alcohol anyone associated with drinking should be or appear to be at least 18 years old.

(d) Advertisements for alcoholic drinks should not feature any personality whose example persons under 18 years are likely to emulate or who has a particular appeal to persons under that age.

(e) Advertisements should not imply that drinking is essential to social success or acceptance or that refusal is a sign of weakness. It should also not be implied that the successful outcome of a social occasion is dependent on the consumption of alcohol.

(f) Advertisements should not claim that alcohol has therapeutic qualities nor should it be presented as a stimulant, sedative or tranquiliser.

(g) While advertisements may refer to refreshment after physical performance they should not give any impression that performance can be improved by alcoholic drinks.

(h) Advertisements should not suggest that a drink is to be preferred because of higher alcohol content or intoxicating effect.

(i) Nothing in an advertisement should link drinking of alcohol with driving or the operation of potentially dangerous machinery.

(j) Advertisements should neither claim nor suggest that any alcoholic drink can contribute towards sexual success or can enhance sexual attractiveness.

(k) Advertisements should not suggest that regular solitary drinking is acceptable or that drinking is a means of resolving personal problems.

(l) No advertisement should suggest that drinking is an essential attribute of masculinity. Advertisements featuring toughness or bravado in association with drinking should not be used. Alcoholic drinks should not be advertised in the context of aggressive or anti-social behaviour.

(m) Alcoholic drinks should not be seen to be consumed in a working environment unless it is clearly established that the working day has ended.

**(vii) Financial Advertising**

(a) Advertisements should not present a financial product or service in misleading terms.

(b) References to taxation or interest on savings etc. should be clearly explained, and be factually correct at the time of transmission.

(c) Advertisements should comply with legal requirements.

(d) Any advertisement which falls in a grey area should be referred to the appropriate authority for clearance.

**(viii) Comparisons**

Advertisements should not unfairly attack or discredit other products or services, advertisers or advertisements expressly or by implication.

**(ix) Health Claims, Medicines and Medical Treatment etc.**

(a) Medicines require great care in their advertising, and health claims require very close scrutiny. Therefore all advertising of medicines and pharmaceutical products should be screened by the Pharmacy Council.

(b) No script or advertisement should be accepted which may mislead persons to believe that the product or service has the endorsement of any health authority.

(c) Advertising for alternative medicines and medical treatment should meet the same requirements as do orthodox non-prescription medicines and treatment. However these may need to be channelled through an establishment familiar with that area of alternative medicine.

**20. Station Identification and Monitoring of Programmes**

(a) Each station shall, during its normal broadcasting hours, transmit at intervals not exceeding 30 minutes, a station identification which shall include the station name and operating frequencies.

(b) Broadcasting stations shall operate logging systems. Station logs shall be available at all times for inspection by the appropriate authorities.

(c) Each station shall keep a daily log of all transmitted programmes for a period of (six) 6 months.

**21. Programme Relays**

Caution should be exercised in the relay of foreign broadcasts since they may directly or indirectly subvert national identity, culture and self-respect. Such broadcasts if any, should only be relayed through a local station.

# **APPENDICES 5:**

## **METHOD INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

## General Interview Guide

Name:

Position / Title:

Main Programmes worked:

### Normal Processes

1. Describe your normal process of beginning a programme production:
  - a. How is programme content developed?
  - b. Is there an ideological underpinning to ideation for productions?
  - c. What criteria (standards & content) are employed for production?
  - d. To what extent are ideas influenced by social, political and economic factors?
  - e. To what extent are ideas influenced by offerings on imported foreign content?
2. What outcomes (quality, message, audience feedback) are desired for productions?
3. How do you intend to monitor/measure production outcomes?

### Public Service Values

4. How would you relate your work to a 'public service values' influenced process?
5. To what extent are the international benchmarks of 'public service values' applied?
  - a. Explore notions of diversity, universal access to *the content* of productions, distinctiveness and independence.
  - b. Explore notions of social cohesion and social capital enhancement in the educative nature of content.
6. Can you relate these to the work you do and give examples?
  - a. Diversity – genres, regional representation, ethnic (esp. minorities) representation, programme participation for disabled and sensory impaired, socio-economic and political plurality
  - b. Universality – access nationally, access for sensory impaired, access across language divides,
  - c. How do you relate these values to your work and Ghanaian society?
7. How do you relate these to your work process within GTv?

### Reflective Processes

8. Is there a use of a formal documentation of programme aims, objectives, standards, desires in programme content making and outcomes from the beginning?
  - a. What documents are these drawn from?
  - b. How often do you refer to these documents?

- c. How are these outcomes monitored/measured?
9. Is there another formal process for deciding aims, objectives, standards, desires in programme content and outcomes?
    - a. How do these processes work?
  10. How are these outcomes monitored/measured?
  11. What learning has been gained through the monitoring process?
  12. Training
    - a. Are there formalised training processes aimed at helping you improve your work?
    - b. Are these sessions aimed at development communication understanding and enrichment?

### **Development Communication**

13. Is there a formalised objective to create programmes for social and national development in your work?
14. How often do you refer to these formal objectives?
15. What processes are used to develop such programme ideas?
16. How are affected communities engaged with when making such programmes?
17. How are outcomes monitored / measured?
18. How much dialogue should there be between GTv and its audience?
19. In what ways, do you think GTv contributes to national development?
20. How could this be improved?

## Broadcast Data and Number Codes for SPSS Analysis

Codes	Programming Types	Genre	Audience	Production
1	Information	News	Adult	In-house
2	Education	Sport	Youth	Out-house
3	Entertainment	Film	Children	Co-prod.
4	Unknown	Factual	Family	Unknown
5		Learning		
6		Sitcom		
7		Variety		
8		Music (Pop)		
9		Music (Religious)		
10		Telenovela		
11		Culture		
12		Christian Teaching		
13		Fashion/Beauty		
14		Local Drama		
15		Islamic Teaching		
16		TV Serial		
17		Game Show		
18		Talkshow		
19		Soap		
20		Quiz		
21		Line-Up/Announcements		
22		Branded Infotainment		
23		Life		
24		Unknown		
25		Product Advertising		

Codes	Origin	Interactivity	Language Used	Government Communication
1	USA	Studio	English	Yes
2	Germany	Phone-in	Akan	No
3	Hispanic	None	Ga	Unknown
4	Britain	Unknown	Nzema	
5	Ghana		Dagbani	
6	Nigeria		Ewe	
7	Other African		French	
8	Unknown		Multi-lingual	
9			Local language	

## **APPENDICES 6:**

### **SAMPLES OF NEWS PUBLICATIONS REPORTING STORIES AND REACTIONS TO HOMOSEXUALITY IN GHANA**



## **Rev Minister: Homosexuals compete with babies for diapers**

**Published On:** August 27, 2011, 00:00 GMT

The argument against homosexuality has taken a new twist with the superintendent minister for the Wa Methodist Church of Ghana insinuating that homosexual men compete with babies for diapers.

At an induction ceremony, the Very Rev. Samuel. C. Hagan, claimed diapers are in short supply owing to the "evil" activities of gay men.

His utterances follow weeks of heated debate over the rights or wrongs of the practice of homosexuality in the country.

Human rights advocates have called for the rights of lesbians and homosexuals to be respected.

But critics, particularly religious leaders, have been quick to revolt.

The Very Reverend Samuel Hagan minced no words in condemning the activities of gay men.

In a report filed Joy News' Upper West correspondent Rafiq Salam, Samuel Hagan criticized pastors who he said presided over gay marriages.

He commended human rights advocates for championing the respect for the rights of the vulnerable in society but admonished them against championing the rights of homosexuals.

"Your rights of freedom to pursue freedom for others are good but don't use freedom as a covering for evil."

"Now there are many men who are struggling with babies for the demand of pampers," he noted.

"I challenge all religious bodies to come out clear and state their positions since the menace of homosexuality is consuming the society like a bush fire," he stated.

**Source:** Joy News/Myjoyonline.com/Ghana

**Link:** <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201106/68272.php>

## Homosexuality: Stop the double standards! Anna Bossman tells pastors

**Published On:** August 2, 2011, 00:00 GMT

The outgoing Acting Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Anna Bossman has taken a swipe at some members of the clergy whom she said have been inciting hatred against homosexuals in the country.

Speaking on the Personality Profile edition of Multi TV's current affairs program **pm: EXPRESS**, Ms. Bossman asked society, particularly members of the clergy not to be hypocritical on issues concerning homosexuals.

Some pastors have in recent times condemned the increasing reports homosexual activities in the country with a Methodist Bishop in the Upper West region recently alluding to the fact that owing to the increasing number of gay men in the country, they are now having to compete with babies for diapers.

But Ms. Bossman thinks the hate message by the men of God is out of tune with the religion they profess.

"I don't know whether I can claim to be a very devout Christian... I can't claim that I am someone who reads the Bible all the time but I know one thing, if you are a Christian it means that you're following Jesus Christ and I know from the things I have read that when it came to the matter of an adulteress, there was a story right in the Bible about an adulteress when people were going to stone her because she was an adulteress and they asked Jesus about it what did he say? 'He who is without sin let him be the first to cast the stone.' That's what he said, why, because the whole religion, Christianity is about compassion, it's not about going and standing and inciting hate."

"That is what I understand. I am not a priest but in my layman understanding, I know that the least I can do is to show compassion to others. That's the least I can do and I will never go and stand anywhere and incite hate against anybody, never" she stated.

Ms Bossman accused the priests of closing their eyes to the numerous cases of child sexual abuse even though they they know most of the perpetrators and failing to condemn the practice and rather focus on bashing homosexuals.

"Why are we not making noise about these people who are preying on vulnerable and defenceless children? If you talk to me about these things, yes I'll have something to say about these things. Why are we not talking about parents, especially men who are in very high positions and who are regarded as a pillar of society. Why are we not talking about them who rape their daughters and we know them. You are hiding your face behind things that are really atrocious and then you're going to worry about persons who consensually, they're not doing anything to anybody, they're doing to themselves – it's not my problem."

"These other things that I'm talking to you about, rape of children, the violence against women, defenceless women, these are things that we should really be talking about and we should try to do something about it and so I take great exception to persons and even priests and pastors who can come and stand and incite hate against persons who are different but at the same time they are protecting persons who are doing unspeakable things to children" she said.

According to Ms. Bossman, "the issue is really is not the marriage, I don't think that's really the issue. But the real issue is the way and manner we treat others because they are different from us. That's the real issue so I don't think it should be brought down to same sex marriage. It's how are we treating people differently. Are we treating people humanely and with compassion and are we recognising that people might be completely different from us but do have the same rights of respect and do have fundamental human rights, that the real issue."

She urged society not to be hypocritical on the issue since "there are many things that we cannot explain and when we cannot explain them then our reaction is either because of fear maybe or simply  
javascript:openNewWindow('pix.asp','%20'PhotoGallery','900','800');because of whatever reason we start doing things we shouldn't be doing. What we have to accept is that there are people who obviously are not like us or they do view love but they find that they are attracted to the same sex."

**Nii Akrofi Smart-Abbey/ Multi TV/ Ghana**

**Link:** <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201107/68552.php>

## **APPENDICES 7:**

### **EXPLANATIONARY NOTES TO PARTICIPANTS AND REFERENCED ROLES FROM INTERVIEWS**

## Personality and Job Function Codes

### Interviewees:

- X1 - GTv Producer-Director, Documentaries.  
**Worked 20 years at GTv.**  
Trained in-house, at NAFTI (HND, Television) and Westminster University (MA, Television Production)
- X2 - GTv Producer-Director, Sports and Music Entertainment.  
**Worked 6 years at Gtv**  
Trained in-house and South Africa on a short-course, and University of Ghana (BA, Humanities)
- X3 - GTv Producer-Director, Drama and Live Events.  
**Worked 11yrs at GTv**  
Trained at NAFTI (BA, Television).
- X4 - GTv Producer-Director and Chief Controller of Programmes  
**Worked 21 yrs at GTv.**  
Trained in-house and at NAFTI (HND, Television).
- X5 - GTv Head of Programmes  
**Worked 33 years at GTv.**  
Trained in-house and at NAFTI (HND, Television)
- X6 - GTv Executive Producer.  
**Worked 38 years at GTV**  
Trained in-house and at NAFTI (HND, Television)
- X7 - GBC Researcher  
**Worked 37years at GBC**
- X8 - Former Director of Television

### Job Functions

- P1 - Director of Television (DTv), Head of Television Division
- P2 - Director-General, GBC, Head of Executive Board, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
- P3 - Chief Controller of Programmes (CcoP) or Head of Programmes (HoP)
- P4 - Executive Producer or Supervising Producer.