

■ Towards a policy model for community radio broadcasting in Zambia

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■ Abstract

- This article, which is based on a focused synthesis of a range of historical, political, policy, regulatory and other factors, proposes a normative policy model for community radio broadcasting in Zambia. It starts with a historical analysis of the factors that have influenced the development of community radio broadcasting in the country, particularly in the period before and after 1991. It is argued that community radio broadcasting in Zambia is largely reflective of the state-centric policy-making regime. This policy-making regime is itself a legacy of British colonialism. The policy proposal put forward in this article is informed by the assumptions of the *group* and *organised anarchy* models of policy-making and seeks to promote community radio broadcasting in terms of its vision, regulatory structures, funding, training, technology, production of local content and research.

1 Introduction

The 1990s were a decisive period in the emergence of community radio broadcasting in Zambia.¹ This followed the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector by the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), which assumed political office in 1991.

One particularly significant policy move by the MMD Government was the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Service's (MIBS) 1996 *Information and media policy* framework paper, revised in 1999. Making submissions before the Parliamentary Committee on Information Broadcasting Services in 1999, the then MIBS Permanent Secretary, Suzanne Sikaneta, argued that the ministry's policy paper was a culmination of a consultative process involving key stakeholders in the media industry, such as the media themselves, media freedom activists and the government itself (Zambia 1999a).

However, various civil bodies, especially media-related ones, such as the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA) (Sikazwe 2000) and the Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA) (Chembo 2000), have repeatedly argued that they were not fully consulted on the development of this policy.

The policy framework makes very general statements about 'community radio' or 'community media'. This seems to reflect the fact that the development of community radio-friendly policy has not been moving at the same pace as the rapid developments in broadcasting and telecommunications worldwide. Several reasons can be given for this.

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Firstly, although the phenomenon of community radio is not new on the African continent (Mtimde, Bonin, Maphiri & Nyamaku 1998), it was only after 1991 that it began to receive official recognition in Zambia. Following the liberalisation of the politico-economic landscape, the media industry was opened up to private capital, with the result that several financiers began to apply for radio broadcasting licences.

Secondly, since community radio is *just* beginning to emerge as an important medium of localised communication in Zambia, there is little comprehensive, systematic and coherent research data on the phenomenon. This may, in turn, explain why the formulation of policy has largely been neglected. It is noteworthy that in the absence of such a policy, administration in the field of community radio has not been effective and satisfactory to many community media initiators.

Thirdly, the Government *itself* has not actively pursued the formulation of a well-articulated policy framework for community radio broadcasting. Over the years, there have been verbal pronouncements which, unfortunately, have not been translated into concrete policy action. In part, this has resulted in some misconception about what constitutes 'community radio'. For instance, Radio Phoenix, a privately owned, commercial FM radio station, was given a licence in 1996 on the premise that it was a 'community radio' station. However, some years down the line, its proprietors have ceased to measure themselves against the standards used by such movements as the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) to define community radio.

This misconception has clearly not been addressed by the *Information and media policy* paper of 1996 although it sees the setting up of 'community-based media' as one of the prerequisites for 'promoting and facilitating the growth of a sustainable media industry, capable of enhancing free flow of information and freedom of expression for national development over the 1996–2005 period' (Zambia 1996). Nor has it been adequately addressed in the revised draft policy paper of 1999 (Zambia 1999b).

Despite this ambivalence in policy, between 1994 and 2000 several private FM radio stations have emerged. By 2000, a total of 11 construction permits/licences had been issued.

The above is a brief background to the thesis on which this research is based. This article describes the investigation of the following four research questions:

- Is there a need for community radio broadcasting in Zambia?²
- What are the problems associated with community radio broadcasting?
- What historical (media) factors have shaped the development of community radio in Zambia?
- What policy model for community radio broadcasting can be suggested for Zambia?

In this article, the emphasis is on the last two questions.

2 Methodology

The methodological approach used in addressing the research questions is the so-called ‘focused synthesis’, first described by Majchrzak (1984) in relation to policy studies. The approach is largely dependent on existing information on the basis of which deductions are made in relation to the state of a policy and on the basis of which recommendations for improving policy are made.

Whereas a focused synthesis may be very much like traditional literature reviews in that it involves the selective review of written materials and existing research findings relevant to the particular research questions, it must not be confused with the latter. Indeed, one can easily see several distinctions. For one thing, a typical focused synthesis discusses information obtained from a variety of sources beyond published articles. It engages in discussions with experts and stakeholders, anecdotal stories, personal past experience of the researcher, unpublished documents, staff memoranda, and any published materials related to the topic of research. For another, focused synthesis, unlike a literature review which seeks only to describe sets of research studies and identify gaps or areas needing more research, uses information sources to the extent that they directly contribute to the overall synthesis. Furthermore, while most traditional literature reviews are used as stepping stones for subsequent research, focused synthesis tends to be used alone in a technical analysis in such a way that the results of the synthesis are themselves the results of the policy research effort (Majchrzak 1984:59–60). In the case of this research, a vast amount of policy, quasi-policy, official and unofficial documents on the media in Zambia, relevant literature on the topic of community radio broadcasting, interviews with key role players, as well as research publications on media policy in general, were scrutinised in order to arrive at a proposed model formulation for community broadcasting in Zambia.

3 Historical contextualisation

It is clear that the evolution of community radio broadcasting in Zambia has been influenced by two streams of historical factors closely associated with the broader history of the media in Zambia, including the press. The first stream can be located in the period prior to 1991 and the second in the post-1991 period.

3.1 The Zambian media landscape before 1991

It is useful to position Zambia’s media scenario within a wider pan-African media landscape. As Mbennah, Hooyberg and Mer sham (1998:41–63) observe, the mass media in Africa have developed quite steadily since the late 1950s and particularly since the early period of decolonisation. In the 1970s, Africa was the continent least endowed with news communication resources. Compared to other continents, it had fewer newspapers, periodicals, broadcasting transmitters and receivers, and cinemas. Generally, mass communications, the authors argue, served a small, educated elite group, about 10 per cent of the population, clustered in urban areas (Mbennah et al. 1998:42).

The media in Zambia, like in other African countries, are a legacy of the country's colonial past. The development of the media was directly or indirectly linked to the colonial objectives of the British Empire. As Mytton (1983:37) observes: 'Africa's modern print and electronic media developed as the direct or indirect result of contact with Europe. Few African societies had a written language, and in those that did, printing was either unknown or underdeveloped. Arab traders brought literacy to West and East Africa, but the technology of printing came from Europe and the United States.'

Furthermore, the history of the press in Zambia is closely bound up with that of South Africa. The country was linked to the South by economic ties, by transport and communications, and by the political pressures exerted by vocal white settler communities (Mytton 1983:37).

It was in this crucible of changing political fortunes, between 1940 and 1960, that most of the country's newspapers were born. Among these were the *Northern News*, the *Central African Post*, the *African Times* and the *Central African Mail* (Mytton 1983:37–49; Kasoma 1986:41–76).

In December 1964, shortly after independence, the *Northern News* was sold to the London-Rhodesia Corporation (LONRHO) (Kasoma 1986:83). LONRHO had also just bought out the brewing concern Heinrichs, which in 1964 had started another daily called the *Zambia Times* and a weekly called the *Zambia News*. LONRHO merged the *Northern News* and the *Zambia Times* into the *Times of Zambia*. It continued to publish the *Zambia News* which later became the *Sunday Times of Zambia*. In May 1965, the new government formed by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) purchased Scott and Astor's *Central African Mail*, whose success was in doubt (Kasoma 1986:75). It was renamed the *Zambia Daily Mail* and turned into a daily in 1969.

Later in 1975, the government moved on to take over the *Times of Zambia* and its sister publication the *Sunday Times*. It was in 1983, however, that the government acquired total ownership of the publications before they were placed under the management of the National Media Corporation (NAMECO), a parastatal company, five years later (Moore 1991:63–65).

Alongside these developments, the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), a Catholic Church body, and the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), a platform for protestant churches, set up a private newspaper called the *National Mirror*, which was to provide a significant proportion of serious alternative news and views in the one-party State created by the UNIP government in 1973. More than a decade later, in 1990, this was to be joined by another privately owned newspaper, called the *Weekly Post*. Renamed the *Post*, this publication became a platform for those with dissenting views and news.

As for radio broadcasting, its development can be traced to the period between the 1950s and the 1960s. Harry Franklin, Director of Information in the colonial administration, set up a radio station in Lusaka in 1941 and ran it in his own spare time. The station was useful in galvanising moral support for the war effort during World War II from the settler and

indigenous communities. The few indigenous listeners availed themselves of community sets provided at chiefs' courts and administrative centres (Radio Listenership Survey of Zambia 1965).

The most recent Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) audience survey, carried out in 1998, indicates that 74,6 per cent of the Zambian population of 10 285 631 listen to ZNBC's Radio channels 4, 2 and 1, while the remaining 25,4 per cent is divided between Radio Christian Voice, Radio Icengelo, Radio Phoenix and other (mostly foreign) stations (Zambia 1998). The fact that the majority of the Zambian populace listen to ZNBC is attributable to its wide geographical spread and nationally placed transmitters that carry its audio signal over long distances.

Television was introduced in 1961 by a private firm, LONRHO in Kitwe, a town in the copper belt province. Owned by 'Tiny' Rowland, this station was set up primarily to serve the large white mining and commercial community on the copper belt in the north (Zambia 1996:3–5). In 1967, television moved to Lusaka, the capital, and became part of the ZBS. In 1987, an Act was passed to turn ZBS into a body corporate to be called the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC).

It was in 1972 during the first national mass media seminar attended by a large number of journalists in the country that the then President Kenneth David Kaunda of UNIP set out what seemed to be the government's 'policy' orientation towards the media. In his speech, Kaunda castigated the media for failing to reflect Zambian society and for sometimes conducting themselves as if they were an alternative government. He pointed out that the news media everywhere else in the world reflect the interests and values of the society they serve. For instance, he argued, capitalist news media project the philosophy, value and interests of the capitalist society and the communist media do likewise for their societies. Kaunda said that it was tragic to think that people who criticised the party and government, or the 'scatterbrains', who had some 'monstrous ideas', were given more space in the Zambian news media than those who put forward constructive proposals (Kasoma 1986:104–105).

The arguments above reinforced Kaunda's earlier view put forth at the International Press Institute's annual assembly held in Kenya in 1968, that 'the press is capable of making or destroying governments given appropriate conditions' and 'it can cause war or create conditions for peace' as well as 'promote development or create difficulties in the way of development' (Mytton 1983:58).

The statements were made against Kaunda's belief that the nation needed to be harmonised around a common philosophical doctrine of humanism. Kaunda had already unveiled the philosophy of humanism to the UNIP National Council two-and-a-half years after independence. The ideology was centred on the centrality of the human person, stressing the 'equality of all men' and abhorring 'the exploitation of man by man' (Mwanakatwe 1994:128). The philosophy elevated the 'state' as the custodian of humanism. Therefore, in keeping with this ideology, all institutions, including the media, were made to serve the state. It was in this light,

coupled with the declaration of Zambia as a one-party state, that the ‘party and government’ nationalised and took over all media in the country.

Kaunda’s statements must also be evaluated in terms of what Kasoma (1986:134–173) calls ‘state-press struggles for freedom’ in the period between 1975 and 1983. According to Kasoma, this period was characterised by an unprecedented struggle by the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* for press freedom. The struggle stemmed from the fact that the newspaper editors wanted to maintain a non-partisan editorial stance, even in the face of the UNIP take-over of the newspapers, while the UNIP politicians, fired by the one-party doctrine, saw the newspapers as a vehicle for galvanising popular support for their party ideology and programmes.

From the brief historical overview, above, four historically inter-related media processes can be discerned in this pre-1991 period. Firstly, the pre-independence press mirrored the ‘free market’ regime characteristic of the colonial power. It allowed for greater private involvement by enterprising white settlers in the development of the media sector as a business venture. At the same time, the ‘white press’ was openly interested in entrenching settler control over the British colonial territory. LONRHO’s ‘buy outs’ of some of the settler media, while internationalising British private capital were, in a sense, extending British rule to the socio-cultural sphere of life in the colony. Hand in hand with this, though, was a neglect of private enterprise on the part of the colonised. In a sense, the pre-independence media were a reflection of the unequal social relationships between the imperial nation and the indigenous population. Notable also is the fact that colonial radio and television mirrored Great Britain’s ‘public broadcasting’ ethos as seen through the setting up of broadcasting corporations along the lines of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Mytton 1983:53, 78). Secondly, the period immediately after independence was characterised by the entrenchment of the new nationalist government through a series of heavy ‘regulatory’ activities. The declaration of the one-party state, rationalised by the philosophy of humanism, set the scene for this regulation of the media industry. Although most of the documents about this were the preserve of the ‘party and its government’, they still amounted to a regulatory framework within which the media were ‘nationalised’. It is to this period that one can trace the genesis of media regulation in Zambia.

Thirdly, with the media thus integrated into the ‘party and government’ structure, this period marked the beginning of the repression and suppression of dissent in the media in an effort to bring them into line with the ‘party and government’ (Moore 1991:23). In part, this was reinforced by repressive laws inherited from the colonial past and left mostly intact by the nationalist government, such as the State Security Act (replacing the Official Secrets Act of 1911, 1920 and 1939 of the United Kingdom); the state of emergency then in force; and the Penal Code Act (Chanda & Liswaniso 1999), resulting in some kind of ‘legal’ dictatorship (Banda 1997).

Lastly, this period was characterised by a lack of a consistent, coherent and comprehensive policy on the media. As Moore (1991:69) notes, ‘Issues regarding dissemination of information, service to rural areas, availability of equipment, education of the masses, development considerations, budget allocations to accomplish media goals, establishment of regular avenues of communication are vague and not contained in any unified statement of policy’. The closest the government came to enunciating a legal framework for the media was when it passed the ZNBC Act of 1987 to transform the ZBS into a *corporation* that would seek to generate its own revenue and depend less on state funding (Zambia 1987).

3.2 The Zambian media landscape after 1991

Whereas the media in the so-called Second Republic (between 1973 and 1991) were a legacy of Zambia’s colonial history, the media in the so-called Third Republic (between 1991 to date) are a legacy of Kaunda’s post-colonial state.

The post-1991 media landscape in Zambia can be described in terms of five distinguishable, but interrelated, features that characterise the present broadcasting landscape. We describe these features as ‘cautious deregulation’, ‘Christian determinism’, ‘globalisation and its impact on Zambian broadcasting’, ‘the de-localisation of content’, and, ‘the continued lack of policy coherence’.

3.2.1 Cautious deregulation

The government claims that it has embarked on a liberalisation programme of the Zambian economy, and there appears to have been a *cautious de-regulation* of the broadcasting regime. The enactment of the ZNBC (Licensing) Regulations (Zambia 1994), while meant to pave the way for the liberalisation of the broadcasting sector, still vests final authority for the awarding of radio and television licences in the Minister of Broadcasting and Information Services. Indeed, the minister is empowered to receive and scrutinise applications for radio and television licences. It is only he or she who can grant or refuse to grant a licence. In this regard, it must be noted that he or she is, first and foremost, a political appointee of the president. Therefore, as some have complained, the minister’s judgment may be influenced by whether or not the applicant’s political ideology and party membership agrees with his or her own.

Furthermore, the regulations as laid down by the Act are too cumbersome to follow, especially with regard to community broadcasting. The Act specifies that the following persons and bodies are eligible to apply for licences: (1) an association, known by whatever name, established on a permanent basis; (2) an individual; and (3) a body corporate.

However, the set of broadcasting licence application forms, simply referred to as Forms MIBS/BLC1 and MIBS/BLC3, which accompany the standard application that this researcher obtained in 1998 had a different, rather restrictive, provision, which stated: ‘Licences may be

issued to natural and legal persons (corporate bodies) and associations of persons established on a permanent basis other than political parties' (own italics).

Many, especially politically vocal human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs), complain that their applications for radio licences have not been approved even after two years. This complaint extends to political parties which, fed up with the limited access to state-owned media, want to apply for licences to set up their own radio stations. Quite clearly, the restriction for political parties is total. This has raised questions about the nature of community radio broadcasting in as far as political-party expression is concerned. Can a political party be constructed sociologically as a 'community of political interest' and therefore qualify to set up its own community radio station?

3.2.2 Christian determinism

The above point seems to hint at a second continuing feature, namely *Christian determinism* in the broadcasting regulatory practice. The large number of Christian applicants given licences is suggestive of the notion that the government's ministry awards licences on the basis of one's Christian orientation. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the former MMD Republican President, Dr F. T. J. Chiluba, declared Zambia a "Christian" nation. Indeed, some have pointed to the fact that the first person – Bob Edmonton – ever to receive a private radio licence *is* a Christian. In addition, although the Act specifies that 'only government media are allowed radio transmission on Short Wave (SW) for radio broadcasting' (Chanda & Liswaniso 1999:24), the ministry went ahead and granted Radio Christian Voice a SW frequency. In one sense, this could be interpreted as legal-cum-technical incompetence on the part of the ministry. In another sense, it could be explained as the ministry's endorsement of the applicant's religious inclination.

For some, this is sufficient evidence that there is a need to develop a coherent, consistent and comprehensive policy that would ensure that such arbitrariness is avoided. It is in this light that many welcomed the government's information and media policy framework of 1996.

3.2.3 Globalisation and its impact on Zambian broadcasting

Zambia, like other African countries, seems to be the target of what certain authors, including Arthur (1998), call 'the globalization of communication'. It is important to pay extensive attention to this issue because current debates about media and communication policies in Zambia are characterised by the influences of globalisation – that 'inter-related complex of processes, industrial, economic, technological, cultural and cognitive, which have resulted in regional boundaries (whether of family, class, religion or nation) being rendered permeable to distant influences' (Arthur 1998:3). These 'distant influences' are clearly helping to reshape not only the discussions about media and policy formulation in Zambia, but also the administrative activities of the Zambian government in terms of awarding broadcasting

licences to such foreign media as the South African M-NET and DSTV satellite bouquet (MultiChoice Africa) and the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) World Service.

It is clear that the period between 1991 and 2003 has seen a remarkable and steady *internationalisation* or *transnationalisation* of major world broadcasting services *into* Zambia. The process of de-regulation embarked upon in 1994 by the Zambian government has given rise to the emergence of largely foreign-owned private satellite subscription and terrestrial free-to-air broadcasting services. The South African MultiChoice Africa has exposed Zambian subscribers to a variety of channels and programmes, sourced all over the globe. The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) (a charismatic gospel television channel) has also exposed Zambian viewers to more international Christian-evangelical programming. It is perhaps understandable that the hitherto monolithic state broadcaster ZNBC, struggling to turn itself into a *public* broadcaster, has begun to embrace transnational broadcasters in a bid to ward off competition from the new entrants, particularly from the private FM and community radio stations. (For a further discussion of the impact of globalisation on broadcasting and its related trends of deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation and commercialisation, and of the impact of convergence on broadcasting, see Fourie (2003).)

3.2.4 The de-localisation of content

Clearly associated with globalisation, is the de-localisation of broadcast content. While the development of private television could be said to have introduced a degree of choice into television viewership, much of what is televised has no local content – from hard news to soap operas. In a sense, even Zambia is beginning to experience something of the 'Coca-colonisation' of its television industry, with few locally produced programmes of its own to effectively compete against this trend. Banda (2003) emphasises the importance of local content. Here, suffice it to say, according to senior scholars such as Sreberny (2000:103), any effort to counter the impact of the globalisation of media firms would amount to a process of *media localisation*, or an opposite tendency to the dynamics of globalisation, as a consequence of, and often in reaction to the former. This, she argues, is the dynamic of localised production and the indigenisation of such cultural products as television programmes. Nevertheless, as Sreberny herself is quick to point out, the evidence about this trend is patchy and contradictory. As Thompson (1995:162–165) puts it, a central feature of the globalisation of communication is the fact that media products circulate in an international arena, whereby material produced in one country is distributed not only in the domestic market but also – and increasingly – in a global market. This scenario is likely to happen in a situation where 'many television stations in less developed countries do not have the resources to produce extensive programming of their own' (Thompson 1995:162–163). The import of American serials, through such third-party agents as the South African MultiChoice and CASAT in Zambia, at prices negotiated on a country-by-country basis is a relatively inexpensive (and financially very attractive) way to fill broadcasting schedules.

3.2.5 The continued lack of policy coherence

A fifth feature concerns the continued lack of a *coherent, consistent and comprehensive policy framework* that expressly recognises community radio broadcasting and accords it due importance. In short, where the formulation of broadcasting policy is concerned, nothing much has been done since the Second Republic. In fact, globalisation and its accompanying de-localisation of content show (1) that community radio is becoming an important issue and (2) that overall media policy formulation must thus take the phenomenon of community radio broadcasting into account. This is not happening in Zambia.

The above five features that characterise the present Zambian broadcasting landscape give rise to several implications for future media policy, in particular for community radio. The implications are the following:

- The state needs to examine carefully the merits and demerits of a de-regulated media industry. While de-regulation and privatisation, in the name of the globalisation of communications, may be good for attracting private foreign and local actors to invest in the media industry, there is need to ensure that this is not at the expense of localised content production.
- It is important that future media policy takes into account the extent to which the entry of foreign media into the local media market can promote or stifle local media content. It could be argued that, by definition, community radio could serve as an important policy tool for ensuring that community-localised content counteracts any undue dominance by foreign programme content.
- In implementing any media policy, it is important that the state should guard against such ideological issues as religion. As demonstrated above, the Zambian government has been known to give greater numbers of radio broadcasting licences to Christian media organisations, sometimes at the expense of other well-meaning applicants. The implicit ideological assumption is that Christian media organisations will churn out programmes that do not offend the political sensitivities of the government of the day. This is a subtle subversion of both freedom of expression and freedom of the press in the name of political expediency.
- It is important, given the existing policy ambiguities, to spell out a coherent media policy that recognises the place of community radio broadcasting as a legitimate tier of broadcasting in Zambia.

4 The need for community radio broadcasting in Zambia

Within the context of the Zambian media landscape sketched above, the question whether the country needs community radio broadcasting needs to be asked. Based on the findings of studies conducted by Panos (2002) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (Misa 2000) the question can only be answered in the affirmative. Both these studies, as well as a case study of five community radio stations, Mazabuka Community Radio Station, Radio Lyambai, Yatsani

Radio and Chikuni Community Radio Station (cf Banda 2003), clearly indicate geographic and sociocultural (including linguistic) necessities for the expansion and development of the community radio sector. As far as the role of community radio in development is concerned, the studies also indicated respondents' information needs in relation to HIV/AIDS, combating diseases such as cholera, malaria and diarrhoea, crime, reproductive health, and information on civic matters in the community such as information about civic responsibility, child abuse, human rights and entrepreneurship.

Within the context of participatory communication theory, the studies confirmed the South African policy view on community radio (cf. e.g. Wigston 2001:30–31) that for a community radio station to be 'participatory', 'empowering' and 'culturally specific' such station

- should be fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profitable purposes
- should serve a particular community
- should encourage members of the community it serves or persons associated with or promoting the interests of such community to participate in the selection and provision of programmes to be broadcast in the course of such broadcasting
- may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising, membership fees, or by any combination of the aforementioned

Instead of repeating the details of the above-mentioned studies in order to prove the need for community radio in Zambia and for policy in this regard, the emphasis in this article is on three further imperatives for such broadcasting: the political imperative, the pragmatic imperative and the policy imperative.

4.1 The political imperative

Politically, the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1994, in the wake of the political pluralism embarked upon in 1991, paved the way for those who had plans to set up private radio stations, including commercial, religious and community radio projects. Other political factors were at play. A strong and vibrant civil society – NGOs, churches, professional bodies and other interest groups – had emerged. A more vigorous private press had also re-emerged. Political pluralism had culminated in the birth of more than 20 political parties. This was in turn a reflection of the wide-ranging changes sweeping across the Southern Africa region, part in response to the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Generally, the new regimes that were riding on this wave of democratic governance *needed* to be seen as *progressive*.

Zambia, in particular, with Dr F. T. J. Chiluba at the helm, embarked upon a policy of liberalisation and privatisation in all sectors of the economy, including the media industry. More than anything, the Chiluba administration did what it did in order to make a *political* statement that it was putting the country on a path to sustainable political, social and economic reforms.

Clearly, within such a context, the political scene would be conducive to the expansion of a community radio sector.

4.2 The pragmatic imperative

Pragmatically, Kasoma (2001:29–33) contends that the need for community radio can better be appreciated against a backdrop of the technical and other shortcomings of ‘national radio as provided by ZNBC, commercial radio, and Christian radio’. Weighed against national radio, the need for community radio arises from the following reasons:

- ZNBC radio does not reach the whole of the Zambian population
- Being national, ZNBC does not necessarily address specific problems and issues that communities face and that could be targeted by community media
- ZNBC does not cater for all the language groups in the country.

Kasoma adds that the ZNBC broadcast signals do not reach every corner of Zambia even after its transmitting power had been boosted in 2000/01 by the installation of Chinese FM transmitters in almost every province. There are still pockets in the country that the signals do not reach, because of either geographical impediments or atmospheric disturbances. In addition, in many parts of the country, the signal is too faint to provide a powerful and clearly audible reception, particularly on the cheaper, and hence weaker sets (receivers) owned by many people in the country. Moreover, some of the channels of ZNBC radio, in particular Radio 4, do not reach most of the country. They are restricted to a small area, along the line of the old railway from Livingstone to Chilimbambowe (Kasoma 2001:29–30).

Weighed against commercial radio, community radio is (ideally) focused on a specific community’s needs, issues and problems. It is therefore not necessarily ratings-orientated and profit-driven, as is often the case with commercial stations. Programmes that sponsors and advertisers shun are, therefore, unlikely to be broadcast on a commercial radio station even though they may be beneficial to the community (Kasoma 2001:29–30).

When weighed against Christian or church-based radio, community radio would seem to be a lot less restrictive in the sense that the primary aim of a Christian radio is to evangelise. The majority of programmes broadcast are usually biased towards Christian teaching and are coloured with the Christian faith. Because Zambia has many Christian churches, the range of the content of a particular Christian radio station would depend on the type of church that owns it. Some churches are more fundamentalist than others and their radio stations are, therefore, more likely to be fundamentalist (Kasoma 2001:30–33).

4.3 The policy imperative

With regard to the *policy* imperative, by 1994 the movement of community radio broadcasters, represented in the main by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), had become *international* in scope and its advocacy for broadcast

pluralism included the need to develop pro-community broadcasting policy frameworks in Africa, especially in the wake of the ‘wind of change’ that had blown in political pluralism. With a large number of African broadcasters joining its ranks, AMARC and other international lobbyists were beginning to influence on the local policy-making arenas in Africa. Many wishing to set up community radio stations were quick to seek membership of this world body (AMARC) and, in so doing, were enlisting in a world-wide campaign to push for the de-regulation of the broadcasting sector across Africa as a way of ‘democratising communications’³ (Mtimde et al. 1998:1).

This international campaign to liberalise the airwaves in support of the emerging community media sector was also championed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) as it sought to ‘provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences about approaches to developing community media and to formulate strategies for promoting and enhancing the development of community media in African countries’ (Boafo 2000:5). Alongside this rhetoric was a practical commitment by Unesco to fund the establishment of community radio stations, as exemplified by the UN agency’s financial support given to such radio stations as the Mazabuka Community Radio Station in Zambia, Dzimwe Community Radio Station in Malawi and Katutura Community Radio Station in Namibia. In the case of the Mazabuka Community Radio Station, Unesco actually entered into partnership with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services to ensure the success of the community radio station. Arguably, Unesco has used this partnership to push home the need for the necessary policy and legislative reforms.

In addition, at a more local level, there have been initiatives by media associations, such as the Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA) and the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA) to lobby for media reforms, such as the setting up of an independent broadcasting authority to regulate the broadcasting sector. These pressures, coupled with the dictates of the liberal-democratic philosophy currently being espoused by the ruling MMD, have combined to push government into a process of dialogue with civil society about media policy reforms, including an initiative to develop a strong community broadcasting sector.

The call to liberalise the airwaves, therefore, was at the same time a call to develop an appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks wherever these were inadequate to deal with the new phenomenon of community radio on the African continent. In that sense, the government of the Republic of Zambia was forced to rethink its overall information and media policy framework. It was in this vein that the 1996 policy framework was developed, later to be revised in 1999, to take into account both community radio and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Zambia 1996,1999b:12).

Therefore, it becomes imperative for policy-makers to preoccupy themselves with this additional tier of broadcasting, and this is discussed in the rest of the article.

5 Selected approaches towards policy-making vis-à-vis media operations

Most media policy-making in Zambia has been *elitist* and *institutionalistic*. To understand this in comparison with other countries, it is important to discuss four theoretical approaches to policy-making and then relate these to the way in which media policies have been crafted in Zambia. Again, the focus is on media policy in general as policy related to community radio needs to be situated within a broader media policy.

Public policy-making and implementation as a *process* lends itself, among others, to the following models:

- 1 elite/mass
- 2 institutionalist
- 3 group
- 4 organised anarchy models.

1 The elite/mass model

The *elite/mass model* posits policy-makers or public administrators as either ‘servants of the people’ or as ‘the establishment’. In a nutshell, this model postulates that a policy-making/policy-executing elite is able to act in an environment characterised by apathy and information distortion and thereby governs a largely passive mass. Policy flows downwards from the elite to the mass. Central to this is the notion of a society divided according to those who have power and those who do not. The elite are conceptualised as those who share common values and are characterised by higher incomes, more education and higher status than the mass. They are largely seen as conservative, preferring the status quo to any revolutionary societal change (Henry 1999:295).

2 The institutionalist model

The *institutionalist model* (Henry 1999:296) focuses on the organisational Chart of government. It describes the arrangements and official duties of bureaus and departments, but customarily it has ignored the linkages between them. Constitutional provisions, administrative and common law, and similar legalities are the objects of the greatest interest; the behavioural connections between a department and the public policy emanating from it are of scant concern. Sapru (1994:38) argues that this model treats the state as a web of government structures and institutions, adjudicating between conflict, social and economic interests. The activities of individuals and groups are generally directed towards governmental institutions such as the legislature, executive, judiciary, political parties, et cetera. Government institutions themselves give public policy three distinct features:

- 1 They give legal authority to policies, complete with a set of sanctions for those who disobey such policies.

- 2 They universalise the application of public policy, to the extent that it extends to *all* citizens.
- 3 They give policies their coercive appeal. Only legitimate government institutions can legally impose sanctions on violators of public policies.

3 The group model

The *group model* projects the notion that in a pluralistic society pressure groups and lobbies also have relevance. The polity is conceived of as being a system of forces and pressures acting on, and reacting to, one another in the formulation of public policy (Henry 1999:295). This implies that interest groups or non-governmental, non-profit organisations should bring their respective ideologies or agendas to bear on the process of policy-making (Baur 1968:8). But, as is noted in Parsons (1995:252), in capitalist societies the supposed pluralistic nature of public policy-making whereby a multiplicity of interest groups compete to influence public policy is constrained by the interests of business and the market. By implication, decision-making is not a neutral affair; the demands of business interests predominate over the demands of other groups. As with the elite/mass model, issues of power arise even here. The more powerful an interest group, the more likely it is to influence policy-making. That power may be in terms of finances, information, capacity, et cetera.

4 The organised anarchy model

The *organised anarchy model* posits three ‘streams’ of agenda-setting and policy-making. Firstly, there is the *problems stream*, which entails focusing the public’s and policy-makers’ attention on a particular social problem, defining the problem, and either applying a new public policy to the resolution of the problem or letting the problem fade from sight. Secondly, there is the *political stream*, which focuses on the *governmental agenda* – the list of issues or problems to be resolved. The primary participants in the formulation of the governmental agenda are various; they are the state, including high-level political appointees and the president’s staff; members of the legislature; the media; interest groups; political parties; electoral campaigns; and general public opinion. A consensus is achieved by bargaining among the participants, and at some point a ‘bandwagon’ or ‘tilt’ effect occurs that is a consequence of an intensifying desire by the participants to be ‘dealt in’ on the policy resolution and not to be excluded. Thirdly, there is the *policy stream*, which specifies the *decision agenda* or the ‘alternative specification’. This agenda or specification is the list of alternatives from which a public policy may be selected by policy-makers to resolve a problem. It is at this stage that a more intellectual process starts whereby career public administrators, academics, researchers and consultants, interest groups, et cetera, take the lead in offering such policy alternatives (Henry 1999:299–300).

The relevance of these policy approaches to this discussion lies in two fundamental points. Firstly, the analysis of the Zambian context for policy-making and implementation in 5.1 below, throws into sharp relief some of the fundamental principles underlying these theoretical

policy constructs. For instance, it will be argued that the media policy mechanisms in Zambia reflect much of what is assumed in the *elite/mass* and *institutionalist* models of policy-making and implementation. This, then, will provide a scenario against which the model policy process developed in the last part of the article can be contrasted.

Secondly, in contradistinction to the elite/mass and institutionalist models that seem to underpin the existing media policy initiatives in Zambia, the model being suggested here is motivated, firstly, on the basis of the *group* model of policy-making and implementation, laying particular emphasis on the validity of the contributions of the various media interest groups *as such* towards the development of media policies in Zambia. But, beyond emphasising the significance of one particular group, or most affected stakeholder, this article seeks to propose a policy model that is inclusive of several agendas in Zambian society. To that extent, it seems reasonable that the policy model being proposed here should also be informed by the assumptions of the *organised anarchy* model, because this particular model revolves around several ‘streams’ of agenda-setting, such as high-level political appointees, members of the legislature, interest groups, political parties, et cetera.

If such a policy process is properly managed, it should be so inclusive as to have inputs from a cross-section of society, including advocates of a far more democratised community broadcasting system, free from the interference of the political elite. It is for this very reason that the *group* model as such is seen as an important process for ensuring that the specific interests of the *community radio broadcasting sector* are put on the policy agenda.

5.1 The Zambian context for media policy-making

With the advent of plural politics in 1991, policy-making has undergone some changes. The period prior to 1991 was characterised by a hugely ‘presidentialist’ politico-legal system (Banda 1997:10). The executive branch of government was the prime mover of state and other policy formulation and articulation. This has been demonstrated with regard to Dr K. D. Kaunda’s driving the articulation of media-related policy statements. Quite clearly, the institutionalist model of policy-making described above, with its emphasis on structural-cum-bureaucratic legality, characterised much of the policy-making in the UNIP era, especially after the establishment of the one-party-state in 1973. It can be argued, therefore, that the president and his party functionaries were the principal forces in the policy formulation process.

With the establishment of the Policy Analysis and Coordination Division (PAC) at the Cabinet Office to address some of the problems highlighted above, a new policy-making, implementation and evaluation process emerged. Technocrats are largely responsible for the enunciation of policy. However, within the confines of the executive policy-making bureaucracy other checks and balances are to be found. With regard to media related policy formulation, the legislative wing of government essentially provides these checks and balances. This is evident in the institution of the Parliamentary Committee on Information and

Broadcasting Services. This ‘departmentally related committee’ is provided for by section 149 (1) of the National Assembly Standing Orders of 1998, made under section 86 (1) of the Constitution of Zambia. It is among several other such committees that ‘relate to the structure of Government consisting of ten members other than the Vice-President, Minister, Deputy Minister, or any other member holding or acting in any office prescribed by or under an Act of Parliament, appointed by the Speaker at the commencement of each session’ (Zambia 1998a: sect 86.1).

While a Cabinet meeting, where policy-making *par excellence* may take place, is mostly a closed executive affair, the Standing Orders mandate such departmentally related committees to

- study, report and make appropriate recommendations to the government through the House on the mandate, management and operations of the government ministries, departments and/or agencies under their portfolio
- carry out detailed scrutiny of certain activities undertaken by the government ministries, departments and/or agencies under their portfolio and make appropriate recommendations to the House for ultimate consideration by the government
- make recommendations, if necessary, to the government on the need to review certain policies and/or certain existing legislation
- consider any Bills that may be referred to them by the House.

The Committee on Information and Broadcasting Services, chaired until 2001 by the Hon. Alexander Miti, had released several reports to the House and the government on issues to do with media operations in the country and recommended certain policy-cum-legislative steps. In the main, their recommendations were not accepted. For instance, they recommended that the government should move quickly and establish an independent broadcasting authority as well as reconstitute the state-owned ZNBC into a genuine public service broadcaster. Arguably, such committees, even if their role is merely advisory, may have the effect of opening up the policy-making process to society at large.

Apart from arranging *in camera* hearings by officials in government ministries/departments/agencies, they also listen to such interest groups as media and human rights activist organisations to get a sense of their views and perspectives on media issues.

Thus, it can be argued that the group model accounts for some measure of policy-making in the country. To exemplify, because the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services appeared to be reluctant to move faster with media reforms by pushing for legislation on freedom of information, introducing amendments to make the ZNBC Act of 1987 fall in line with aspirations for a true public broadcaster and pushing for the establishment of an independent broadcasting authority, the ZIMA, the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA), the Zambia Media Women’s Association (ZAMWA) and other stakeholders teamed up in 2002 in a partnership that was designed to galvanise mass or popular support for their media reforms

project. More specifically, the three media activist organisations, working with mostly opposition political parties, hired a law firm to help them draft Bills to take care of the issues raised above.

Upon completing his assignment, the ZIMA legal consultant, Patrick Matibini, submitted the draft Bills to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

The ZIMA strategy, in this regard, was to get the mainly opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House to propose what is called ‘a private members’ motion’ on the Bills. However, after scrutinising these private Bills, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Hon. Amusaa Mwanamwambwa, held that the Bills could not be debated by the House because the executive wing of government, despite being petitioned by the private members, had not granted them express consent to go ahead, as was constitutionally required when such Bills had financial implications for the state treasury (Matibini 2002).

If this process had gone ahead, it would have been the first time in the history of Zambia that policy-cum-legislation was initiated, discussed and pushed for adoption/enactment outside of the normal government bureaucracy and procedures. However, this was not to be. At the same time as ZIMA, PAZA and ZAMWA were pursuing these policy-cum-legislative media reforms through a private member’s motion, the MIBS was working on its own versions of the three media Bills and urged the media organisations to drop theirs and instead work with the Ministry in ensuring that it would be successful in getting the motions passed in the House.

Before turning to the formulation of a policy model for community radio in Zambia, and as a conclusion to our discussion of the act of policy making and the state thereof in Zambia, a brief comparison of broadcasting policy and regulatory trends in Zambia’s neighbouring countries, with the exception of Australia, is provided as a possible model for policy.

5.2 A brief comparison of broadcast policy and regulatory trends in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Australia

The purpose of this section is to provide a diagrammatic overview of trends in policy and broadcast regulation in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Australia, in that order. The relevance of this is to draw specific lessons for Zambia.

The first observation prompted by Table 1 is that there is clearly a need in Zambia for the establishment of an independent regulatory structure, such as the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA). While the specific functions of each of these regulatory authorities are unique to each country, the notion of an authority independent from government and other vested interests in society is useful for the regulation of the broadcasting sector. It is evident, however, that in Malawi, for example, such a body has not developed the kind of structural and operational independence that is evident in the Australian experience and, to a large extent, in the South African model.

Table 1 Comparison of broadcast policy and regulatory practices in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Australia

Malawi	Mozambique	South Africa	Australia
Nascent broadcasting legal framework	Developed broadcasting legal framework	Highly developed broadcasting legal framework	Highly developed broadcasting legal framework
Community radio indistinct from other types of broadcasting	Community radio receiving specialised attention, though not yet at regulatory level	Community radio distinct from public and commercial broadcasting	Community radio distinct from public and commercial broadcasting
Presence of a unitary broadcasting regulatory structure (Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority)	Presence of multiple broadcasting regulatory structures (High Council for Social Communication; Office of the Prime Minister; National Institute of Communications; and Ministry of Transport and Communication)	Presence of multiple broadcasting regulatory structures (Independent Communications Authority of South Africa and the Media Development and Diversity Agency)	Presence of unitary broadcasting regulatory structure (Australian Broadcasting Authority)
Absence of a community radio sector association	Absence of a community radio sector association	Presence of a community radio sector association (National Community Radio Forum)	Presence of a community radio sector association (Community Broadcasters Association of Australia)
Absence of specific funding for the development of the community radio sector	Absence of specific funding for the development of the community radio sector	With the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in place, there is reason to believe that there will be statutory funding for community media initiatives owned and operated by previously disadvantaged groups	No statutory funding for the community radio sector
No code of conduct for community radio broadcasting	No code of conduct for community radio broadcasting	No code of conduct for community radio broadcasting, except for some definitional guidelines provided for by the IBA (now ICA-SA), although the NCRF has a charter to which its member community radio broadcasters subscribe. This is, however, not backed by force of legislation.	Clear and elaborate code of conduct for community radio broadcasters, backed by force of law.

Second, the regulatory trends analysed above would seem to suggest the need for Zambia to enact a law that not only establishes an independent regulatory organ but also provides for a multi-tier broadcasting system, with community radio broadcasting clearly elaborated and provided for. This is evident in South Africa and Australia, but seems to be absent in the case of Malawi and Mozambique.

Third, the enactment of the South African Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in South Africa provides, in one sense, a state-supported model for resource mobilisation for the development of the media, including community radio. This, then, is an example that a policy model for Zambia could emulate in terms of addressing problems relating to, among others, the funding, training and equipping of community radio in the country.

Fourth, as in the cases of Australia and South Africa, there is need for a policy model for Zambia that will clearly establish a community radio broadcasters' association or forum to champion the cause of community radio broadcasting in the country. Although the establishment of the National Community Radio Forum (NCRF) in South Africa is not grounded in a legal instrument, there is every reason to warrant such a body. Community radio broadcasting, as noted throughout this study, is about empowering communities and a forum such as NCRF can serve as a platform for community engagement. The Australian model of the Community Broadcasters Association of Australia (CBAA) is particularly appealing, because it is based on the concept of a legally founded self-regulatory system for community radio broadcasting.

6 Towards a policy model for community radio broadcasting in Zambia

Against the background of the preceding parts, the policy model formulated here is underpinned by three principles:

- The airwaves are an exhaustible public property which should be allocated, controlled and used in the public good and public interest.
- The government, as the custodian of all public interest and public good, should put in place laws and other regulatory bodies that will ensure that the allocation, control and use of the airwaves in broadcasting is done in a free, fair and transparent manner that gives equal opportunity to everyone, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised voices in society.
- The executive wing of government, which, according to the analysis presented above, has tended to monopolise policy formulation and implementation, must not have undue influence and control over the acquisition, control and use of the airwaves in broadcasting.

Set against these principles, the policy model that follows addresses the following policy categories:⁴

- a vision of/for community radio broadcasting in Zambia
- the regulatory structure of community radio broadcasting
- the funding of community radio broadcasters
- the application of new information and communication technologies in community sound broadcasting, including overall infrastructure development
- the provision of training and education to community radio practitioners
- the production of content, especially local content
- research.

6.1 Vision of community radio broadcasting

Any vision of community sound broadcasting must be informed by a definition of community radio that elevates the power of communities to define and influence their own development through communication. The closest definition to this is one proffered by Myers (2000:90), to wit: ‘small-scale decentralized broadcasting initiatives which are easily accessed by local people, actively encourage their participation in programming, and which include some element of community ownership or membership’.

This definition eliminates most of the ideal-typical scenarios that other, more dogmatic or rigid definitions seem to almost religiously or fanatically want to invoke. While recognising the central role of the community in ‘owning’ community media initiatives, this definition opens up possibilities for a single ‘initiator’ or ‘motivator’ to set up a community radio initiative and seek to introduce into it notions of ‘community ownership’, ‘community management’, ‘community programming’, et cetera. This is the kind of *elastic* or inclusive definition that recognises the place of enterprising individuals who are motivated, for some reason or other, to set up small-scale, community-located media initiatives. Such individuals may not be moved purely by commercial considerations. The definition also leaves the door open for those local-level media projects, or what Anthony Everitt (2003) calls ‘access radio projects’, that may be initiated by any form of community-based organisation.

The central idea of such a definition is further reinforced when the question is posed as to whether or not one should not define community radio less rigidly and focus more on the *processes* of *programming* (or, more broadly, *participation*) than on the *structures* of *ownership* and *control*. Another question asked is whether it would not be justifiable to argue that a privately owned, even commercial, radio station which devotes *more* time to coverage of community issues and events satisfies the ideal of ‘community radio’. In this vein, it is argued that it was partly because of this definitional ambiguity that some participants at the sixth conference of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) held in 1995 frowned on calls to adopt a working definition of community radio as *radio that is owned, controlled and programmed by the community it serves* (Valentine 1995:8-9). Myers’ definition, therefore, would seem to steer clear of such definitional sensitivities and refocus

attention on the processes of community participation, and not necessarily on the rigid structures of ownership and control.

6.2 The regulatory structure for community radio broadcasting

Following from this, the community radio broadcasting sector should have a two-pronged regulatory structure: state-mandated and community-driven, as expounded below. It is proposed that the structure should reflect the co-regulatory principle inherent in the Australian broadcasting system mentioned in 5.2.

Thus, following the example of Australia, the state should have overall legal supervision of the community sound broadcasting sector by enacting, or inserting within the existing legislation by way of an amendment, a law that ensures that community radio is expressly provided for in the scheme of broadcasting in Zambia and outlining the terms and conditions for applying for a community radio broadcasting licence. This should guide any proposed regulatory authority in discharging tasks relating to processing applications for licences.

The law should, therefore, also provide for the establishment of an independent broadcasting regulatory authority with specific directions on its composition, mandate, powers, et cetera. This will help reduce any discretionary powers that tend to result in the arbitrariness of decision-making *vis-à-vis* the awarding of broadcasting licences by the MIBS.

Indeed, as the United Kingdom-based Community Radio Association (CRA) suggests, there are advantages in there being a single body for spectrum planning and frequency allocation, and for all of broadcast radio service planning. Terms of reference should include a clear policy to ensure equitable development of, and provision of spectrum for, each of the tiers of broadcasting in the country (Community Radio Association 1993).

Furthermore, as is the case in Australia, this law should provide for the establishment of a Zambian community radio broadcasting association, hereafter referred to as the ZCRBA. The law should, in the spirit of promoting a legally binding system of self-regulation for the sector, provide for the elaboration by the ZCRBA of a community radio broadcasting code of ethical conduct that addresses issues relating to the following:

- responsibilities associated with broadcasting to the community
- guidelines for all programming
- local content quotas
- sponsorship and advertising limitations for community broadcasting
- recruitment and management of volunteer staff
- conflict resolution of internal disputes
- handling complaints from the public
- mechanisms for the review of the code of ethical conduct.

Because of the emphasis on self-regulation, the law should provide for the active participation of the various communities which harbour community radio initiatives in the elaboration of the issues listed above in order to ensure greater consensus and agreement. Community radio broadcasting draws its life-blood, its soul, from the community and therefore it should resonate with the needs and aspirations of the community. The elaboration of the code of ethical conduct for community broadcasters, focusing on the issues listed above, should thus reflect maximum community participation. This should give the community radio broadcasters the community ‘legitimacy’ they so badly require in order to operate as such.

In fact, with specific reference to the developing of an appropriate code of conduct for community radio broadcasters, it is important to note, as is the case in Australia (Australian Broadcasting Authority 2002), that three conditions should be met. These are:

- The code of practice must provide appropriate community safeguards for the matters covered by the code
- The code must be endorsed by a majority of the providers of broadcasting services in that section of the industry
- Members of the public must have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code.

6.3 The funding of community radio broadcasters

Funding is a problem that besets community radio broadcasting everywhere in sub-Saharan Africa. This is sufficiently documented in a number of places (Mtimde et al. 1998:42; Teer-Tomaselli 2001:240–241; Van Zyl 2001:18).

Partly to address this problem, this policy model proposes the establishment of a community radio support fund, hereafter referred to as the CRSF, along the lines of South Africa’s MDDA, although the latter embraces conventional forms of media as well. It is worthwhile to note that this proposal is also reinforced by the UK-based CRA, which called for the setting up of ‘a production and development fund’ for the community radio sector (Community Radio Association 1993:5). This was to be re-echoed in 2001 by the Community Media Association (CMA) – a successor to the CRA – when it argued that ‘a special fund set up’ for community media ‘would reinforce the purpose and the viability of Community Media and it would assist by leveraging money from other sources’ (CMA 2001:10).

Clearly, this raises the challenge of how this Fund would mobilise resources to support the community radio sector. The law proposed above could also address at least five statutory mechanisms through which such a Fund would be financed within the overall institutional framework of the proposed ZCRBA:

- Government subventions, fully endorsed by parliament so as to avoid any party-political strings attached, especially by the political party in power at any given time.

- A percentage of any sponsorship and/or advertising revenue accruing to the community radio broadcasting station. This percentage can be revised, from time to time, by the ZCRBA.
- A community radio broadcasting service levy to be charged on any private business firms operating in the community which is a beneficiary of that community broadcasting service. This can be treated as the ‘social responsibility’ obligation of the private business sector based in the community where that community broadcasting service is offered. There should be clarity about the fact that such financial or other support must not be given with any strings attached.
- Donations from a number of aid agencies such as Unesco, the Soros Foundation, among others, is another possibility that could be sanctioned as a legitimate source of financing for community radio broadcasting.
- Any good-will contributions or donations by individual community members or organisations operating in the community serviced by a particular community radio broadcasting station might also serve as a source of funds.

Apart from the more general function of representing the overall interests of the community radio sector in Zambia, the ZCRBA must, therefore, also be mandated to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Mobilise resources for the community radio sector in Zambia.
- Support emerging community radio initiatives.
- Lobby and advocate for an enabling policy and legislative environment for the community radio sector.
- Develop appropriate codes of conduct for the community radio broadcasters.

6.4 The application of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in community sound broadcasting including overall infrastructure development

As Everitt (2003:32) has aptly noted, digitisation and the growth of computer processing power are contributing to a converging technological media environment. Quoting the Director of the UK-based CMA, Steve Buckley, Everitt argues: ‘Convergence is taking place at the level of production between sound-based media and visual and moving image media and also at the level of distribution between broadcasting systems, radio and television, and telecommunications systems, which are developing from one-to-one systems to one-to-many.’

Everitt (2003:33) suggests that an overall cross-media approach would make better sense than treating media delivery systems separately, in order to reflect the ways in which communications media are developing in the electronic marketplace. This view is reinforced by Mtimde et al. (1998:39–40) who, in reflecting on the interface between the new Internet and satellite technologies and community radio, argue that some community radio stations in

Africa, and elsewhere in the world, now have access to the latest technology, allowing them to receive news through a satellite link or through the Internet.

Nevertheless, Everitt (2003:33) contends that as far as consumers are concerned, the digital revolution is yet to take place and, until the penetration of digital radio sets approaches universality, it offers little to a tier of broadcasting aimed at disadvantaged and socially excluded communities whose members will be the last purchasers of new receiving equipment and a significant number of whom do not even have access to telephone landlines. He also argues that, for all its advantages, the Internet will be of little use to community broadcasters until access to it has also become nearly universal. Although Everitt is referring to the minority communities resident in the UK, this picture is equally, if not more, reflective of the sub-Saharan reality.

Therefore, given these limitations of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), but nevertheless recognising their due importance, this policy model proposes two things, namely:

- That community radio policy should be open about the possibilities that new ICTs hold out for their programming capabilities and their audiences.
- That community radio broadcasters should actively and innovatively apply such new ICTs where and when there is a likelihood that they will enhance their overall impact in the community.

The overriding policy consideration, though, should be the extent to which the community itself can fully identify with and benefit from any such technologies as the community radio station would like to use.

While ICTs, innovatively and creatively utilised, can be a useful device for community radio broadcasting, it would be even more useful to have in place an overall infrastructure development policy. Earlier it was mentioned that most community radio initiatives in Zambia experience inadequate or poor production and/or recording facilities. In part, this could also account for the apparent incapacity of some community radio initiatives to produce good local programmes on any sustainable basis.

Given this realisation, this policy model proposes the following:

- The Community Radio Support Fund proposed above should be used to make available equipment grants or loans to, especially but not exclusively, emerging community radio initiatives.
- Further to the above recommendation, and to ensure a more focused and sustained infrastructure development plan, the proposed Community Radio Support Fund could have a special sub-funding mechanism, such as a revolving 'community radio broadcast infrastructure procurement' fund. Resource mobilisation for this special funding

mechanism can include a combination of methods, such as returns on loans given out, donor contributions, et cetera.

6.5 The provision of training and education to community radio practitioners

The training and education of community radio staff, usually volunteers, is emphasised by many (Mtimde et al. 1998:35; AMARC, (sa). In particular, AMARC notes that most of the training offered by media training institutions follows a traditional approach, concentrating on a fairly rigid approach to radio production, presentation and management – the kind of training that, according to AMARC, does not explore other creative and innovative means of improving the way in which community radio stations operate.

In addition, Mtimde et al. (1998:36) stress the following point: ‘Training should always be conducted with a view of developing community radio and not only some individuals. There have been cases where it is always the same individuals in a station that get access to training opportunities. This concentrates all the skills in a few hands, hence reducing the ability of a wider number of people to participate effectively on the station. Fewer skilled people weaken the radio’s sustainability, should these individuals leave the station for greener pastures.’

Training for the community radio sector can encompass such areas as the process of setting up a community radio, the management of the community radio, the production of programmes, and technical skills and equipment (Mtimde et al. 1998:36; Kasoma 2001). Indeed, it is in this regard that the adoption and application of ICTs for community radio broadcasting can be appropriately incorporated into the overall training package for community radio staff and/or volunteers.

Given the central role of appropriate training for effective community sound broadcasting, the following policy guidelines are suggested:

- The proposed ZCRBA must incorporate in its structure a community broadcasting training unit whose task will be to conduct a periodic training needs assessment and design necessary interventions.
- The proposed ZCRBA must lobby for the reorientation of curricula in journalism and media training institutions in Zambia so as to bring them into line with the training requirements of the community radio broadcasting sector.
- The proposed ZCRBA must articulate in its code of conduct for community radio broadcasters the requirement for community radio broadcasters to commit themselves to providing training opportunities for permanent and volunteer staff as a way of cultivating excellence in local content production.

6.6 The production of local content

Largely as a result of globalisation and the inability to produce local programmes, many community radio broadcasters have tended to ‘ape’ their more advanced commercial, hugely

entertainment-based FM radio stations. Thus, it is not surprising that volunteers in most community radio stations in Zambia constantly fill up their programming with all manner of foreign popular music, especially from the United States of America. They have also tended to replay programmes produced elsewhere in different cultural contexts, thus compromising their own capacity to produce local programmes. This has had the tendency to result in some kind of unintended cultural imperialism in the arena of content production. In this connection, the importance of local content production cannot be overemphasised.

Indeed, Everitt (2003:61–65), in his evaluation of the UK-based Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) initiative, selected two variables – *community language* and *local accent and expression* – to analyse the dynamics of participation in the production of local content. According to him, the BCB emphasised the use of community radio to promote cultural expression in community languages as well as to encourage and support presenters in community languages to develop their presentation style, delivery and confidence.

This policy proposal, therefore, seeks to elevate the production of local content by community radio broadcasters in Zambia. It should be mentioned, however, that this proposal is mindful of the difficulties experienced by many community radio stations in terms of the resources needed to mass-produce good local programmes on a sustainable basis. It is envisaged, however, that this problem will have been significantly reduced with the establishment of the proposed community radio support fund and all the other ancillary funding mechanisms proposed in connection with the community radio support fund.

To this end, the following policy recommendations are advanced:

- The proposed Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act, or an amendment thereto, should expressly mandate the proposed broadcasting regulatory organ to fix a minimum percentage of local content for community radio broadcasters to follow. To this end, the exact percentage of local content programmes should be negotiated (e.g. local music, art and folklore).
- This local content requirement, to be included in the elaboration of the proposed code of conduct, should then be monitored on a regular basis by the proposed ZCRBA to ensure that it is adhered to. As part of this monitoring exercise, the proposed ZCRBA should also assist community radio stations if they have genuine practical problems in attaining this requirement. In this way, the monitoring need not be seen as an intrusion into the operations of community radio broadcasters, but as an evaluative device to gauge the extent to which community radio broadcasters might need special assistance in meeting such an obligation.

Above all else, this policy model recognises the need for *developmental* local content. It has been noted earlier in this article that most emerging community radio stations succumb to the temptation to fill their airtime with such cheap entertainment programmes as popular music. This point is acknowledged by Lush and Kaitira (1998:72–73), who contend that most young

volunteers in Namibia have tended to stamp their youth culture and values on community radio broadcasting through popular music, usually at the expense of programmes of a developmental character. Indeed, this observation does not preclude the fact that there is a place for *local* music promotion as part of a project to develop local cultural identities. This, however, should not be at the expense of developmental programmes focusing on, for example, environmental, agricultural and health issues.

This point is also recognised by the Zambian (Zambia 1996) government in its articulation of the *developmental* role of community media as bordering on (1) promoting civic education on people's rights, duties and responsibilities in order to enable them to participate fully in the democratic governance of the country, (2) creating awareness and remedial action, *inter alia*, on the environment, population, health and gender, (3) promoting HIV/AIDS awareness in communities and creating public awareness in times of epidemics and disasters, and (4) disseminating community development information (Zambia 1996).

The observation is further confirmed by the Panos (Panos Southern Africa 2002:5–6) study, which notes that there is a general view that 'lack of such (developmental) information is both a cause and effect of under-development in the community. Small-scale business people are particularly concerned that the lack of information leads to poor business activity, especially where access to metropolitan markets is concerned. They feel a sense of isolation, disconnected from the epicentre of decision-making'.

Given these important considerations, therefore, the following policy guidelines are suggested as a way of enhancing *developmental* local content:

- Of the negotiated minimum percent local content programming on all community radio stations, a negotiated percentage should be dedicated to developmental issues, such as community development, education, health, agriculture, community business opportunities, the environment, et cetera.
- Given the central place of such developmental programming in the operations of community radio broadcasting, the policy guideline should provide for the full participation of the community in the identification, selection and treatment of issues for such developmental programming, as is proposed above.

6.7 Research

It is recognised that policy should provide for continued research into community needs, uses and problems. Indeed, this article underscores the importance of undertaking more community-participatory research into the dynamics of community radio broadcasting. In addition, it should be noted that while most studies of community radio broadcasting tend to focus on the perceptions or definitions of 'needs' and 'problems' as articulated by the communities, there is a need for research to pay attention to the *assumptions* of the community radio stakeholders as well. Do their assumptions 'fit' the expectations and needs of the community they wish to serve? In effect, this is the kind of inclusive research that can

tease out possible processes of ‘dialogic communication’ likely to be embedded in the community structure.

To this end, the following policy guidelines may be advanced to provide for continued research:

- A community broadcasting research unit, under the management and supervision of the proposed ZCRBA, should be established and placed within an existing media training institution such as the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM). The undertaking of timely research projects into various aspects of community radio broadcasting should be mandated.
- The results of any such research project should be used by community radio broadcasting stations, policy-makers and other stakeholders within the framework of the proposed ZCRBA to improve the status of community radio broadcasting in Zambia.

7 Conclusion

The article addressed two main research questions:

- 1 What historical (media) factors have shaped the development of community radio in Zambia?
- 2 What policy model for community radio broadcasting can be suggested for Zambia?

This was done from a normative perspective, in the process of which further questions and problems were raised that are open for empirical investigation and counter-arguments, as is usually the case with normative studies.

The historical overview of the broader media policy landscape in Zambia clearly indicated that despite the emergence of a three-tier broadcasting system in line with the country’s politico-economic liberalisation, the state broadcasting system has remained in a dominant position and that there is a dire need for the development of the community radio sector.

As far as the second research question is concerned, and based on a *focused synthesis* of a range of historical, political, policy, regulatory and other factors, the study proposed a policy model for community radio broadcasting in Zambia. The model requires further research in terms of economic, regulatory, infra-structural, technological, training and sociocultural implications, means and needs. However, against the present lack of a community radio policy in Zambia, it is hoped that this article could be a stepping stone towards the development of a much needed community radio sector in Zambia.

Notes

- 1 On the state of community radio broadcasting in Zambia, see Media Institute of Southern Africa (2000) and Panos Southern Africa (2002). For the purpose of this article, suffice it to say that community radio in Zambia is treated as a *sine qua non* of development. It is seen to be a medium through which localised or community development agendas can be shaped, articulated

and transmitted. However, the studies referred to above, as well as a case study conducted by Banda for his thesis (cf. Banda 2003) of four community radio initiatives currently under way in Zambia, namely of Mazabuka Community Radio Station, Radio Lyambai, Yatsani Radio and Chikuni Community Radio Station, revealed, amongst others, that one must approach 'community' media initiatives in Zambia with caution. Their claims to most of the attributes of community broadcasting may not necessarily represent the reality of their operations. In other words, one must *problematise* the operational aspects of present community radio initiatives. There are numerous problems related to undemocratic representation, inadequate production facilities, lack of local content, volunteer discontent as a result of lack of regular monetary incentives, et cetera. There are problems related to dependence on donor funding, poor management structures and practices, lack of democratic structures that can effectively represent the communities of interest or place that these initiatives purport to serve and problems related to technology and skills. The purpose of this article is not to elaborate on these problems, as is done in the studies referred to above, but rather to focus on the need for future policy.

- 2 A definition of community radio is not addressed in this article. However, in the doctoral thesis on which this article is based (cf. Banda 2003), considerable attention is given to this as well as to contextualising community radio within the framework of development communication theory. Also see McCain and Lowe (1990) and Lewis (1993) for a discussion of the complexities related to defining community and community broadcasting. On development and communication, see Infante, Rancer and Womack (1997:362); Kunczik (1984); Rogers (1976); Freire (1985; 1996.)
- 3 The concept of *democratising communication* has a resounding resonance in modern discourse about the role of communication in various aspects of development. Within the context of the discourse about the evolution of the Information Society, a revulsion is emerging among activists against the privatisation and commercialisation of media, the concentration of media ownership, the sanitisation and homogenisation of media and the consumerisation of information through advertising (World Association for Christian Communication 2002). In the same breath, the concept of democratising communication relates to a situation whereby one ensures that information and knowledge become readily available for human development, and not locked up in private hands; that there is affordable access to, and effective use of, electronic networks in a development context; that the global commons, for both broadcast and telecommunication, are secured and extended to ensure this public resource is not sold for private ends; that democratic and transparent governance of the information society is instituted; and that community and people-centred media, traditional and new, are supported (World Association for Christian Communication 2002:2). This concern is further echoed by Oosthuizen (2001:173) when he argues that South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) 1992 policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa included a recommendation to democratise the media by ensuring that the different types of media should make provision for the diversity in communities; that steps should be taken to provide all communities with access to the technical means of receiving and disseminating information, such as electricity, telecommunications and other facilities; that communities should also have access to skills required to receive and disseminate information; that diversity of ownership of media production and distribution facilities should be guaranteed; and that affirmative action should be taken to make financial, technical and other resources available to the sectors of society that have so far been denied these facilities.

- 4 In the thesis on which this article is based (cf. Banda 2003) a more elaborate motivation is provided for why the focus is on these categories. This is done against the background of the state of media policy and the media landscape in Zambia and based on policy theory and research.

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