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# Media Professionalism: Dependence on Rich Country Models<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The capacity of the world capitalist system to influence the rate and pattern of industrialisation in developing countries is greater now than at any time in the past. The rapidity with which countries are incorporating into the system in economic terms is complemented by the socio-cultural influence of the flow of information throughout the world. The mass media in particular, as a techno-industrial mechanism for transmitting information and entertainment to a potential mass audience are an important element in this global process. Documenting the content of such flows is important. But it is equally important to understand the influences on media production in the periphery—in particular the socio-cultural features of transferred metropolitan models of professional training and the organisation of communications structures. These concerns are based on an underlying, perhaps prejudicial, assumption that the maintenance of cultural identity (or identities) in developing countries is a means of containing transnational influence, and of supporting economic and social policies more relevant to the needs of specific countries.

However, there is no simple unilinear process of global flows from centre to periphery in the mass media: there are rather considerable regional differences which it is useful to distinguish at the outset. The influence of the USA in Latin America is one of relatively unimpeded market forces transferred in the case of the media through commercial audience-maximising systems built around advertising. One effect this has had is to encourage, through advertising in particular, high consumption patterns and levels of living. The creation of expectations which can only be met by further incorporation into the world economy makes it more and more difficult to establish economic policies which correspond to the capacity of these countries to foster locally conceived and based development strategies.<sup>2</sup>

In Asia and Africa, by contrast, there is a more limited incorporation into the modern consumer economy. The model of institutional transfer in broadcasting is that of the state corporation, though this does not necessarily exclude the influence of the market: there are samples of advertising in several cases. Although it is possible that a rise in living standards may mean greater incorporation—or the generalisation of the Latin American model—the current influence of the European model of professionalism on the state corporations already reproduces certain important characteristics of dependence.

## Research Objectives

The aims of the research were to consider in a preliminary manner the influence of professionalism and organisational structures transferred from industrialised to developing countries in the field of broadcasting. In particular what constraints have imported characteristics created, impeding the use of electronic media to support national development and cultural policies. The research considered the effects of socialisation, training and the perpetuation of standards and norms of metropolitan derivation in three principal occupations of radio and television—engineers, managers and producers—in two African countries, Algeria and Senegal. It also examined problems of recruitment and methods of work in the local environment and considered these in relation to metropolitan influences. The influence of the state on broadcasting in developing countries is crucial and more attention had to be given to this than was anticipated in the original research design (October 1974).

The methods of investigation used were individual and in some cases group interviews which sought information on training, local output, methods of work and changes in organisation since independence. It is hoped that this preliminary enquiry will lead to a more systematic elaboration of research questions which can be applied to other broadcasting systems in developing countries.

## Transfers of Technology and Institutions in the Media

Few questions have been asked about the effects of the transfer of technology on socialisation, role relationships and organisation, as economists have mainly concerned themselves with the effects of different types of technology on employment and labour utilisation. Consideration of broadcasting from this perspective raises a new series of questions. On the one hand the technology is very sophisticated and does not easily lead itself to experimentation in

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1 The research described in this article is part of a modest programme of research on the mass media. The introduction to the research problem described here is an adaptation of IDS Discussion Papers No. 100, *Professionalism in Broadcasting: Issues of International Dependence*, and No. 101, *Professionalism in Broadcasting: Case Studies of Algeria and Senegal*. Fieldwork was carried out from January-June, 1975, on a grant from the Social Science Research Council.

2 The need for socio-cultural decolonisation, as it may be called, enabling countries to operate within their own national capacities (present or future) is noted in Sauvart, 1976. This problem has also been discussed in recent years at media gatherings such as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference and regional broadcasting associations in Latin America, Asia and Africa. See also International Broadcast Institute, 1976.

the development of appropriate technology. But the radio or television programme, in contrast, is a *cultural* product and its influence goes beyond the simple consumption of goods and services.

The organisation of broadcasting in developing countries is bureaucratic, often as a consequence of the models imported from developed countries, although there is no necessity for this in terms either



Photo: 'Magnum'

of technology or product. Yet Third World broadcasting is not simply part of an international enclave. As a local institution, it contains many secondary characteristics of dependence expressed through choice and use of technology, organisational transfer, working methods and professional socialisation. Structures and occupations are only partly shaped by transnational influences.

The transnational influences carried through the mass media operate at two distinct levels. The first is the direct influence on consumption patterns and life styles carried through the foreign programmes and advertising. The second is the influence on standards and norms of training, professionalism, modes of organisation and media production which cause various occupations to identify with their metropolitan counterparts, and ultimately draw the media away from the cultural base and resources of

a poor country. It is this secondary influence with which the research was concerned. The transfer of technology in any production process will have an effect on organisation, labour utilisation and output. But in media production such changes also have a critical influence on patterns of cultural expression. In contrast to transfers of technology in textiles or food processing, those in the mass media reproduce and make more penetrating the other forms of external influence.

Metropolitan influence affects the various broadcasting occupations differentially. Engineers are the most directly affected by transnational influence, for they are the principal actors in the transfer of technology. The production of broadcasting equipment is mainly located in a few industrialised countries (USA, UK, Japan, France, West Germany) and in a few large firms in those countries which sell to developing countries.<sup>3</sup> Yet the creation of Third World marketing mechanisms (or the creation of south-south links, as they have been called, rather than relying on the dominant north-south flows) is not completely foreclosed. To take an example, the Indian electronics industry produces black and white television cameras, and receivers especially designed for use in rural areas.<sup>4</sup> The particular significance of the black and white cameras is that most systems have been compelled to move to colour by the phasing out of monochrome equipment by the major producers, and the difficulty in obtaining the necessary components or spares for non-colour systems. Many countries with limited budgets face considerable expense because of the extra cost of production and transmission equipment and of receivers, the latter, already a luxury item in the Third World, often increasing by four-fold. Thus far the Indian industry has not however, sought export markets. But should it do so, it would be confronted by the expert marketing systems of the major producers.

Like some electronic components, radios are produced in certain developing countries because of the labour intensive requirements of their production. Yet for the moment most of them are made under licence from and for sale through the marketing channels of the major firms, which use developing countries mainly as a source of cheap labour. Such production does not therefore escape technological

<sup>3</sup> Current IDS research with Richard Stanton is examining the marketing mechanisms established by UK firms for the sale of equipment to developing countries.

<sup>4</sup> Produced under licence from a German firm, who themselves marketed the camera more than ten years ago, thus making it out-of-date for the European market. Experimentation was carried out in the production of television sets to be used for direct reception in the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) Broadcast to 2,000 villages for one year. They had special components which made them particularly rugged. There will no doubt be reports on the experiment shortly, as it was completed only in Summer, 1976.

and marketing domination by the main international firms, which is difficult for Third World buyers to counter. But the exchange of products, information, and expertise between the better endowed developing countries and others may create more room for manoeuvre. Such exchanges already exist in rudimentary form in journalism and media production, but they are of minimal impact against the dominant flows.

### **The Problem of Professionalism**

In an interesting book on the professions and their organisation Johnson defines professionalism as "a particular form of institutionalised control of certain occupational activities in which an occupational community defines client needs and the manner in which these are catered for."<sup>5</sup> His work focuses on the client-professional relationship, stressing not only variations in professional autonomy but also variations in the social characteristics of the consumer. Broadcasting in developing countries, however, presents some difficult problems for the analysis of professionalism, for the power and resources available to the different broadcasting occupations and their capacity to exercise control over their work are circumscribed directly by the state.

In traditional terms the client of a broadcasting organisation is the audience. But in a system which is non-commercial and largely unconcerned with audience definition of maximisation, but rather with the diffusion of a centrally-defined ideology, the principal client appears in some respects to be the government. While broadcasters do not define the needs of government, they decide (in collaboration with various ministries and parastatal organisations) which elements of policy are to be diffused, and the techniques and form in which they are to be presented. The state in the two countries examined is not only the major source of policy directives, but often takes a principal role in the definition of national cultural orientation as well as ideology. While lip service is paid to the audience, the two major influences on broadcasting are transnational and state control.

The traditional definitions of professionalism thus require major revision if they are to be relevant. This is partly because the occupations which comprise a broadcasting organisation do not fit easily into the analysis of the more highly integrated traditional professions with more coherent organisation and ideology,<sup>6</sup> partly because professionalisation in the developing countries emerged in a different historical context from that of the developed countries. In contrast to the latter it did not emerge as a response

to the growth of industry and technology and the accompanying social differentiation. It was rather grafted onto the social systems of developing countries from the outside, often being transmitted through metropolitan training programmes. The stress on occupational autonomy is the ideology of professionalism transferred via metropolitan influences. While usually mediated through a common language and common social institutions, professionalism contains "elements forcibly and clearly expressed by those occupational groups making claims for professional status and engaged in an ideological struggle. Such occupations lay great stress on the need for occupational and individual independence as a pre-condition of fulfilling obligations to consumers" (Johnson 1972: 57). To give a concrete example, the system an electronic engineer trained at a metropolitan university, with close professional contacts with his counterparts throughout the world and a positive attitude towards highly sophisticated technology would choose to install in his country will correspond much more to outside standards than to his country's needs. And attempts by the government or broadcasting managers to dictate a choice of technology based on their interpretation of the latter might be seen as a threat to his professional status and competence.

In certain respects the transnational features of professionalism, which are closely related to the transfer of technology, and provide its social structural component, might be seen as a potential countervailing force to state control and its ideological requirements. For at least in theoretical terms, the class structure of a developing country contains contradictions between the forces which maintain class at the national level and those which reproduce it at the international level.

Yet in practice, these contrasting forces rarely come into conflict. Close control over the recruitment of senior managers incorporates them into the system of state control. The tension between government control and censorship of output and the ideal of the freedom of the press absorbed through transnational socialisation is felt—insofar as it is felt at all—mainly by the non-managerial broadcasting staff.

In Algeria and Senegal the state defines its own needs with reference to its official ideology, leaving to producers and journalists the precise technical manner in which they are transmitted. In some respects both the political requirements of the state and the claim of broadcasting professionals to special expertise in producing programmes reinforce each other: meaning for example that the shape and format of broadcasts is worked out without reference to viewers or listeners.

<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the traditional literature on the sociology of the professions his emphasis is on the exclusiveness and social control exhibited by professions. See T. J. Johnson, 1972. More recent work by Johnson seeks to link his approach to professionalism with the Marxist analysis of modes of production.

<sup>6</sup> Considerable doubt on the usefulness of this approach is cast in Gurevitch and Elliott, 1973.

## **Broadcasting in Algeria and Senegal**

As for many developing countries, the majority of the populations of Algeria and Senegal live on the land. Nevertheless their process of development and industrialisation does not necessarily serve the needs of rural transformation, and their use of broadcasting reflects this. Both broadcasting systems are urban-based, and television in particular is urban-oriented.<sup>7</sup> Both exhibit vigorous state control. By no means are the only problems the metropolitan influences on the system: indirect influences based on models of imported organisation and training are important, but they interact with features of the local social and ideological structure.

The following is a schematic presentation of the principal differences and similarities between the two countries in the context in which broadcasting is developing.

**General policy:** Algeria is an oil-rich country with an aggressive Third World strategy and a vigorous policy of internal industrialisation based on state socialism, while Senegal has only barely emerged from colonial status economically and politically and remains very dependent on the franc zone, French aid and French private investment. It has very little industry and is a poor monocrop economy based on groundnuts.

**Cultural features:** Algeria is making a self-conscious attempt to redefine its indigenous culture after 140 years of French domination, a revival which is based on Arabisation and Islam. Senegalese culture on the other hand is somewhat divided, in that the educated urban elite remains very French influenced while the culture and social structure of the mass of the population remain relatively unaffected. More than 95 per cent of the population is Muslim. The spread of the Wolof language with the cash-cropping and marketing of groundnuts has produced a national culture in social and linguistic terms. Official cultural policies find expression in the works of President Senghor based on negritude and African socialism.

**French influence:** In Senegal, this is dominant in all features of modern life since modernisation is defined as the improvement of performance within basically French institutions. In Algeria certain sections of the educated elite remain very influenced by French intellectual and cultural life, while the only structural influence remains in the patterns of administration (bureaucratisation, hierarchy, paperwork). France is only one among many sources from which the Algerians purchase technology and expertise. French administrative and accounting

methods remain intact and are a major constraint on current socialist strategy.

**Education:** Algeria has had a remarkable growth of universal education and literacy since independence, with new breakthroughs in technical training, although an enclave has also been created through the special status awarded to highly qualified professionals, usually in technical fields. Senegal has been marked by the French tradition of classical education, and its institutions remain almost unreformed, including a disdain for technical and practical education. Attempts to reform the system or make it more relevant come from non-French donors and international agencies. These tendencies are apparent in broadcasting training as in other fields.

**Broadcasting budget:** Algeria has a very large articulated according to ideological and cultural priorities. Broadcasting is used as a vehicle for disseminating official ideology and culture, and has recently been used to discuss priorities of state socialism. In Senegal, there is little clear definition of broadcasting priorities, and there is a distinct lack of purpose in the broadcasting organisation. The radio has served, however, an important—though not officially recognised—vehicle for the spread of the Wolof language.

**Coverage:** Algeria has total national coverage in radio and television by satellite since 1975. Senegal has moderate national radio coverage through transmitters largely provided through French aid and based in the regions. There is a single television transmitter which covers the capital city and up to 60 km beyond.

**Broadcasting budgets:** Algeria has a very large budget, especially for technical equipment, reflecting the relative wealth of the country and the importance accorded to broadcasting. This has made the technical component of the system more advanced than the local production of programmes. In Senegal (admittedly a much poorer country) the budget is very small. Most equipment and the expertise to run it is provided through French aid. This and the exclusively French orientation of training have made the system a much more obvious locus of direct external influence.

**Decentralisation:** Little autonomy is given to regional stations in either Algeria or Senegal. In Senegal there is more latitude since the ideology officially diffused from the centre is less well defined than in Algeria, but on the other hand Algeria's regional stations have a much greater technical capacity than the small regional radio stations in Senegal.

**Participation in Broadcasting (the audience):** Algeria has a state centralising regime, broadly speaking

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<sup>7</sup> Algeria had television before the French exodus in 1961; Senegal went into television only in 1974.

unconcerned with mass participation in ideological matters. When for example, it recently achieved the technological capacity to cover the entire country with television via satellite, no allowance was made for the different cultural origins of the people in the southern or Saharan regions who will, like the rest of the country, receive a diet of imported programmes from France, the USA, and other Arab countries (though they will also receive some local programmes based on imported models such as the round table). Attempts to experiment with different types of media, with community involvement, or with the incorporation of audiences into the programming structure, have in Algeria as in other developing countries remained better known in the publications and meetings of UNESCO or experiments of FAO than in broadcasting itself.

An interesting but short-lived contrast to this is the rural educational radio experiment in Senegal, which became well-known for the voice it gave to the peasants in elaborating their grievances against state control and exploitation. Started as a UNESCO experiment (UNESCO, 1973), it coincided with a particularly acute phase of peasant hardship (the Sahel drought) and was kept going largely on the basis of the initiative of a local broadcaster, but importantly with the approval of President Senghor who apparently used it for political reasons against certain highly placed government officials. It was later altered in form and content by state intervention and it became more of an arm of agricultural extension. But while it lasted it served as one of the most interesting examples of the potential importance and power of radio in the rural as well as the national context.<sup>8</sup>

Comments upon the experiment made by African broadcasters attending a seminar at the IDS in 1975 provide an interesting insight into the constraints against popular participation in the media in the African context. Their reaction was generally one of disbelief. Broadcasters from English-speaking countries questioned that a broadcaster could 'get away' with anything quite so politically contentious. And the response of journalists from Algeria, proud of their progressive state socialist regime, was—"How could something like this experiment be found in so reactionary a country (with such pervasive French influence) as Senegal?" Cultural and national development strategies are so centrally controlled in Algeria that the state control of broadcasting is broadly speaking more monolithic than in Senegal with its less articulated ideology, explaining why such an experiment can occur more

easily in the latter despite its more conservative political environment.

**Professional Attitudes of Broadcasters:** In Senegal, the usual aims of broadcasting—to inform, to educate and to distract—are accepted as fundamental principles of the broadcasting organisation. Despite a recent attempt to decentralise the organisation in order to foster more initiative, most of the broadcasters questioned by us felt that there was little real reward for initiative. A number of informants referred to a malaise in the organisation, attributed partly to the low status of the occupations, partly to poor recruitment and partly to government censorship. Among younger members of staff, poor recruitment in turn was blamed on government policy which was seen as responsible for inadequate budget allocations, censorship and the lack of definition of policies either in developmental or political terms. All these factors were believed to hinder technical innovation and experimentation in programmes.

A centre-periphery situation prevails both within the country and in terms of external influence. The former militates (except in unusual circumstances) against the broadcasters leaving the capital city or becoming in any way involved with the major proportion of their listeners in the rural areas. The latter is increased by the malaise in the organisation in Senegal, trips abroad for training or international meetings being viewed as a way of breaking out of the existing structures and of providing a revitalisation of personal and professional commitments.

Both producer/directors and radio and TV journalists are susceptible to state censorship. Ranks are divided however, between the older generation, more willing to toe the government line than the younger generation. In the words of one young journalist:

How can I save face among my peers when they question the seriousness of what we do as journalists since the ORTS (Senegalese Radio and Television Corporation) does not report things and does not allow the opposition to speak. The gossip network in Dakar is more important for keeping people informed!

Most of the technical staff of Senegalese radio and television are in-service trained. For those with overseas training are quickly attracted into private enterprise, although recent government scholarship policies have been designed to prevent this. Production and management staff tend to be the most stable occupations in the organisation. Engineers are less stable because their training and skills are more readily transferable.

Reference to outside professional standards in the Senegalese organisation was used by respondents

<sup>8</sup> The Rural Educational Radio programme in Senegal was listened to as "a voice of opposition" by urban residents as well and had important national following. (See R. Cruise O'Brien, *An Experiment of Rural Radio in Senegal*, Ceres, forthcoming.)

chiefly to draw attention to the relatively limited level of expertise in broadcasting occupations. The dependence on working methods and organisational structure derived from the French colonial model are apparent in poor utilisation of the already limited manpower available. And the presence of several French technical advisers in key posts, who remain the natural reference points for improvement and modernisation in basically unreformed working structures, is a reflection of the role of the French in the country in many sectors, of which broadcasting is only one.

In Algeria the influences on broadcasting occupations are less obviously French. Many directors, journalists and technical staff have been trained in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe since independence. Although there have been various attempts (since Boumedienne came to power in 1965 in particular) to alter the organisational structure, overbureaucratisation remains a brake on a more popular local form of broadcasting. A fairly dramatic recognition of the failure to reform the administration of broadcasting to meet local goals was the request in 1976 for an ORTF team to assist in implementing a new management structure.

The role of Algerian Radio and Television (RTA), in line with other governmental agencies, is to lead the people, rather than to mirror cultural diversity. Broadcasters tend to be distant from their audience because of their educational qualifications, organisational bureaucratisation, and the resistance of the official ideology to greater participation, although this is a more acute problem perhaps in television than in radio. In this, RTA reflects a national tendency. Advanced professionalism and bureaucratisation divide professionals and civil servants from the people, while the state ideology permits them to idealise their role as working "in the name of the people."

Professional contacts abroad are maintained by management and some senior staff who travel to many conferences, trade fairs and other professional meetings each year. There is a cleavage between this group and other groups within the RTA such as those who are in charge of educational broadcasting. The former are cosmopolitan (with a European life style), while the latter are more influenced by Arab culture through their educational background.

As in Senegal, the role of the producer in Algeria posed problems, in that while there was no lack of local talent, this did not extend to the necessary qualities of planning and management, so crucial to production. The performance of producers has not necessarily been determined by the prestige of the schools which he may have attended: some from the top European schools have found it difficult to settle

down in the local environment. The Head of Production felt that "motivation" was the most important quality. But this was not borne out by the experience of a young producer who returned full of enthusiasm from studies in Poland, only to be ground down within a few years by the poor management and lack of regard for producers within RTA: "We are just the wheels of the cart moving toward increased production; we are of no greater significance to them (management) in professional terms." Yet in some respects, those trained in the socialist countries have faced fewer problems of adjustment to the local working environment, not only because of the close relationship between broadcasting and the aims of the state in these countries, but also because of shared views on the role of the producers and the content of programmes.

Professional status was emphasised by all producers, being in part a reflex against management, but it was most marked among those who had been trained in European working methods. A number of grievances within the organisation were distilled in their view into a clash between the artistic spirit, with which they identified, and the administrative apparatus. For their part, administrators felt antipathy to the production staff for not producing quickly enough (in their view) and for being somewhat problematic in terms of the organisation. This clash is without doubt the principal point of professional stress in many other Third World broadcasting organisations. Problems of this kind are bound to be apparent in a regime trying to move as quickly as the Algerian one and with such an obvious centralising thrust. Most opposition tendencies, whether intellectual, populist or syndicalist, have been either eliminated or incorporated into the state-managed development programme. The conflict between professionals and the state authority and the predominance of the latter in broadcasting reflects a general tendency in Algerian society.

#### **Professionalism: Appraisal by Commonwealth Broadcasters**

It had become obvious to me during fieldwork that some of the problems which I had originally raised as research questions—the conflict between the state and professionals in broadcasting, for example—fitted more appropriately into a broadcasting system derived from the BBC model rather than from French (ORTF) organisation and training. The French system has been much less marked by the corporate professionalism which is characteristic of the BBC with its highly articulated professional ideology which draws in all the main broadcasting occupations (Burns, 1972).

By contrast, the ORTF is subject to more overt government control and is marked by sharper

differentiation between the individual broadcasting occupations, each with its own separate union affiliations. While one may talk of the diffusion of professionalism in general terms, one must also be precise about the specific aspects of professionalism and the specific models which are being diffused.

The opportunity to direct a seminar for African broadcasters<sup>9</sup> on my return to Sussex in August 1975 provided an occasion for examining some of the research ideas in a non-fieldwork context. The express purpose of the seminar was to consider how broadcasting could better serve national development both by examining the international constraints and by considering a number of individual country experiences. Discussions of professionalism became a central theme, in the context of which we considered how to make broadcasting a more dynamic part of a country's development programme rather than merely reacting to the government or its specialised departments for broadcast material. In addition to the seminar discussions, a questionnaire was circulated to ten members of the seminar (from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi and Zambia), most of whom held senior managerial positions.

Three principal problems surrounding professional roles were discussed: how to retain journalistic initiative while meeting responsibilities towards government; the maintenance of standards; the need to motivate and animate staff. Most participants reluctantly admitted that the independence of broadcasting from government had no place in their societies even though expressing a certain guilt feeling in relation to the professional ideals instilled through training (most of them were BBC trained). Some felt that there was a need to re-define the role of journalist from being the "conscience of society" to being supportive of the government's development programme—much more on the Eastern European model of the profession than that considered appropriate to broadcasting organisations in the West. In recent discussions such a position has become known as 'development journalism', a formula which begs a number of questions concerning the role of government and the 'fourth estate'. It was felt that the maintenance of standards could not be applied with exclusive reference to metropolitan models. A reformulation of the standards which had been absorbed as 'universal' through training was needed to reflect local capacity and objectives.

Among the pressing professional problems they identified were poor conditions of service, inadequate training and loss of staff to the private sector. A producer from Kenya was explicit:

"The lack of attractive terms of service (including low salaries, lack of freedom of choice of material, the lack of promotional opportunities) has resulted in the best qualified broadcasters in my organisation leaving and joining the private sector."

A Nigerian broadcaster added:

"The recruitment process is tied to a system that has very little consideration for the needs of the medium. The process is long, tedious, cumbersome and sometimes frustrating. In the past the system has led to the loss by the organisation of eminent talents to other competing interests. Talent, flair and proven ability should receive greater consideration in the system."

The lack of adequate time for production was also mentioned, as well as the need to support the national language, so important yet so problematic in many African broadcasting systems. Mastery of the potential and constraints of the media was mentioned, and linked especially to the imagination and innovation required to adapt external models and techniques to the local idiom of communication. Lack of professional awareness, defined as "lack of empathy with the audience", was mentioned as an obstacle to such an adaptation.

The civil service stamp on the organisation had, it was felt, several negative features:

"As a civil service department, we are not able to recruit the best qualified people because of the regulations, rules, and salary structures."

The most pressing problems in terms of staff training were the scarcity of trained personnel and the remoteness of overseas training to local needs. The fact that facilities are available locally for basic but not for more specialised training was believed to make it difficult to build up a core of people professionally committed to making broadcasting more nationally relevant. Most participants believed that better staff training is needed to build a professional image, although some felt that the acquisition of basic skills is such a fundamental problem that considerations of professional identity are something of a luxury.

Respondents were asked to comment on innovations in their own organisations adapting them to local circumstances. Certain countries had been able to make changes in administration and finance, even within the constraints of civil service rules, including greater staff participation in decisions, exchanges of staff among departments and the education of management about the qualities of good and poor programmes. In Kenya, producers had been encouraged to spend some time in villages so that they could get to know the rural population better

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<sup>9</sup> Study Seminar 50: Broadcasting for National Development in Africa.

and begin to specialise in certain regions. Working methods in a number of organisations were seen as largely unchanging, although Nigeria, for example, was moving towards greater specialisation of roles, separating producers from announcers, and newsreaders from reporters.

In order to ascertain their international contacts, respondents were asked to mention the professional reasons for which they had been outside their country in the last five years. This produced interesting verification of the importance of the links between English-speaking countries in Africa, especially those fostered by the BBC. Most had been to at least one conference or training seminar in Britain or in Africa organised by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association. A number claimed close colleague relationships with BBC professionals. Engineers had good contacts with manufacturers in Britain, and a number had built up Commonwealth contacts among colleagues in Africa. The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association and like associations do not serve as licensing authorities admitting individuals for practice in broadcasting occupations. They are rather the keepers of the professional ideology of standards and autonomy. Although much less powerful in professional terms than City and Guilds or the Bar associations, they maintain a useful 'old boy' network with considerable professional influence.

There was some discussion of the acquisition of programmes in the international market. Respondents were for example divided about attendance at international fairs, a number of them agreeing with the claim that "by not attending a sufficient number of international fairs, developing countries get a poor selection of imported programmes", while others felt that the selection of imported programmes was poor anyway. One respondent went a long way in deferring to international marketing: "the sellers at these fairs are skilled both in knowing their wares and what is right for the African market", while others felt that importers ought to be much more selective to ensure programmes suited local purposes.

The maintenance of recognisable international standards permits a broadcaster to work in principle—in any organisation in the world. Only one or two respondents felt, however, that this kind of international mobility is possible, the remainder believing that the technological capabilities in different national contexts were so distinct as to preclude it. Rather than agreeing that the trend is towards greater international homogenisation in the content of programmes, respondents pointed out that attempts really are being made to boost local production, to reconsider imported influences and gear production to the local culture.

These English-speaking broadcasters seemed on the whole more articulate and to have had considered seriously the dilemmas of their own professionalism than those who were interviewed in Algeria and Senegal. This does not necessarily mean, however, that metropolitan professionalism is not a general problem at the periphery; but simply that the BBC professional ideology and overseas network is much more explicit than its non-Commonwealth counterparts.

### Conclusion

In order to understand the international influences on the development of broadcasting and the media in developing countries, an examination of institutional transfers—whether organisational or professional—is of considerable importance. The development of various media occupations in peripheral countries requires examination not only of transnational influences but also of state control. The issues examined in the case studies raise important questions, but further consideration in a comparative context requires a reformulation of the framework of analysis. For the reasons mentioned above, I am not altogether happy with 'professionalism' as an organising concept from which to trace metropolitan influences and their effect. Another approach might be to focus on the mechanisms of occupational ideology and control or on the social structural implications of the transfer of technology.<sup>10</sup> In none of these approaches, however, should one lose sight of the essentially *cultural* dimension of the media and their products.

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<sup>10</sup> Later in 1977, I hope to reconsider the original hypotheses of the study with the advice of a group of scholars from developing countries. Further case studies in broadcasting systems influenced by the US commercial model or the UK public corporation in regions other than Africa will be examined.