

Globalisation and media ethics in Africa: the case of Zambia

ABSTRACT

The disintegration of military regimes and one-party rule occurring across Africa in the early 1990s allowed for the mushrooming of numerous new media initiatives and the resuscitation of hitherto dormant media operations. The enthusiasm was fuelled by promises of freedom of speech and prospects of the media becoming an autonomous fourth actor on the public stage. It was envisioned by many that the media would reject the ethos prevailing under hegemonic rule and adopt international norms. But nearly two decades later, media people and their organisations in sub-Saharan Africa are still entangled in a labyrinth of ethical dilemma. One of the big issues begging further research and reflection is whether to localise or globalise ethical discourse and practice. How far should indigenous cultural values inform journalism ethics? And, how can this be negotiated in a rapidly globalising environment? This paper uses the Zambian experience to advance the position that glocalisation - the hybridisation of ethical norms between the local and the global - provides the most enduring and acceptable foundation for ethical theorising and practice available to media professionals on the continent.

INTRODUCTION

Media in Africa are, to borrow from Goodwin (1987), “groping for ethics” to guide their role in globalising societies, this amidst both promising yet unpredictable democratisation and somewhat hopeful national economic indicators that are, alas, constrained by excruciating financial and professional costs of operating culture industries on the continent. Negotiating business and professional survival while playing an effective role in the uncharted course of being the fourth estate, exposes media people and also their organisations to a profusion of ethical dilemmas.

A vivid illustration of these dilemmas and the need for media people in Zambia to develop concurrent normative positions occurred in July 2008 when a ferocious disagreement erupted between the Media Ethics Council of Zambia (MECOZ) and *The Post*, the only independent daily in the country. MECOZ chairperson and University of Zambia journalism lecturer, Rose Nyondo, was a guest on a call-in show on Radio Phoenix, a popular commercial FM station in Lusaka. When asked by a caller, “How do your ethics take the following words ... jackals, imbeciles, stupid, idiot and hyena referring to somebody?”. Nyondo responded that usage of such terms by the media was a breach of cultural ethical boundaries, saying “Even in our own tradition, if I call you a goat, I have insulted you.” Nyondo further argued that name-calling by the media was also a breach of professional norms: “It’s libel, it’s defamation, it’s a very negative thing you can think about” (as cited in Silwamba, 2008:1).

The Post, which often carries columns in which terms such as these are used to describe public figures - including present and past heads of state and other significant actors on the national stage - disagreed with Nyondo. In a fierce editorial response, the paper said it was ‘shocked’ by Nyondo’s remarks and said it did not know “what culture” was being referred to because “in Zambian languages, animals are used to describe behavior”. The paper made its normative position clear: “What is important is that there must be very good justification to call someone a fox, a jackal, a hyena, a scoundrel, an idiot, a fool. One must be able to demonstrate that the behavior of that person befits that description.” The paper gave the university don and chair of the national media ethics body a quick lecture: “Nyondo should also be aware that to insult someone does not always amount to libeling that person.” The editorial was scathing about the defamation remark: “What she exhibited was total ignorance of the law” (Things should be called by their names, 2008).

This wrangle among media professionals reveals the critical need for substantive reflection on ethical norms – which Nordenstreng (1995:435) describes as ‘the basic principles of behaviour’ (to guide the practice of journalism in Zambia and the rest of Africa). Bourgault observes that “in the absence of standards of professional behaviour based upon competent performance, there develops instead confusion over appropriate behavior” (1995:51). There is legitimate concern among ethicists in Africa that the ‘confusion’ or apparent lack of professionalism can be exploited by governments to legislate media conduct (Kasoma, 1994a).

This paper is a contribution towards the reflection on and evolution of standards and hopefully also the reduction of 'confusion' over what the media should and should not do. This is in line with Wasserman's observation that "more work needs to be done in the study of journalism ethics to fully understand how journalists - around the world - are making ethical decisions and how those decisions pragmatically balance forces of globalization with local resistance" (Wasserman & Rao, 2008:178).

1. SOURCES OF ETHICAL NORMS

There is general consensus among media professionals that they cannot operate in an ethical vacuum. The nature of the media - telling stories about people, businesses, politics and selling space - demands standards. While there are many ways of understanding and interpreting standards, actually having established systems in place induces cohesion in media practice. Sources of ethical reasoning date back to Greek thinkers. Aristotle's virtue ethics, for instance, advanced the thinking that the right course of action could be found by avoiding extremes and rather seeking to find the golden mean. The Judeo-Christian tradition is based on the 'love-thy-neighbour' teaching of Jesus. More recent thinking can be attributed to Kant's 'categorical imperative' theories. Then there is Stuart Mill's utilitarianistic proposition that creating the greatest good is yet another approach to ethical reasoning. Egalitarianism posits that all individuals should be treated equally. However, relativism rejects absolutism by allowing different situations to determine ethical choices. In sum, the above theories fall into three distinct clusters: *deontological theories* are duty based, meaning that people have certain obligations to observe despite the circumstances; *teleological theories* draw attention to the outcomes and results of choices made; finally, *virtue theories*, such as "love thy neighbour, address the character of the person (Christians, 1991; Day, 1991).

While the above theories provide the normative foundation for any discussion on media ethics, this paper proposes that contemporary Zambian media professionals can further distil the ideas embedded in these theories by examining three distinct yet interrelated clusters of sources to turn to for insights and reasoning that could lead to enduring ethical resolutions. The first cluster of sources - comprising indigenous values emanating from within the history and culture of Zambia and surrounding nations - is 'local'. The second is 'global' and comprises international, predominantly American and Western European ethical standards in the liberal tradition of media practice in those nations. The third is 'glocal' - a blend of indigenous insights and global values resulting in ethical frameworks that fulfil the expectations of contemporary Zambian culture and society while matching the demands obliged on local media by the unstoppable globalisation of journalism.

This paper employs both historical and contemporary analysis to examine and discuss how the Zambian media negotiate ethical norms in the sometimes explosive environment to deliver effective journalism. While this study focuses on one African country, the issues are nevertheless continental (Karikari, 1996). The toppling of military regimes and pulling down of one-party states that swept across the continent in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to the eruption of

unprecedented media activity in Africa so that the airwaves and newsstands, hitherto dominated by a handful of pro-government media products, were suddenly flooded with new voices (see Bourgault, 1995).

But this euphoria spawned a new ethical dilemma. Senghor (1996) observed two paradoxes that confronted the African media in the early 1990s. The first was that “information pluralism ... produced certain perverse effects”. The reintroduction of free speech, competitive politics, and other freedoms also triggered long-buried but unresolved issues in African societies. Ethnic, religious, regional and economic tensions surfaced. The media, lacking enduring ethical guideposts, were in many cases caught up in these dangerous feuds. The ‘perverse’ outcomes were alarming:

Some of the media, instead of preventing these dangers seem, on the contrary, to be fanning them. Some newspapers ... have reproduced communiqués inciting to murder or ... civil disobedience. Some radio stations ... have called on the army to rebel or called for the destruction of public buildings. In a nutshell, democratization ... seems to be devouring its own children (Senghor, 1996:1).

Yet another paradox identified by Senghor was that, in spite of these ethical ‘perversions’, there was also a simultaneous “unprecedented rise [in] the demand for information ethics”. Advocacy by media people for a free, self-regulated media that paralleled and helped fuel the campaigns for a return to competitive democratic politics had accomplished the desired effect for Senghor to be able to report: “The media have reasserted their ‘civic’ role. In reaction the public has taken them more seriously on their word.” But the media, still reeling from the newly-found freedoms, found themselves with no ethical anchors and fell short of public expectations. “The press no longer has a good press,” was Senghor’s conclusion (1996:2).

The reasons for lack of a ‘good’ press by African media are many but at the core is the need for an emergence of ethics that govern media conduct. “Overall, the question of ethics has been seen as an essential requirement if the media are going to play effective and relevant contributions in the democratization process in Africa” (Karikari, 1996:143). Kunczik puts it this way: “A functioning democracy is founded on a communication sector that functions adequately and allows informed public opinion to develop freely” (1999:5). This paper uses the Zambian experience as a building block towards the construction of media ethics that consolidate the standing of the media as one of the cornerstones of authentic African democracy.

2. MEDIA IN ZAMBIA

The print and broadcast media in Zambia, compared with those in other countries on the continent such as Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, are small. There are three dailies - *The Post*, *The Times of Zambia* (hereafter *Times*) and the *Zambia Daily Mail* (hereafter *Mail*). *The Post* is privately owned, while *Times* and *Mail* are government newspapers. Reliable circulation figures are hard

to confirm, but 2002 print-run estimates were at 40 000 each for *The Post* and *Mail*, and about 32 000 for *Times* (www.nationencyclopedia.com/Africa/Zambia).

In this paper, references to the press will be primarily about these three papers as they dominate the print-media market. However, it must be added that while there are other weekly, monthly and occasional newspapers and magazines, their circulation and influence are extremely limited and their ethical behaviour is a reflection of how the major dailies conduct themselves. Therefore, focusing on the three major dailies is, by implication, a study of all the print news media in the country.

The broadcast industry is dominated by the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), the government radio and television conglomerate. ZNBC operates one TV channel and four radio channels. It is the only broadcaster with national reach and with local-language programmes. Its content, both on radio and TV is, needless to say, pro-government. Banda acknowledged this: "Television holds a special appeal for the ruling party ... its content is frequently monitored by state functionaries ... ZNBC executives find themselves overly occupied by what goes out on the channel" (2006:23). The main news bulletins on both radio and TV generally begin with reports about statements and activities of the Head of State, followed by stories about government ministries and departments before other local and international news is reported. Opposition voices are generally stifled.

Private broadcasting is still a very young industry in the country and severely constrained by government-imposed licensing restrictions (licences are only issued for a limited broadcasting radius) and limited advertising revenue (only a few large corporations buy air time). The most visible independent TV broadcaster is *Muvi TV*. Located in the capital, Lusaka, *Muvi TV* is giving ZNBC strong competition in the Lusaka market by carrying political stories – blacked out by the state media- and by showing traditionally uncomfortable images of dead bodies shot by police in urban skirmishes or desperate slum dwellers with unusual physical deformities, asking the government for funding to receive treatment abroad. Besides *Muvi TV* and the religious *Trinity Broadcasting Network* there are two other television broadcasters in the country, *MoBi TV* and *CB TV*. However, these are still in the testing phase and have not yet entered the ethical landscape.

Radio is a more vibrant industry (See Banda, 2006a:16-20; Banda, 2006b). This is due in part to lower start-up and operational costs. It costs much less to initiate and run a radio station than it does to launch a television operation or to go into newspaper publishing. There are at least 39 commercial and community radio stations broadcasting from all provinces and in major regional languages. The dynamics of radio broadcasting - accessibility, popularity of content, proximity to audiences, etc - make it a minefield of ethical dilemmas. One radio station in the agricultural town of Mazabuka, in Southern Province, triggered community hostility because of broadcasting 'witchcraft' stories. In Western Province, another radio station offended the local traditional establishment by airing music in a language from another part of the country (Phiri, 2007). The conflict between 'local' values and global trends is thus apparent.

2.1 Ethical dilemmas

While the media industry in Zambia is small in comparative terms, the ethical issues surrounding its operations are however very significant. This is because the media are a powerful player in the nation. Television, radio and newspaper stories can make or break people. They can steer the country's political life in a bad direction, foment discord and fan animosity. The country's nascent, continuous evolving democracy can be derailed by journalism that is void of ethics: "A democracy needs journalists as watchdogs even though the journalists are not above the state. But that begs the question: Who is watching the watchdog?" (Kunczik, 1999:13). It is this power of the press that makes it imperative for media people to reflect on ethics that guide their conduct.

The ethical dilemma media people face in Zambia operates on four levels: 1) societal, 2), organisational, 3), professional, and 4) personal.

2.1.1 Societal level

At the societal level, the journalist has to negotiate professional conduct in a society that is itself prone to corrupt and generally unethical behaviour. It is not uncommon for public actors to want to offer bribes to journalists for positive coverage or to gloss over events that could place the public figure in bad light. Occasionally, some media professionals will resist such offers. For example, one journalist reported a cash offer by a Member of Parliament (HH's man in bribery, 2006) but in many cases, such offers are hard to walk away from. Though such offers are most common during election times, there is no doubt that such temptations are ongoing and that journalists do succumb to them. Warren's observation is sadly true of Zambia:

In many 'developing' countries, so called 'envelope journalism' (accepting financial benefits for certain action or inaction) is the corruption which destroys the image of our profession, deepening cynicism about the media and making us part of the problem (2006).

Operating ethically in societies where unethical conduct is the order of the day is a big challenge confronting media professionals in Zambia and in Africa in general. Kunczik (1999:11) succinctly remarks: "The functions a society assigns to the press or mass media are also decisive to journalistic ethics."

2.1.2 Organisational level

If society places high ethical pressures on the media people, the organisations in which they operate often exacerbate the whole situation. As noted above, a large part of the media industry in Zambia is state-controlled. Kunczik might as well have the media in Zambia in mind when he states:

...in many cases individual journalists would definitively prefer to comply with the [ethical] code but find that conditions do not allow them to. It might simply be a matter of having to make a living; or perhaps the state, using its power prevents 'ethically perfect journalism', preferring lies and manipulation instead (1999:11).

On 10 September 2007, Information Minister Mulongoti told journalists working for the public media that if they wanted to keep their jobs, they had to follow the government line in their reporting (MISA, 2007). Such comments by a public official charged with information and broadcasting in the country make it clear that ownership of the media severely constrains ethical journalism in the country.

Journalists working in the government media are also by affected by a lack of resources to undertake ethical journalism. In many cases reporters lack transportation and end up asking for rides from newsmakers. It is also not unusual for reporters to ask for or receive a 'free lunch' and snatch a free T-shirt while on assignment. In some cases, they expect an 'allowance' for covering a story. And since many journalists are still youthful, a free drink is even harder to resist. It is hard to see ethical reporting taking place in such situations. Little wonder the public is generally sceptical of most journalism coming out of state media.

Though the state dominates the media industry, it has been noted above that some independent newspapers and broadcasters have entered the arena since the early 1990s. In terms of the press, *The Post* is the only independent daily surrounded by much smaller, less-known and less influential weeklies, monthlies and occasional newspapers and magazines. In radio, *Radio Phoenix*, *Radio Icengelo* and some religious channels are bigger players surrounded by numerous community radio stations. *Muvi TV* has captured the Lusaka market, while other independent stations are still in the experimental phase. However, media professionals in the private media sector are not shielded from ethical dilemmas. Owners of the newspapers and broadcasting operations make their own demands of journalists. They have their own political, ethnic, religious and other leanings that can potentially affect content. Pressures also emanate from advertising interests. Financial considerations thus sometimes override ethical standards. Again, Kunczik describes the Zambian scenario with uncanny precision:

But even a commercial organization within a medium, in competition with other media, can prevent the emergence of ethical journalism; it may be that an owner, publisher or manager demands or supports a certain political leaning; it may be that the pursuit of profits leads to a preference for a certain kind of content (e.g. sex, crime and human interest are big sellers); it may be that owing to pressure of current events, ethically perfect work (e.g. research) is prevented or that quite unethical behaviour (e.g. invasion of privacy, use of illegal methods to procure information) is supported (1999:22).

It becomes clear that Zambian journalists face practically insurmountable ethical challenges at the organisational level. Kasoma (1994:32) offers a simple but radical solution: media people should have enough 'self respect' to "resign rather than consent to reporting lies which serve a few rich and powerful individuals and cause suffering to the vast majority". However, in the face of limited career options and surviving on shoe-string salaries, this option remains remote for most journalists.

2.1.3 Professional level

Other ethical challenges faced by media people in Zambia relate to the state of the profession itself in the country. To begin with, the profession is young and the media fraternity has not had time to develop enduring ethical practices around which to gravitate. There are few, if any 'elders' in the profession to look up to for ethical insights. There is no body of literature on media ethics. Although 'ethics' courses are listed at leading media-training institutions, the scope and depth of the content remain subject to discussion. Many practising journalists interviewed for this article maintained that the 'ethics' they had learned in class were totally divorced from what they encountered once they got into the newsrooms. They found that they had to learn new 'ethics' on the job - usually in the form of the adulterated survival practices of 'experienced' journalists.

Journalists seeking to engage in ethical journalism further have to deal with the reality that standing up for ethics can be professionally costly: receiving limited reporting assignments, being sidelined in promotions and generally hitting a dead end early in one's career. Although no study has been conducted, there is strong evidence that most mass-communication graduates from the University of Zambia (the only degree-granting institution in the country) leave journalism for positions in business or in the burgeoning NGO world. This means that young professionals in whom a substantial investment in ethical reasoning has been made do thus not stay in the profession.

Another dilemma at the professional level is that the media industry lacks professional associations competent to address ethical issues affecting the media. Again Kunczik is worth quoting: "The extent to which professional principles can achieve their purpose depends on whether there is a professional jurisdiction with sanctioning powers" (1999:22). According to the Media Ethics Council of Zambia (MECOZ), "[J]ournalists who use their professional status ... for selfish or other unworthy motives violate a high trust" (quoted in Kantumoya, 2004:77). Though this sounds good on paper, in practice MECOZ still has to accumulate more influence in the media ethics discourse in Zambia. To make matters worse, some of the independent media have resisted becoming part of MECOZ because suspicion exists that it is a government front. The result is that there is a vacuum in the media profession when it comes to discourse on ethics.

2.1.4 Personal level

Ethical journalism, inevitably, is personal. Media professionals have to have certain inner convictions about what is right and what is wrong. Of course, there is always the

option of taking the ethics-less path where the journalist simply does what needs to be done to get the story, to meet the deadline and to keep the job. Merrill refers to this as 'non-morality or anti-morality' or 'non-ethics, the dark side of ethics'. But such soulless mechanical journalism would appear to defeat the whole purpose of being in this profession. After all, the vocation is to be both an information gatherer and disseminator, and these of necessity carry ethical imperatives. Merrill here cautions that this non-ethics idea "cannot (or should not) be taken seriously by the conscientious, ethical journalist" (Merrill, 1997:218).

However, strong ethical convictions can come at high personal cost to journalists in Zambia. In the public media, some journalists have lost jobs because they generated stories not desirable to the government. The editor-in-chief of the *Mail* was dismissed soon after the paper ran a headline declaring opposition leader Michael Sata as 'leading' in the 2006 presidential elections. In 2008, some key reporters and editors at *The Post* also resigned under dubious circumstances. Besides the professional cost of losing a standing in the profession, there are severe personal costs, involving how to face spouse and children and tell them that one is jobless and then to brace oneself for reduced income. Thus, although journalists who take a stand are celebrated in media circles, the impact of the resulting circumstances in their private lives can be excruciating.

Sometimes personal costs border on physical harm. Although there are no known murders of journalists in Zambia, disconcerting physical threats are common. Journalists known for hard-hitting reporting are sometimes threatened with mugging and beating in public places. For example, on 27 February 2008 reporters from *The Post* were threatened by irate supporters of the opposition United National Independence Party (once led by former president Kenneth Kaunda and now headed by his son, Tilyenji Kaunda) for what the cadres felt was negative reporting by said independent daily. Without police intervention, the reporters would have come to harm. Such experiences do make ethical journalism a personal challenge to practise (UNIP officials harass *Post*, 2008).

2.2 Finding ethical guideposts

In the light of the identified profusion of ethical dilemmas with which Zambian and indeed African media people have to contend, there is a need to develop ethical guideposts able to aid the journalists as they negotiate their way uncertainly around said ethical dilemmas. As was noted earlier, not enough reflection on media ethics takes place in most African countries, except perhaps in South Africa where the industry is more mature (Wasserman, 2006). However, both research and reflection on ethics emanating from the rest of Africa are extremely limited, if not non-existent. Back in 1994, the now late Kasoma reasoned that the "young profession of journalism in Africa may not really have had the time or opportunity to establish an ethos for its professional practice" (1994:4). Nonetheless, Kasoma refused to tolerate 'unethical journalism' which he said is 'not democratic' but 'selfish' (1994b:20). Instead, he called for an intellectual investment in the field:

African journalists must look to their moral philosophy for those principles and values which will raise African journalism to a more acceptable ethical or moral level than has been the case during the post-colonial era ... Africa will need to develop its own journalism ethics. Theories of journalism ethics ... do not drop like manna from heaven. They are painstakingly developed over long periods of research and reflections by people who are interested in the subject (Kasoma, 1994b:9).

One way 'painstakingly' to research and reflect on the topic is to ask whether African media should develop a body of ethics from indigenous moral values and thus resist global influences. In short: Should media ethics be localised or globalised? Or is the third option, 'glocalization', preferable, which in Wasserman's words is a 'multi-directional' phenomenon nurturing 'a combination of homogeneity with hybridity' resulting in a discourse that approaches "ethics as a fusion of paradoxical forces coming together in an increasingly shrinking world" (2008:178).? Before a proposition is advanced and espoused, it is necessary that we briefly revisit the history of the evolution of media ethics discourse and practice in the Zambian context.

2.3 Localisation of media ethics in zambia

Nationalisation followed hard on the heels of independence in Zambia in 1962. The media industry was not spared. The two major dailies - *Times* and *Mail* - and the national broadcaster became state assets (Kasoma, 1986; :11-57; Moore, 1991). An unwritten code of conduct was that the media were both to deliver cultural and development content and to convey government positions on issues. Respect for leaders - exploitatively extracted from cultural norms - was a given. The press thus could never challenge those in power. Kaunda's personal philosophy of humanism - a blend of mild socialism marinated in Christian beliefs about humans being created in the image of God - was the moral guide for media behaviour (Moore, 1991:19-30). Media autonomy and editorial neutrality were anathema.

In sum, it can be said that *localisation* was the guidepost of media ethics during the greater part of the Kaunda years. The big players in the industry were nationalised, and any independent media attempting to enter the arena were stifled - if not to death, then at least to a sterile existence churning out toothless politically and culturally 'correct' content. Global influences on media practice were demonised as diabolical intrusions on Zambian political independence and indigenous cultural values. This extended to other media besides the press, radio and television. Movies (including videos) were censored by a Kaunda-approved censorship body. In 1972 state radio was instructed to air 90 percent Zambian music, thereby forcing Teal - the only major record producer at the time - to produce more Zambian music (Kasoma, 1990:47-48). The book industry was dominated by an organisation whose name tells it all: the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.

Up until the late 1980s, the only organisations to resist this unbridled state-enforced localisation of the media content - and inevitably media values - were church media houses. The most prominent of these was Multimedia Zambia (MMZ), a publisher of a newspaper

and books and a producer of radio and TV content jointly owned by the Catholic Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and the Protestant Churches Council of Zambia (CCZ). MMZ published *The National Mirror* whose content infuriated Kaunda so much that at one point he ordered government institutions to stop placing advertisement in the biweekly (“Do not place ads...”, 1990; “No advertising in Mirror”, 1990). MMZ books included content about Kaunda’s archrivals such as the late Simon Kapwepwe who was once paid large fines by the government media (*Times* and *Mail*) for referring to him as an enemy of the state (Simon Kapwepwe, 1978). MMZ radio and TV programmes were mostly pious but featured church figures of whom Kaunda was suspicious and was later directly to accuse of ‘preaching hatred’ (Phiri, 2001:34-36).

It is against this background that any discussion on the issue of ethical guideposts for the media in Zambia should be approached. The Kaunda era was characterised by an attempt at localisation of media ethics. The idea was that now that Zambia was free from colonial rule, it could establish an ethos grounded in indigenous knowledge and practices. This included sincere nationalism - understood in this case as dedication to one’s nation and nationality and the rejection of undesirable external influences. The press was to respect the new leaders, never challenge or embarrass them; radio and television content was to reflect indigenous culture; movies were censored for all content that could corrupt Zambian society. Said conditions both fortified the localisation of media ethics and solidified resistance to international views of the media’s role in society (Moore, 1991).

2.4 Localisation of media ethics rejected

The re-emergence of multiparty politics in the late 1980s, leading to the ushering in of the MMD to power in 1991, opened the Zambian media to forces of “globalization ...a process creating interdependence among societies and cultures that were previously separated” (Baraldi, 2006:54). The folly of localisation is that it overlooks the reality that “the world is not a composite of completely disjointed cultures and values” (Nordenstreng, 1995:436). In other words, Zambia is not and cannot be an island existing in splendid normative isolation. Media people in Zambia, many of whom were schooled in other countries, were aware of media norms informed by research and reflection in other cultures and knowledge bases.

Thus, the independent media that mushroomed during this time rejected the localisation of ethics and were hungry for what were considered to be global norms. Even the courts rejected Kaunda’s last-ditch attempts at gagging the state media (Media ban wrong, 1991). Part of the pro-democracy campaign that emerged in the late 1980s and that led to the end of Kaunda’s 27-year rule in 1991, was therefore the call for an independent and neutral media. For the first time since independence, the media in Zambia would be open to global norms. Promises were made to privatise the state newspapers and convert the national broadcaster into a true public broadcaster accountable to the public (Moore, 1991:139-142).

During the few years of exuberance (roughly 1989 to 1992), the discourse among media people was about freedom of expression, democratisation of media ownership and content, individual rights, and professional autonomy. Expectations were high: public media would be privatised and the independent media would thrive in a free society; there would be massive de-regulation; the then Minister of Legal Affairs, Roger Chongwe, even suggested that pornographic content - until then a cultural and religious taboo in Zambia - could be published or produced and distributed openly in the country.

However, the new-found freedom brought with it much baggage: amateurism, sensationalism, lack of professionalism and a myriad of other ill practices marred the performance of the media. Libellous and defamatory content became the order of the day, so that the image of the media as purveyors of reliable information was tarnished.

Kasoma, in his own words, 'bemoaned' what he saw:

... the unethical practices of some African journalists who have taken advantage of people's ignorance and churned for them information from unethical journalistic mills which has resulted in misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, sensationalism, masking of bad elements in society, publishing of information to paint those whom journalists do not like in a bad light, avoiding publication of certain news because journalists do not want to hurt certain quarters in society, etc. Not only is this list of possible misuse of journalistic trust long but the range of potential damage to society's aspirations is too ghastly to contemplate (Kasoma, 1994a:30).

The state, perhaps aghast at the unbridled behaviour of the media - particularly the press - backtracked on earlier promises of privatisation and deregulation. The government held on to *Times* and *Mail* and the national broadcaster, ZNBC, and became hostile to the independent media propagating 'international' values. Many of the independent media that mushroomed in the late 1980s were dead by the early 1990s. The causes of these fatalities are many and include undercapitalisation, limited circulation, huge distribution costs, limited advertising revenue and, in some cases, poor management of the new media enterprises. However, state hostility is one of the major causes of their demise. The independent press faced endless legal battles, which made it fiscally impossible for some to operate.

The Post is the notable survivor of this fracas. The paper, which began as a weekly, has continued to exhibit editorial autonomy from the state and challenged local cultural and political norms while championing independence. The paper has been accused of everything from libel and defamation to espionage. It is perhaps the first paper in Africa to label an incumbent head of state 'a thief', another cultural and some would say ethical anomaly. This feud between Chiluba and *The Post* intensified when Chiluba warmed up to the possibility of going for a third term - a breach of the country's constitutional two-term limit. By the time Chiluba left office in 2001, there was bad blood between him and *The Post*.

The presidency of Levy Mwanawasa, Chiluba's handpicked successor, has exhibited little tolerance for freedom of expression, and, by implication, a free press. When opposition leader Michael Sata challenged the creation and role of the National Constitutional Commission (a body created to craft the country's future constitution), President Mwanawasa accused him of 'committing treason' (Phiri, 2007). Therefore, although President Mwanawasa appears to look away when *The Post* refers to him as a 'buffoon', his government will on occasion strike back to remind the press that its content is being watched closely.

The Zambian government's media policy is informed by the phobia of people with 'warped ideas' infiltrating the media. Therefore, by 2008, the idea of privatising *Times* and *Mail* had been shelved. The deliberately elongated processes of establishing an Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) to govern the radio and television broadcasting industry and an independent board to oversee ZNBC as a public broadcaster were also ground to a halt. The result is that 17 years after the end of the one-party regime, the two dailies and ZNBC are deeply embedded as government communication tools. This state phobia of press freedom deoxygenates the discourse about ethical guideposts for the media in Zambia (Phiri, in press).

3. HOW 'GLOCALISATION' ADDRESSES ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The above discussion of the media situation in Zambia creates the impression that there is an irreconcilable divide between the localisation and the globalisation of media ethics conversation and practice in Zambia. Bertrand says that the ethics of media in a country are influenced by the "culture of a nation, its economic stage of development, its political regime" (quoted in Wasserman & Rao, 2008:167) In the case of Zambia, the proponents of localisation would argue that this means that media ethics should be embedded in the country's culture, its stage of development and also in the political system. Any media practice that infringes on these conditions is insensitive and may cause more harm than good.

Naymnjoh (2005) points out that the uncritical acceptance of western liberal ideals is one of the causes of the complications and dilemmas of media ethics in Africa. Wasserman (2006:87) concurs: "It has become clear from a range of examples that in Africa the liberal-democratic model, upon which many of the dominant western media ethical frameworks have been built, is not suited to post-colonial African contexts".

Proponents of a globalised world view of media ethics consider globalisation to be an irreversible phenomenon. According to Moore (1991:136), technology "makes information ... instantaneous, widespread, and democratic". He goes on to say that "governments are finding it far more difficult to keep secrets, to control information flow and to limit access". Elsewhere, Wasserman and Rao thus sum up the impact of globalisation:

Globalization has been responsible for major transformation in the structure of news in the South. Privatization and deregulation have enabled cross-border flows of capital and

technology. Those changes have opened new ways for media businesses to expand into international markets using output deals, virtual integration, joint ventures, programming sales, and production arrangements. Globalization has unsettled past linkages between state and capital, geography and business, the local and the global. (2008:165)

In such an environment, media norms, too, have to be global. Media content gathered and packaged in Zambia must be consumable worldwide. However, if media people in Zambia have their own localised idiosyncratic body of norms, their products will neither compete nor carry credibility on such a global platform. Historically, international media organisations, such as BBC, CCN and international newspapers and magazines have tended to trust their own correspondents and looked down upon local media professionals and their content. This, in part, is because of the prevailing belief that local reporters are not able to deliver content that crosses cultural boundaries, partly because their ethical norms are not in sync with international practices.

While the debate between the localisation and the globalisation of media ethics is a worthwhile academic and professional investment, this paper advances a third route as the most enduring response to the ethical dilemmas of the media in Zambia, namely glocalisation. This proposition is not new. In 1991 Moore (1991:136) wrote that “Zambia should evolve a hybrid system of the media”. He envisioned a scenario in which the media could “play the ‘watchdog’ role of the press, still serve the interest of the nation and the government in development and still be responsible to the people”. While localisation is often a response to a fear of foreign domination and has proven to be a futile attempt at sheltering traditional norms from global influences, and while globalisation often implies a surrender of identity and control to powerful international forces, glocalisation, on the other hand, is a vibrant, dynamic and resilient hybrid.

Glocalization derives from a societal evolution from a previously non-globalized condition. It is the result of confrontation between previously non-globalized societies ... The foundation of glocalization is confrontation between societies ... In other words, glocalization is a product of intercultural communication (Baraldi, 2006:54).

Understood in this way, glocalisation nurtures media ethics that crossbreed the local with the global. While the matrimony may not be harmonious - hence the confrontation - it does nevertheless integrate indigenous knowledge values with global norms. The confrontation can be eased by locating the core ethos of the local and the global. Although Kaunda’s philosophy of humanism is now disparaged, it had a strand of ingeniousness: it tapped into the centrality of the human being and on being human that is entrenched in African culture and linked these to global human rights values. South Africa’s *ubuntu* is something along similar lines: there is something intrinsically indigenous yet also pervasively universal about the value of the human.

Media practitioners and scholars would concur that all media content ultimately deals with humans and what it means to be human. Business, politics, development, the environment, health, education, international relations, etc. are essentially about humans and how they relate with one another and their environment. The value of humans is fundamental at the local, the national and

the global levels of analysis. “There is indeed a fundamental and generally acceptable basis for a journalistic ethic – namely human rights” (Kunczik, 1999:6).

A media ethic grounded in human rights has a solid global dimension. The UN Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations states:

It is the duty of all States, regardless of their political, economic or cultural systems to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the universal nature of which is beyond question (cited in Kunczik, 1999:8).

But utilising human rights as a lighthouse to illuminate and guide media practice is also very Zambian and indeed African. Kasoma (1994:11) argued that media people on the continent should “practice a journalism that is sensitive to, rather than oblivious of people’s rights - rights which journalists should seek to defend and promote”. According to Kasoma (1994:26-27), in African thinking, “a good action is one that is performed for the benefit or service of other persons, either individually or collectively. Conversely, a bad or wrong action is one that arises from purely selfish motives”).

A particularly burning point on the debates about the efficacy of a journalism ethic based on human rights is that while western liberal societies emphasise individual rights - sometimes to what some may see as extremes - African societies tend towards communal good. Kasoma however refutes this:

The importance attached to family and community in Africa morality does not mean that Africans do not hold individual rights dear. On the contrary, there are practices in African society which attest to the very high regard Africans have for the individual ...The great concern for good care of the sick, the aged and the handicapped in African societies, also reflects the importance attached to the individual. If Africans did not value individual rights, they would cast these people out, and regard them as burdens whose usefulness to society has ended or was nearly at an end (Kasoma, 1994a:27-28).

The power of glocalisation is that it nurtures hybridisation of indigenous and global ethical norms to breed a media ethic that is in harmony with both local *and* international human rights concerns. In practice, this means that while media consumers have a right to be fully informed, educated, and entertained, this has to be done in a way that keeps the media content palatable to local cultural norms. Humans make and consume media content but their rights remain constant whether they happen to be makers or consumers of news. This ought to be a foundational ethical position for media people and organisations in Africa. And while there may be divergence in respect of how this is understood, it can at least serve as a benchmark for the local media ethics discourse, while also serving as a guide on how to negotiate entrance to and participation in the global media arena.

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