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Moving Beyond the BBC Model

An analysis of the Zimbabwe

Broadcasting

Corporation

by

Lorraine Garwe

A thesis submitted to

the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Journalism

Department of Journalism

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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**"Moving Beyond the BBC Model. An analysis
of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation**

Clyde Sanger
Thesis Supervisor

Carleton University

April 25, 1993

Abstract

At independence, many African countries found themselves needing to stabilise and expand their broadcasting services. Problems such as the lack of skilled manpower, limited financial resources and the absence of established training institutions hindered the initial growth of broadcasting services. On attaining independence in 1980, Zimbabwe experienced similar difficulties. An estimated 80% of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation staff terminated their services in 1979. This thesis draws heavily on the recommendations of the BBC team invited at independence by the government to evaluate the existing services of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. Lessons are that Western concepts of the electronic media are inadequate, if not substantially inapplicable, in determining the media policy of a Third World country.

This thesis therefore attempts to provide the first comprehensive account of the post-colonial Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation in the independence era. Presented in journalistic style, this account is

based on interviews with people who have been associated with the Corporation, newspaper articles and this author's observations as a senior member of staff of the Corporation.

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Zimbabwe - A Profile

Zimbabwe is a small, landlocked, mostly subtropical country with a relatively low overall population density. It is about the size of California, or one and a half times the size of the United Kingdom. The nearest seaport is Beira in Mozambique, about 300 km from the eastern border, and 65 per cent of the country is between 900 and 1,500 metres above sea level and so not subject to extremely high temperatures.

The total population is about 9 million, giving a population density of about 23 people per square kilometre, about 10 per cent of the United Kingdom's.

Equally important are the burdens of history. In 1922, a referendum was held to decide whether the territory should be given responsible government under the British Crown or become a fifth province of the Union of South Africa. The former alternative having received an affirmative answer, an increasing degree of internal self-government was attained during the period prior to the Second World War. It was understood that full independence would ultimately ensue. (Anderson, 1970)

The Second World War interrupted plans for amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and it was not until 1953 that the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was formed. The Federation lasted for only ten years until, with much bitterness on the part of Southern Rhodesia, it broke up into its component parts. Northern Rhodesia as Zambia, and Nyasaland, as Malawi, were given independence from British rule almost immediately. Since the breakup of the Federation, the pursuit of independence dominated the political scene in Rhodesia.

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was announced by Rhodesia on 11 November, 1965. UDI was an Act of rebellion by the settlers. They precipitated it against the legal authority of Britain over Rhodesia. This reinforced the disruption in the nineteenth century of what were once powerful centralized states, followed by complete military defeat and ninety years of incorporation into a European culture and economy. To a greater extent than in non-settler colonies this destroyed most of the basis for reestablishing a distinctively indigenous tradition. Even many so-called traditional customs or institutions turn out on inspection to be heavily influenced by the perceptions and convenience of the settlers. Modern

Zimbabwean culture is thus as much a product of European as indigenous influences, but that influence has usually been absorbed and modified or has generated powerful counter-cultures that are modern but still Zimbabwean. Thus Christianity has been widely adopted but is often married with indigenous religion to give rise to 'independent' churches. (Stoneman and Cliffe, 1988)

The above profile has historical consequences therefore in shaping the media policy of Zimbabwe, as we shall observe in the following chapters.

Chapter One

The Evolution of Broadcasting in Zimbabwe

A. An Overview of the Colonial legacy

The history of the mass media in Africa is closely tied to its colonial heritage. In the colonial era, they were mostly established, owned and controlled by foreigners. The years immediately preceding the independence of most African states were a significant turning point in the development of the mass media in Africa. It is a period of growing political awareness among Africans, a time of rising expectations, black leaders making radical demands for change and of the emergence of a good number of indigenous African newspapers dedicated to the fight for political, cultural and economic freedom in Africa.

The first broadcasting systems introduced to Africa reflected colonial policies and economic interests and were meant to supplement colonial administration efforts. This was obvious during the liberation war in former Rhodesia. Rhodesia's rulers had more than political power. They controlled the

mass media. And with the press, radio and television backed up by laws that censored and suppressed, they aimed to control the minds of the people. When the Rhodesia Front Party unilaterally declared independence from the British colonial authority on 11 November, 1965, Rhodesia's unrecognised Prime Minister needed to counter the international outcry against this illegal act. He needed a medium to communicate his message and no one else's. He needed to seize total control of the press. The Minister of Information at that time, Mr. K. van der Byl, declared in 1965, "I tried to get as much control of the media as was possible. I believed that the media should be brought under control because it's largely inhabited by people of the Left, the sort of liberal-leaning or socialist philosophy which is the forerunner of Soviet expansionism. You get the liberal, and behind the liberal, comes the communist. Therefore I did what I could to try and discipline the thing." (Rhodesia Herald, 13/11/65)

After independence, African nations hoped to change these objectives of broadcasting.

These fresh goals of broadcasting included assisting in the creation of new political institutions and providing legitimacy and stability for the new nation. Other goals included improving

social conditions, increasing per capita income, improving educational standards and promoting cultural pride through the creation of national art and symbols.

From the beginning of the development effort, radio was viewed as the most important and most powerful medium for Third World growth. Its apparatus was already in place when emerging countries began systematic efforts to recruit the mass media to promote social and economic development. That process proved to be both a blessing and a curse, a blessing because the hardware was in place and functioning, but a curse when governments wanted to harness the entrenched systems to development programmes. (Steveson, 1987: 69)

With the expansion of radio stations African nations began to diversify into television. The African countries with television stations built them between 1959 and 1969, with the exception of North African countries such as Egypt which has had television since the late 1950's. (Domareb, Jika and Nwosy, 1987: 37)

Almost thirty years after its introduction to the African scene, television, which started more as a novelty than a necessity, has grown to be a powerful means of communication in the Africa

setting.

B. Broadcasting as an incentive for development in Africa.

An unfortunate reality in many African countries is that, despite the considerable efforts of those involved, the actual development of broadcasting has often taken a back seat in overall development plans. The reason is simply that the immediate benefits are not easily quantifiable. Furthermore, the training of broadcast personnel was not considered as a priority. However, African governments now realise that broadcasting is a powerful medium of communication that should be used to assist in national development. This concept of broadcasting as an aid to national development rests on the premise that, unless people are properly informed, educated and convinced of the need to be involved in overcoming their own problems, and unless they are mobilised to contribute towards their own development, then most hopes of improving their quality of life will remain unfulfilled. It is now realised that broadcasting provides one of the most effective means of disseminating information and developmental messages. It can reach large audiences more quickly, and relatively more cheaply, than any other means of communication.

Yet, unfortunately, resources allocated to develop broadcasting are usually inadequate for the recognised needs (UTU, ECA, United Nations Development Program, 1983) and the place of training in that process of development is not sufficiently accepted or implemented. Furthermore, in their early years of independence, many African countries have faced similar problems of inadequate skilled personnel to run their broadcasting systems. (Makondo, 1986). The three main reasons for this were:

- (1) Skilled personnel were lost when the state became independent;
- (2) Africans had not been adequately trained during the colonial period in either the programme or technical fields of broadcasting; and
- (3) In-country training facilities were either not well established or non-existent.

Nevertheless, a common phenomenon of the era was the expansion of broadcasting services, particularly into the rural areas.

This invariably involved the purchase and installation of new broadcasting equipment, usually under aid agreements. A common problem then arose, that of the choice of equipment from whichever country made the offer. There has often been a

temptation to accept equipment from different countries without regard to the long-term problems caused by the reliance on a variety of manufacturers. The maintenance of an assortment of brands of equipment inevitably meant the recruitment of personnel and this caused severe difficulties. The following was a typical scenario of the quest to satisfy the staffing needs of the expanded broadcasting services:

- (i) employment of semi-skilled manpower to help run the broadcasting services equipment;
- (ii) engagement of expatriate workers to supplement the inadequate pool of skilled manpower available nationally;
- (iii) utilisation of training facilities offered by donor countries;
- (iv) establishment of in-service training programmes; and
- (v) the establishment of some kind of mass media training institution.

Some common problems faced in establishing training programmes for broadcasting were:

- (i) scarcity of resources and facilities to start the training programmes;
- (ii) the length of time needed to train personnel to a required professional level; and

(iii) lack of appropriate training programmes offered by friendly countries.

Zimbabwe is no exception to these problems.

C. Brief History of the ZBC

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is the only electronic media institution in Zimbabwe which is involved in the transmission of information, education and entertainment to the public. In other words, it is the only body in the country which, protected by law, is licensed to broadcast to the nation. It, therefore, is a fundamental component of the Zimbabwe media. As a parastatal body under the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, it is headed by a Director General. The organisational chart gives a full picture of the whole organisation as it is now. (see Appendix A)

The Broadcasting Act, which has not been revived since the late 1950's, emphasizes that the Corporation must 'sustain itself'. Being a parastatal administered by the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, however, the ZBC receives what can be best described as a fair share of the Ministry's funding.

D. The ZBC Begins to Take Root

At independence in 1980, the Zimbabwe's electronic media were faced with three problems. One was how to make them responsive to the new political and social realities. Another difficulty involved finding qualified staff to replace those who had left; and, finally, how to meet expanding responsibilities. Following his appointment, the former Director General of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Tirifavi Kangai, was quoted in the national daily newspaper as stating that "The government is embarking on a large scale training programme to smooth the Africanisation of top jobs in the Z.B.C. The exercise will involve long-term training, replacing old equipment and restructuring all the programmes broadcast on radio and television. Promotions will be on merit, taking into consideration that those put in positions of responsibility know what they are doing". (The Herald, 25/6/80).

Before independence, there was no training available for those Africans who worked on the production side of the defunct Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC). Those who worked for the African service of the RBC acquired their skills through on-the-job training and by observing and imitating those

more experienced broadcasters they found already working there.

On the engineering side, the policy of the colonial government discouraged the acquisition of skills by Africans. People who worked on the production of programmes (which then catered mainly for a white audience) had received their training, or had gained experience, in countries outside Rhodesia prior to joining the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation. The overall picture concerning broadcast training and technical training, therefore, was one of there either being no training whatsoever, or very little of it.

At independence, a number of white people left the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation for various reasons. Mr. Kangai encouraged those who stayed behind by pointing out that the policy of the Corporation "was to embrace all Zimbabweans, regardless of their race or creed, who expressed the desire to work for the common good." Mr. Tirivafi Kangai further noted that, in the realisation of the rapid turnover of staff, which took place soon after independence, "the Corporation moved quickly, having people trained across the board". (Kangai, 1984)

During the early 1980's, the Corporation was actually faced with a critical shortage of skilled

personnel. As a result, there were frequent breakdowns of transmission equipment. Technical personnel newly recruited to help run the broadcasting service had little or no experience. Listeners expressed their dissatisfaction with the broadcasting service for which they paid licence fees.

A BBC task force commissioned by the President of Zimbabwe Robert Gabriel Mugabe in 1980 was asked to "examine the existing television and radio services and to assess likely future requirements, in particular the feasibility of expanding the broadcasting services to reach all parts of the country and all centres of the population." (BBC Report, 1980)

It was noted by this body at the time of their appointment that 80% of the Corporation staff had left in the first half of 1979.

Management of Z.B.C. worked under great pressure as they struggled to rescue and maintain normal services, while training new people in the shortest possible time. (Makondo, 1986).

Technical training was given a priority, primarily to avoid collapse of the technical operations of the whole broadcasting system (Makondo, 1982). Other considerations that figured in giving

priority to technical operations training were:

(a) With the envisaged expansion of ZBC's services, new equipment would be introduced. If staff, with the help of training, were to use this new equipment efficiently and effectively, then the probability of breakdowns or malfunctions would be minimised;

(b) Producers and operators were often unaware of the difficulties encountered in handling the equipment. When proper operational instructions were not given, equipment tended to be used on trial and error basis;

(c) It was found that there existed a technical know-how gap between producers, operators and technicians. If the gap was not narrowed, communication problems which often arose hindering efficient programme production would continue unabated.

The Teething Steps of ZBC's Operational Philosophy

It is necessary at this stage to give an overview of the command structure and the objectives of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation following independence from British rule. The organisation operates under a Parliamentary Act known as the Broadcasting Act. The Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, to whom ZBC is accountable, is responsible to the nation for the activities and

functions of the ZBC through the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The President, on the advice of the Minister, appoints the Board of Governors which formulates the policy of ZBC and approves the Corporation's budget and other projects. The Governors are Zimbabweans drawn from all walks of life. The Board is composed of trade unionists, educationists and bankers. It has a chairman and vice-chairman and meets once a month, or more if the situation demands it. The President also appoints a Director General on the advice of the Minister. The Director General, together with a number of directors who constitute the Board of Management, runs the Corporation on a day to day basis. It is they who execute and put into action policies made by the Government and the Board of Governors.

The headquarters of the Z.B.C. are situated at Pockets Hill, an area in the Borrowdale suburb of Harare, the nation's capital. It is there that radio One and Three channels are accommodated together with news and current affairs and television sections. Within this region is another Broadcasting centre which is close to the high density suburbs - formerly known as the African suburbs. This complex, which has been expanded and renovated, houses Radio Two and a

channel called Radio Four, also known as Mbare studios. These studios service the broadcasting of the vernacular languages, Shona and Ndebele, and the educational channel, which broadcasts in English, Shona and Ndebele.

In Bulawayo, the second largest city, there is another ZBC broadcasting centre which serves the region of Matebeleland. Though smaller than the headquarters in Harare, this centre has radio and television studios. Programmes are produced and broadcast from this region. Some of the programmes produced here are also sent to headquarters where they are broadcast nationally. It is important to note that the Bulawayo studios join the Harare studios for the main radio and television news bulletins throughout the day. There is a relay broadcasting centre in the city of Gweru which is in the Midlands province. It is a centre where short-wave, FM and medium-wave transmitters are manned by a Chief Technical officer and several staff members to relay radio and television broadcasting to the Midland and Southern provinces.

Commenting on policy, the then Minister of Information and Tourism, Dr. Nathan Shamuyarira, said that

"the government's aim was to have radio and

television broadcasts which would reach every part of Zimbabwe 'so that the entire country and our entire population can tune in to our services'." (The Herald 17/10/81)

The former Director of Programmes, Mr. Charles Ndlovu, outlined the policy at length by saying that 'the new nation has to be informed and educated in modern methods, e.g. good health and hygiene, and broadcasting should mobilise the public for national development through formal and informal education. It should be, and it is, the duty of our service to be the carrier of information between the national leaders at all levels and the masses that they lead. The nation needs to be informed of daily events and activities that take place within and without its borders, and these events should be explained in a way which makes them understood by the public. After a hard day's work, the public needs to be entertained." (Kangai, 1984)

He also said that the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation would like to see the mass media contributing to the creation of a new man for the new society and the new man would be above racism and tribalism. He would not suffer from the disease of nepotism, but would be able to accept criticism and put self-criticism into effect.

Although these goals were quite promising, Katz and Wedell have noted that, "in spite of their affirmative action in adopting broadcast media, the developing nations have invested little effort in the formulation of explicit policies for relating the media to development goals". (Katz and Wedell, 1977: 100) Zimbabwe too as a new nation was faced with numerous obstacles to development which were common to other developing countries. These are lack of proper land communication systems, an inadequate telecommunications network, vast areas with scanty and widely dispersed population, a scarcity of finance and qualified human resources, a high rate of illiteracy, low life expectancy, low per capita incomes and other general characteristics like poverty, disease and high population growth rates.

We can therefore view development in Zimbabwe as having two objectives, namely, the raising of the people's living standards and, secondly, national integration. Raising of living standards entails, among other factors, changes in attitudes. National integration involves the bringing together of people of different tribes, races and ethnic backgrounds and mould them into one society which helps in the creation of a new identity for the people in any country.

However, authors of mass media are in agreement that no broadcasting, no matter how well designed, can achieve desired goals if performances are not evaluated against prevailing circumstances of any given country. This is more so especially when broadcast programmes are designed with the hope of supporting social and economic programmes and the general development of the society. It goes without saying that a nation's media system does not operate in a vacuum. A media system relates to a polity and its societal objectives and aspirations. The strength or weakness of the media is greatly dependent on the social and economic conditions prevailing in the country.

In one of its recommendations, the BBC task force called for the drastic overhaul of programme scheduling, particularly television, saying that programmes must cater for both black and white races.

"ZBC does not seem to have a coherent programme philosophy and does not give enough care - or money - to compiling the schedules. The selection of programmes should ensure a wider range of interests - an interest not only for a white population but, on the other hand, it has to be accepted that it is the licence money from the white

television set owners that provides a major part of ZBC finances." (BBC Report, 1980)

To get a clear picture of what the overall viewer could watch and listen to on different channels, we shall briefly examine each service and their policy guidelines of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, formulated at independence.

THE ZBC Radio and Television Channels

Television One

At the time of independence, television catered for the needs of the urban middle class. Due to the isolation of the former government, the then Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation could not procure films or documentaries of a contemporary nature from abroad. The policy then at independence for ZTV was to increase local programme production in news and current affairs which inform the public about day to day local, national and international events. The rural areas were a target for television expansion and it was envisaged that television in these centres would use batteries and solar energy until electricity was installed.

Radio One.

Up to the time of independence, there was the

Radio General Service which catered for the white population. All the programmes on this service were broadcast in English only. At independence, Radio General Service changed its name to Radio One and continues up to this day to broadcast in English. Programmes on the evils of apartheid and other local, national and international events and issues are now broadcast on this channel.

Radio Two.

The above was the African service before independence. During that period it was divided on tribal lines. One channel was serving the Shona tribe whilst the other served the Ndebele tribe. At independence, Radio Mthwakazi, broadcasting from the city of Bulawayo, was abolished and only one service remains. The channel broadcasts programmes in a number of vernacular languages. It has programmes on subjects including agriculture, health and hygiene, employer and employee relations and conditions of service for different organisations.

Radio Three

Up to the time of independence, there was a pop station called Radio Jacaranda which catered mainly for white youth. It was transformed into Radio Three,

a pop station which caters for the youth of Zimbabwe regardless of their race or creed. It now plays Zimbabwe's own variety of music and a good proportion of western music and occasionally broadcasts short programmes on youth.

Radio Four.

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation established a fourth radio channel in October 1982 whose function was to undertake and broadcast educational and educative programmes. This writer was one of the first broadcasters to produce programmes for this channel.

Television Two

Television Two was launched in 1988 "solely to give adequate coverage to the Non-Aligned Meeting summit held in Harare". (Bulawayo Chronicle 30/9/88) ZBC stated that this station was experimental and its success would mean its extension to all parts of the country. It is at present still operational.

The overall objectives, then, of all the six services were to educate, inform and entertain. Although easier said than done, the objectives of these broadcasts meant that there was an increase in local programme content and therefore more

recruitment of staff to run these services.

Media Personnel at the Corporation

Denying reports that the network was losing experienced staff, the former Director General of the ZBC Mr. Tirivafi Kangai said: "We have Zimbabweans who have been working abroad returning home to fill the vacancies; at present we have more appointments than resignations." (The Sunday Mail, 14/6/81)

There are two distinct periods following independence at the Corporation. From 1980 to 1982, the organisation was growing rapidly with newly recruited personnel, but run by a core of staff who were for the most part in-service trained and who had assured its functioning since independence. In 1981, there was a major re-organisation of the administration, a large influx of managerial staff including some who were ex-combatants. Those Zimbabweans who broadcast from exile during the war for national liberation became part of the manpower of the newly structured ZBC. The task, then, of the new Board of Management was to merge those Zimbabweans who were working for the RBC and those who had been working in African, European and American countries and who had returned home.

In some cases, the Corporation had to encourage

Zimbabweans who were still abroad to return home and assist in national reconstruction. The evidence suggests that these personnel, taken as a whole, were ill-equipped for the onerous duty of taking media in the new directions of the new electronic media. It was a period of "bureaucratization", which created stresses not only in terms of organisational relationships due to the rapid expansion of administration, but also through an increase in the production of programmes.

However, as yet only a very limited proportion of local programmes are being made for television. Among the constraints are personnel, equipment and budget. The independence era and the departure of qualified staff at the Corporation meant a severe shortage of personnel. At the time, however, the organisation had a very high morale, a sense of defiance against the departed white colleagues and a desire to prove to the world that things could be kept running. In the following chapters, we shall examine closely the different major services of the corporation, using the BBC recommendations as a baseline to how the ZBC has coped in restructuring its services.

Chapter Two

The Working Out of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Policies

The colonial legacy certainly influenced and shaped the broadcast institutions of black Africa, but today's national leaders are now the prime decision makers who will decide whether to continue that legacy or initiate new government relationships. At independence, the government of Zimbabwe, too, found itself at those crossroads. The pattern which the Broadcasting organisation was going to follow had yet to be identified. Foremost in the minds of many at independence were these questions: What kind of electronic media would emerge in the new Zimbabwe? Which electronic media legacy would most influence the post independent broadcasting organisation of ZBC?

Although the stated policy of media was spelt out, that of participation by the people in the elimination of disease, poverty and ignorance, an institutional model had to be found for the corporation. It would be useful at this juncture to give a comparative analysis of different models in some African countries, as these have similar historical colonial experiences.

On the continent of Africa, countries have

different policies and some of them have established publicly controlled broadcasting corporations. Even so, the degree to which those corporations make policy decisions and give equal access to divergent opinions, or relay the views of the government, of course varies according to their political circumstances. It seems, therefore, that the world picture of broadcasting, particularly of ownership, financing and management patterns in Africa, shows a wide variety of practices.

A diversity of systems has been adopted by different countries and they operate simultaneously with varied results. On broadcast facilities, most if not all of black Africa has a policy forbidding any foreign ownership of national radio and television services. Foreign owned radio stations however, do exist in at least four African countries. In three cases, the stations are operated by church groups and are primarily engaged in religious programming. Burundi, for example, has Radio Cordac, supported by the cooperative efforts of Protestant missionary organizations. ELWA, another religious station, broadcasts in 31 languages out of Liberia. Its programming is primarily religious but it also assists the government in generating support for plans of national development. The Radio Voice of the

Gospel, based in Ethiopia, is owned by the World Federation of Lutheran churches and has an agreement with the government not to engage in partisan politics. International broadcasting is done from Liberia and Rwanda. (Mytton G., 1983) Because of the prevailing internal conflicts in the above countries, no data is at present available to indicate whether the above situation has since changed.

Closer to Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, Zambia Broadcasting Services are a department of the Ministry of Information, all broadcasters are civil servants. Radio in independent Tanzania was in many ways typical those in newly independent African nations. Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) became a department of the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism on July 1st 1965. (Mytton, G., 1983: 100) Before that, the Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) was independent of government. When it was dissolved to form RTD, Mr. Wakil, the Minister of Information and Tourism explained this measure by stating that "Radio is an important basis for the country's progress. In Tanzania, where most people are illiterate, who cannot read or understand what is happening in their own country, it is the radio alone which can educate all the people....therefore the radio is an

important asset for us and the only way to use this asset properly is to bring it under government control."

The Minister explained further that the Corporation had been a British creation, and it was soon recognised by his government that the type of system was not suitable for Africa. His reasoning was that, in Britain, the party system made it necessary for there to be an independent corporation, since broadcasting had to remain outside political conflict. As a result, TBC was then adopted as an arm of the government.

Sympathizers of government-controlled media like Sydney Head, says that "the new African nations inherited a communication system profoundly unsuited to their needs as independent states-not because of any conspiracy to deprive them of their due, but simply as natural consequences of their economic dependency and of the nationalistic rivalries of the colonial powers". (Gerbner, Mass Media Policies in Changing Cultures: 85)

The basis of this claim is related to the fact that in the 1960's Africa became a Cold War arena, with the ex-colonial powers trying to maintain their preferred status. "Western governments encouraged private media interests to fill the gap left by

removal of colonial control. Lord Thomson of Fleet set up not only a commercial subsidiary to contract with developing countries for construction and management of television stations, but also a charitable foundation to train African personnel." (Gerbner, Mass Media Policies in Changing Societies: 85) It is also an acknowledged fact that Lord Thomson made his first fortune selling radios in Canada, his second with Scottish Television and was therefore driven by the profit motive.

This observation suggests therefore that historical influences continue to affect the media as a result of the colonial experiences. The situation was the same in Rhodesia where the government had a heavy hand in the day-to-day running of the corporation by increasingly intervening in its affairs. The Chairman of the R.B.C. Board explained the banning in September 1964 of a news item reporting the opinion of a group of white academics, that Africans should be allowed to vote on the independence issue, by saying that "News, obviously designed to exert political pressure on the Government and the public should be banned". (Ainslie, 1966: 166)

Censorship had become more rigorous after UDI, extending to legislation including imposing a fine of

up to 500 pounds or two years imprisonment on anyone who "causes or permits" any hostile broadcasts to be heard "in public". (Ainslie, 1966: 166)

By inviting the BBC team to evaluate the services of the ZBC, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation had indicated its approval of the BBC model. A team of four media experts from the BBC were commissioned by the President of Zimbabwe to carry out an in-depth study of the ZBC's broadcasting system and to recommend changes for its improvement. The group was led by the Controller, English Service and Editor of the BBC World Service, Mr. Austin Kark. In summary, the following were its terms of reference:

1. to examine the existing television and radio services and assess likely future requirements, in particular the feasibility of expanding the broadcasting services to reach all parts of the country and all centres of the population;
2. to determine the need for training for managerial, programme and technical staff, and for possible secondments;
3. to assess the likely technical needs in radio and television, with reference to the requirement for equipment, buildings and accommodation, and engineers and operators;

4. to examine the present management structure of the ZBC and to make recommendations covering the effective and professional use of manpower resources;
5. to consider the present system of broadcasting revenue and how this might be improved to meet future needs; and finally
6. to examine the present news gathering, reporting and editorial systems of the ZBC news operation.

Inevitably, these proposals for changes drew in a large response from members of the public. A letter to the Editor of The Herald from a citizen of Zimbabwe briefed the nation on the history of the BBC in former Rhodesia. In essence, the contents of the letter were that when the Federal government decided to set up a Broadcasting Corporation, Sir Carlton Greene, later Director General of the BBC, was invited to advise the government. As a result the following guidelines were accepted as its foundations:

- a. that the government reserves certain over-riding powers both to intervene and to control;
- b. that the corporation shall be an independent, non-party body corporate, set up by Royal Commission.
- c. that the corporation must not express in broadcasts, its own opinion on current affairs and

matters of public policy. For it to take sides on a controversial issue would be contrary to its policy of impartiality. There shall therefore be no editorial policy. (The Herald 4/7/80)

At the dissolution of the Federation in 1963, these principles were accepted in the formation of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation.

Zimbabwe's communication objective was thus from the start not based on cultural and psychological frames of reference of Zimbabwean society but on the experience and advice of culturally-distant colonial experts and on the pattern of the British Broadcasting Corporation. For instance, the BBC team in one of their recommendations suggested that circumstances should be created whereby ZBC is, and is seen to be, independent from government in the execution of its professional tasks. (BBC Report, 1980)

The Interaction of the BBC and the ZBC

A closer look at the British system itself will help us get a clear picture of this important historical chapter of Zimbabwe's independence.

Much has been written about the policy framework of the BBC and writers like Katz and Wedell define it as "the maintenance of freedom of expression, aimed to be independent not only of political but also of

commercial pressures, hence the emphasis on public, as distinct from private, enterprise and on control in the interests of the people as distinct from those of government". (Katz and Wedell, 1977: 100) The emphasis is non-intervention by government and non-profit making.

The BBC by contrast is proud of its reputation for the "impartial" reporting of news, and for balancing "controversial" subjects by presenting different points of view. It is on the definition of "controversy" or "balancing" that disagreements may arise in Africa. A number of African independent states, including Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia, have discontinued relays of BBC news broadcasts in their national programmes, because of such disagreement. For example, specific criticisms were that a BBC comment on the war situation in Rhodesia might serve to "balance" the points of view of the British and Ian Smith Governments more carefully than either of these as opposed to the view of the African nationalists, which nearly all African states fully supported; or else a report on the issue of economic sanctions against South Africa, a controversial question in Britain, might well be weighted against sanctions, while the African States have all adopted them as a matter of policy.

Rosalynne Ainslie argues further that, although the continent of Africa has acquired for itself, in some quarters, a reputation as "the continent that gags its press", it would be unjust to judge Africa in terms of the Western definition of freedom of the press. (Ainslie, 1966: 213) This freedom, which the western press is proud of, is the principle on the basis of which criticisms of limitations on Press freedom in Africa are made.

To support that statement, scholars have often argued that the concept of freedom, as is widely believed, is not absolute, nor can it be in any human society, for each man's freedom is limited both by physical environment and by the rights of other men. Rosalynne Ainslie goes further to say that there is a particular flaw in the concept of western Press freedom that deserves to be examined. First of all, "in Africa for instance, in the case of the press, newspapers are expensive to produce and must be subsidised. This subsidy can only come from government, in which case editorial comment is likely to be tied more or less close to government". (Ainslie, 1966: 213) For Western journalists, profit from advertising is something that they are not willing to concede. It is no accident that the Press in both Britain and America is basically a

conservative press that accepts all the main assumptions of its society. They are commercial ventures with no fundamental desire to upset the society out of which they make profit. Against this background, Rosemary Righter says that "it is understandable that governments insist that the structure and content of the media must reflect national, political, social and economic goals." Julius Nyerere of Tanzania sums it up this way: "While other nations try to reach the moon, we are trying to reach the village". (Righter, 1978: 185)

In explaining the stricter laws limiting the freedom of the press in many African countries, Rosalyn Ainslie says that "Africans point out that a revolutionary society is not a stable one, and that most African societies, in the sense that they are in the process of rapid economic, social and political change, can be described as revolutionary". (Ainslie, 1966: 214)

This becomes obvious when turning to matters of finance at ZBC. In an interview with the former Director of Programmes, Mr. Grey Tichatonga, he states that, in accordance with the Broadcasting Act, the Government is not obliged to fully finance the Corporation. It is natural, therefore, that ZBC must remain commercially oriented until the situation has

been corrected. Accordingly, the Corporation cannot and does not involve itself in any activity that does not generate any revenue.

He says that ZBC is the only institution in the country that is assisted by the law of the country to generate revenue through the sale of listener's or viewer's licences. It is the only broadcasting institution in the country, thus able to attract advertisers and generate revenue. Further it is an institution that enjoys some autonomy from the State while the State highly subsidizes the corporation. ZBC, therefore, attracts in addition to self-generated funds, state subsidies.

There appears then to be some differences in perspective of the two institutions, the BBC and the ZBC. In matters of finance, however, a point should be noted that both the BBC and the ZBC get revenue from licences. This is explained by Rosalyne Ainslie who, writing in 1966, made these observations about African Broadcasting Institutions: "African broadcasting tends away from the concept of broadcasting as a function independent of government, such as was envisaged by the British. The tasks of radio have emerged as so much part of, and essential to, the policies of government, that many of the countries that inherited with independence a

statutory corporation in charge of broadcasting have legislated to bring radio and television under direct ministerial control".(Ainslie, 1966: 20)

A further relevant argument is that broadcasting organisations in North America and Europe were established with well-tried representative political systems. In Africa as in Zimbabwe, the case is different. The establishment of broadcasting systems often ran concurrent with new governments. Again, the populations of most countries from which the western model structures were derived were predominantly literate. Another fact is that the traditional pattern of life in many developing countries had been under strain for years as a result of wars of liberation and as a result of the accelerated pace of change, resulting from the impact of modernization, new broadcasting systems have come under a great deal of political, technical and cultural strain.

That situation was the case in Zimbabwe at the time the PBC came to restructure the services of the ZBC.

The BBC model then was meant to be grafted on Zimbabwean communities with an objective format and a frame of reference sympathetic to foreign socio-political idealism.

It can be argued then that, for all their

competitiveness, the western mass media give overall support to the existing economic social and political system. They are reformist rather than radical. Renowned scholars who were once advocates of radical change now acknowledge that issues are much deeper than they first observed. In a paper presented to the MacBride Commission in 1979, Schram came close to dismantling his theory regarding the power of the mass media to speed up development. He referred to his re-reading of his 1964 book thus: "The truth is, I was a bit disappointed... I should have been more sceptical about the applicability of the Western model of development. I should have paid more attention to integrating mass media with local activity. Above all, I should have given more thought than I did to the social requirements of development, and in particular the cultural differences that make development almost necessarily different, culture to culture, country to country." (Schram, 1979: 42) Schram blamed the failures of the two development decades on the model of change that derived mostly from the West.

In any case, academics argue that in Africa it would be meaningless to discuss any social institution such as mass media communications as though it operated in isolation, unconnected to other social

processes. The media are central in the provision of ideas and images which people use to interpret and understand a great deal of their everyday experience. They therefore relate to other institutions both structurally, through organisational ties and interaction, and culturally, by conveying information and impressions about society.

Katz and Wedell in their study of the broadcast media in Africa have noted that "the broadcast media in developing countries are in general purveying a homogenized brand of popular culture, either copied or borrowed from broadcasting in the West". (Katz and Wedell, 1977: 67) Their worry is that, although uniformity may well advance the process of modernization in so far as national sharing of images is concerned, this could also introduce high economic demands that may encourage mass production techniques and also be destructive of indigenous political and cultural self-expression.

In Zimbabwe, as in most other African countries, traditional ways of communication tend to predominate in remote rural areas. For instance, daily events and cultural developments are presented through stories, songs and dances. However, they also serve a purpose in urban areas, since these old methods have disappeared from city centres and live on the

influence of radio, television and film production. People in Third World towns, often belonging to a first generation of settlers in urban conditions, retain their traditions and their fondness for remembered styles in song, dance and story.

In their study of communication problems, UNESCO generally accepted that modern communication systems and the way they are used can pose a threat to cultural identity in most countries. "Because communication is a part of culture as much as an influence upon it, the development of a national communication system can help to foster a thriving national culture". (UNESCO, 1965: 100)

What emerges, therefore, from the above observations is the ZBC at independence with a mandate to cater for all races in society, the Africans in the rural areas, the urban elite, both black and white, using the BBC model for its institutional framework.

The ZBC as the mirror of its society

Management at ZBC wished, as speedily as possible, to reflect the Zimbabwean personality. There was at that time the aim to rapidly increase local programme production. The contents, it was thought, would be in keeping with the governmental aims, and the continual need to revive the heroic

past struggle as justification for present sacrifice to the cause of development. This up to now is a national problem which is debated widely. A recent editorial in a local weekly comment outlines the problem "What people miss most, on television, is enough local productions. ZBC loves the revenue from the advertising that goes with every screening of Dallas, Dynasty or Falcon Crest. A local play showing that our society has its own versions of JR Ewing, Alexis Carrington and Angela Channing will not be accepted. Politicians will argue that it does not represent Zimbabwe as it really is". (The Weekend Gazette, 08/23/91)

In summary, discussion on programme production and cultural definition showed considerable uncertainty in the minds of those producers I interviewed. Another problem which emerged during the course of my interviews was the role of producer. While it was pointed out that there was no lack of talent locally, this did not extend to the necessary qualities of planning and management, so crucial to production. The quality of the producer was not necessarily determined by the prestige of the school which he may have attended: some from the top European schools found it difficult to settle down to work in the local environment. For instance, those

producers interviewed felt in general that bureaucratization within the organisation had a stifling influence on good production.

In professional terms, they felt that the creative spirit necessary to local programme production was not adequately encouraged. Even at present, the role of producer in the organisation varies from one with advanced European training, to a man who has been largely in-service trained and knows how to manage the control room. For instance, in a television programme based on a round table discussion, this problem becomes apparent. Neither a moderator, with limited experience, nor the producer, with limited training qualifications, can sufficiently control the discussion which almost always includes senior civil servants and scholars from the university, and thus raises serious status and authority problems in the context of production.

For presentational purposes, it seems very difficult for most moderators to control the pace of discussion, hoping to rely afterwards on editing to make it suitable. As a result of some of these problems which were identified as early as 1980, the former National Presentation Editor of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. James Robinson, carried

out a listener/viewer survey to address complaints from the public on 'deteriorating standards' at the corporation. "Poor pronunciation and grasp of the material being read, particularly during bulletins, has been a frequent complaint levelled at ZBC since the increased introduction of blacks on English speaking services since independence."

A number of 'vitriolic' letters had been received from viewers with the unrealistic attitude that television was still a white medium. (The Chronicle, 26/10/80)

This survey had been carried out under a new policy to encourage greater viewer and listener involvement, something never attempted before. This survey was necessary because of tensions between the white community and the black community. For instance, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Mr. Ian Smith, expressed 'deep concern' at the large number of whites leaving the country and he blamed the broadcasting media, which he said is in the hands of 'a bunch of extremists' who believed in hurling insults at the white community. Saying the way the Ministry of Information was being run appeared to be a calculated measure to drive the whites away, Mr. Smith said that 'it's a tough time for the white people of our country'. (The Herald, 1980)

For the African people during that period, the feelings reflected were different. A letter to a local newspaper was written thus: "With changes in the format of ZBC and TV channels, whites may feel they have no place in the country, but I believe we will all get used to it. If the nervous and panic stricken are planning a mass exodus, it's because they resent change. Yet, failure to accept change undoubtedly breeds hatred, racial confusion and misunderstanding" (Bulawayo Chronicle, 27/6/80)

While the ZBC faced this problem of changing from colonial service into one that would serve the all the people regardless of colour, the programmes had to go on, air time had to be filled. The former Director of Programmes, Mr. Charles Ndlovu, encouraged broadcasters on all services to "spend more time with the people to assess their wants and their needs, our programmes must be fed by our culture". (The Herald, 1980) More local programme content still remains elusive up to this day for a number of reasons which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Having said that, however, twelve years after independence, this appendix is a reflection of the programmes that are shown on ZBC/TV up to this day. (see appendix B). A brief description of the locally

produced programmes reflects the still prevalent attitudes of Western preference. The Tonight Show, a local programme modelled on the Johnny Carson show of the same name in the United States is one local production. The programme is produced in English. The producer of the programme's arguments for producing such western oriented programmes are that as a studio discussion programme it is cheap to produce and "caters for all tastes". Teen Scene, another local production, is aimed mainly at the urban youth. This is a studio production where the moderator chats to the youth about the latest fashion trends in the West, about who is who in Hollywood etc. Obviously, the target audience is the urban viewer.

As most developing countries like Zimbabwe do not have the expertise or material resources for programmes that would genuinely reflect their history, values and culture, they must rely on the transfer of western communication technology and software such as television series, Hollywood movies and wire copy that are far cheaper to get than the production of domestic counterparts. (McPhail, 1987: 55) An attempt by a current affairs production team on the programme Outreach has been made to address the needs and concerns of the rural and urban people. However, this programme faces problems of too few

television cameras and editing facilities. Hence the pattern is a high percentage of imported programmes. As a result, traditional culture has not found its place in the broadcast media, while LA Law on television and other pop stars on radio threaten to overtake the national heroes. There are difficulties in bringing out the populations' genuine, valuable feelings of national pride and a belief in their own spiritual potential and national cultures and, according to Kashlev, this is because of the long-term type of damage "caused by imperialism in terms of its consequences, to the developing countries".

However, the main aims of the electronic media today in Africa generally could be summarised much as the colonial report on broadcasting in Uganda defined them in 1958: dissemination of news, particularly political news and analysis, education and the building of national unity. (Ainslie, 1966: 171) This is so because of the historical economic reasons outlined above. But it is in the development of an independent national consciousness, pride in national culture and history that the electronic media in Africa has perhaps the most urgent role to play in the first years after independence. (Browne, 1963)

In an interview with the former Director of Programmes, Grey Tichatonga, he took all

responsibility for editorial decisions for programmes produced and transmitted by the Z.B.C. Asked whether there were no programme producing agencies in the country that could supply ZBC with local programmes, the former Director replied that, although there are production houses locally, they charge exorbitant prices which the ZBC could not afford and it is cheaper to buy imported programmes than to make local programmes. (Zondo, 1984) As a result such programmes are exported to overseas markets by individual agencies.

But technical production difficulties are not the sole explanation for the limited expansion of television. Also important is the fact that consumers live in the cities. Katz and Wedell argue that, as long as reception technology is considered to be the sole responsibility of the audience, the concentration of the sets will therefore be where the cash income is concentrated, that is in the cities. (Katz and Wedell, 1977: 13) As one of the reasons mentioned about this problem is the lack of equipment, it seems therefore that the BBC recommendations to have more local programme content could not be practical in Zimbabwe's socio-economic realities.

In the next chapter, we look at a further

recommendation of the BBC that "ZBC now needs to move technologically into the electronics of the 1980's as it needs, in programming, to come to terms with the Africa and the Commonwealth of these final decades of the twentieth century". (BBC Report, 1980: 3)

Chapter Three

The Quest for Technology

In the preceding chapter, the failure of more local programme productions on ZBC was blamed on scarcity or lack of equipment. The BBC team highlighted the problems of aging equipment incapable of providing reliable service. Suggested priorities in capital expenditure for the ZBC were the extension of existing radio and television transmitter coverage, replacement of worn-out studio equipment and provision of a second television channel. Virtually all the studio equipment, it was recommended, should be replaced over a five-year period.

This was a mammoth task for the ZBC, which at that early stage of growth faced a number of constraints. One of these constraints was that the projects would have to wait until electricity was available in some rural areas and stronger transmitters could be erected. Secondly, some of the sources cited as possible funders according to the Director General Tirivafi Kangai were described vaguely as "sympathetic organisations and individuals here and abroad". (Kangai, 1984)

The sanction years had left radio and television badly in need of re-equipment and training in new methods and approaches. Outside broadcast units, with sophisticated mobile equipment, were envisaged. The

BBC team also suggested the introduction of colour television to keep it in line with world technical advances and allow "enjoyment of imported, as well as local programmes". (BBC Report. 1980) Acknowledging such proposals, the Director General struck a cautionary note that, although independence had brought the need for a rapid expansion of news coverage in both urban and rural areas, the corporation "would continue for some time to come operating on an old budget which did not correspond to the new reality at ZBC". (The Herald, 1981)

This is true of the majority of developing countries who operate an economy dependent on commodity exports because of the low level of domestic savings and tax revenue. Thus efforts to modernise depend on borrowed capital and other foreign assistance with attendant social and political implications. Some of these problems come in the form of aid from multinational companies, and so much so that the 1970s have seen expanding activities on the part of their local subsidiaries in countries like Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe to assemble radio and television sets for the Africa market.

A large number of consultancy reports, mostly written in close cooperation with local experts and including recommendations for further action, have

resulted from these missions. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is also affected by such problems. Recommendations by the BBC team were to provide country-wide communication with the masses. It was hoped that with the new facilities to be installed at ZBC by donor western countries, programming on ZBC would improve both technically and creatively and that a greater amount of programming would be locally produced.

This has proved to be a nearly impossible task. But first, an account of the experiences elsewhere in transfer of technology will guide us to understand some of the obstacles encountered in these kinds of ventures.

The launching of a broadcasting system in any country introduces into the economy a variety of demands that have to be met if the system is to develop. The technological refinement of even the basic equipment for the production, transmission and reception of radio and television programmes requires research and development resources available only in highly industrialised countries. Thus the introduction of broadcasting institutions, and particularly of television, has added substantial burdens to the foreign exchange resources that the developing countries have to raise and it has made

them dependent on a small group of industrialised countries capable of providing the advanced technology required for broadcasting services. (Katz and Wedell, 1987: 5)

However, in a bid to develop themselves, African countries have resorted to indiscriminate importation of technology, neglecting the need to provide, at the same time, supporting infrastructure. This has resulted in continued dependence on imported technology, which is a great drain on the meagre resources of developing countries.

The importance of the newest technology to the rapid development of poor countries has been aptly summarised by Schiller in his comment on the United States' response to the poor world's push for a new international information order. He says that the United States' assertions were "that technology would eliminate rapidly old gaps and differentials between economies. Better yet, the new instrumentation, according to the same enthusiasts, would enable still- to- industrialise societies to pass over, 'leapfrog'" is the favoured expression - the industrialising process that marked western development. (Schiller, 1989: 199) This was clearly too optimistic.

The post- World War II era witnessed a dramatic

increase in the number of newly independent states. This new-found freedom however appeared hollow when it was launched in a global system that perpetuated their economic dependence on former colonial masters, countries that happened to have industrialised and developed economies. Patterns of trade and investment that had been established under earlier colonial periods continued to operate.

The United Nations General Assembly declared the 1960s as the Decade for Development and its commitment was given added weight when, during the first year of the decade, seventeen newly independent states were admitted to its membership. However, by the 1970s, it was clear that previous approaches to the economic development of developing countries were not working. During the Decade of Development, the gap between rich and poor countries had widened. Large populations in developing countries were suffering from malnutrition, unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of medical care and education.

At present there seems to be no concrete evidence that suggests that the situation has altered significantly for the better. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have replaced development planning in most African countries. By 1990, no less than 36 countries in the continent had pursued programmes of

economic reform supported by balance of payment and other loans from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and shaped by the policy conditionality attached to these loans. SAPs became inevitable as a result of the economic decline that characterised these countries during the 1960s and 1970s. The debt burden, the deteriorating economic situation and the persistent balance of payment crisis necessitated major adjustments in most developing countries. SAPs were originally conceived as a medium-term policy to focus restructuring of the economies of these countries, so that they could adjust to the new economic realities, while sustaining economic growth. The 1980's were a decade of nearly continuous adjustment efforts in many African countries. Zimbabwe is, at present, one such country going through the IMF adjustment program.

It seems therefore, that most developing countries are still in the pre-industrial phase of development, closer to the stage in which Western Europe was in the 19th century than to the stage in which it is now. There are serious implications when Third World countries seek to graft a post-industrial development, like the information economy, onto their pre-industrial structures.

The Role of Transnational Corporations at the ZBC

Attempts by African governments to develop information infrastructures and to strengthen their information capabilities have often taken the form of requests for consultants or experts from UNESCO or other international bodies or non-governmental organisations to undertake surveys either of the status of scientific or technological information generally, or of specific sectors of the economy. While it is generally recognised that the transplantation of superior technical and managerial knowledge is most probably beneficial to a country receiving foreign direct investment, complaints are frequently made about the high profits derived by the foreign companies from their investments. (Johnson, 1975: 76)

A specific case in Zimbabwe is that of a proposed joint contract between the ZBC and Phillips International for the manufacture of radio and television sets. The preamble to this contract states that "the management of the corporation is now concerned that an imbalance has developed between the degree of capital investment and the relatively low levels of listener and viewer audience, due to the limited availability of sets. The revenue available to the Corporation through licence and advertising income is thus disproportionate to the capital

investment. Advertising rates are said to be amongst the lowest in the world. Furthermore, the use of the Corporation as a national communication system is being inhibited".

However, the ZBC management had reservations about cooperating with a foreign company like Phillips International. To allay these fears, Phillips which has existing facilities in Zimbabwe suggested that "consideration should be given to the basis on which Phillips would be prepared to conduct training for Zimbabwean personnel, their commitment to local manufacture and potential exports into the region, given their established operations in the surrounding territories". What made the ZBC nervous about such an arrangement, I'm told, is that in that same report Phillips indicated that they would accept a minority holding in a new separate joint venture company, provided that they "maintained management control, particularly with respect to production and marketing".

This is a concern of most Third World countries, that the domination is being carried out not only through ideological content of communication but more aggressively through infrastructure of technology. Some critics have gone even further to claim that the transfer of technology represents an extension of

capitalist production relationships and value appropriation into the underdeveloped world. However, Gerald Sussman does not view science and technology as inherently destructive or obstructive of human liberation. He says that science and technology have no character other than the historical and social forces of their selection, creation and specialisation. Nevertheless, he does admit that these forces have been historically introduced through conspicuous inequality, racism and cultural as well as psychological oppression. Here Sussman fails to address the issue of dependency which came about because of the colonial legacy. Most critics of technology transfer are agreed that an important impact of the present volume and structure of communication technology transfer is the strengthening of existing North-South dependency relations. This is precisely proving to be the case in Zimbabwe.

As early as September 1981, the Minister of Information and Tourism, Nathan Shamuyarira, declared that Zimbabwe intended buying its colour television distribution equipment from France. "The French system was better than those produced either by Germany or by Britain and was easier to maintain". (The Herald, 2/09/81) Work began on the installation

of new television equipment at the ZTV's Montrose studios in the city of Bulawayo. On the training of ZBC personnel to run the equipment, the French consultant gave assurances that "some of us will remain after completion of the task to help with any initial problems once transmission starts". (Bulawayo Chronicle, 23/10/82)

Although such assurances are given, Hancock notes that even if technology is acquired at a reasonable rate and cost, and appropriate mechanisms have been built in to guide its implementation, it may still not perform adequately unless major modifications are made to accommodate local needs and constraints. The amount of adaptation to suit local circumstances is often among the most important factors determining whether or not a particular technology can take root and survive in a new environment. (Hancock, 1984: 175)

One example of such problems occurred in Zimbabwe with Thomson Video Equipment of France, which had a contract with the ZBC for the supply of television studio equipment and of FM and television transmission equipment. The ZBC Outside Broadcasting cameras delivered to ZBC in January 1990 soon experienced problems. ZBC claimed that this problem existed at the time the suppliers installed the

cameras. What was interesting was that ZBC in FAX 043 told the suppliers that they had not received any Engineering Bulletins for any of the equipment. Part of the urgent fax message read: "ZBC claim that all of their Vidifont equipment is now unreliable. This problem is temperature dependent and affects all three Outside Broadcast cameras, 9 ENG cameras and the three cameras installed in studio 4. We have at this time several units back in your factory for repair." (FAX 110-33-1-3420-7047) A report on the Independent Communication For World Wide Telecommunication Development says that the products of these firms are for the most part designed to meet the largest markets and for use in advanced countries with temperate climates, high density of population, well trained and supported maintenance units and developed and heavily used telecommunications networks. These designs may be less suited to the environments and needs of developing countries. For example, as the case outlined above, they may not function efficiently in high temperature or humidity without expensive air-conditioning. (Report on the Independent Commission for Worldwide Telecommunications Development, 1984: 18)

McPhail describes this kind of transfer of technology as electronic colonialism. This in essence

in the dependency relationship established by the importation of communication hardware, foreign produced software, along with engineers, technicians, and related information protocols, that establish a set of foreign norms and values and expectations which, in varying degrees, may alter the domestic cultures. (MacPhail, 1987: 10) As offers of equipment are, in many cases, part of the aid programmes of developed countries, there is often a temptation to accept some equipment from one country and some from another without regard to the long-term problems caused by a reliance on a variety of manufacturers. The maintenance of an assortment of brands of equipment encounters severe difficulties. The ordering of spare parts cannot be sufficiently organised. The training of technical and production staff is a much heavier burden, as they have to become familiar with a variety of very different systems. For instance in Zimbabwe, the Director of Engineering, Mr. McPhee says that equipment is sourced through government loans, commercial loans, grant aid and protocols. Four French Protocols account for a large portion of the TV studios' equipment and FM radio and TV transmitters. Swiss Mixed Credit funding has provided a joint Studer Alcatel project worth Z\$24 million. This

project is currently underway with the installation of new radio central control rooms in the cities of Harare, Bulawayo and Mbare. Japan provided assistance in the form of a cultural grant that financed T.V. camera monitors and Beta editing equipment. Some equipment and technical spares are obtained using ZBC's own funds. Canada and Australia provided high grade monitors and various equipment for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conferences held in 1992 in Zimbabwe and this equipment was subsequently donated to the organisation.

The case for giving high priority to the expansion of colour television as encouraged by the BBC team is therefore much less strong, given the problems outlined above. The situation at present is that the disproportionately greater cost of obtaining television coverage has limited both the extension of television signals and the multiplication of receivers in most developing countries. The clustering of television coverage around the big cities has had the effect of accentuating the gap between urban and rural standards of life. Another important factor is the high cost of a television receiver, which may be several times the annual cash income of most people.

In Zimbabwe, there are few facilities for the

repair and maintenance of television sets, so that, when a part needs replacing or an adjustment has to be made, the set is virtually useless. This problem highlights the difficulties that ensue when complex western technology is exported-ready made without creating an adequate supporting infrastructure in the receiving countries. For instance, when ZBC changed to colour television in 1986, repair firms received many complaints from viewers about the quality of their reception. Black and white television sets were affected. The problem was that when a new colour transmitter which could only be received through colour television sets equipped with special aerials was introduced this was only suited to colour television and the result was that some television owners did not get a good quality reception. (Financial Gazette 29/8/86) A spokesman for the ZBC explained this problem by saying that "any change to a colour system would require a huge capital investment by the ZBC which does not have the funds. The government has to decide on the priority for colour television". (The Herald, 7/8/80) Asked in the House of Assembly why it was necessary to have colour transmitters when the receiving sets were unavailable, the then Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Mr. Shamuyarira, said that

because of the great advances in technology, manufacturers of television sets and equipment were no longer producing black and white sets and equipment. (The Herald, 26/3/87) What we have to discuss therefore is whether the transfer of technology can help to shift an African country from a state of dependency to the long-desired self-reliance which leads to development. The question is how to transfer the given technology to those not yet in possession of it. The idea that it might not serve the urgent needs of developing countries because it fails to fit into the actual conditions and limitations of poverty has been treated with ridicule. (Schumacher, 1973: 86)

Unlike rich industrialised countries, Third World countries are characterised by a dual polity. On the one hand they have a vast agricultural hinterland which is inhabited by nearly 70% of the population, which lives mostly by small-holding farms and subsistence agriculture and is perpetually caught in a poverty trap. On the other hand, there is the minuscule modern urban sector, which is western oriented, affluent and is in a position to gain access to and benefit from the levers of power. This underlying inequality has important consequences for the way in which a country as a whole benefits from

technology. (Stonier, Jayawera and Robertson, 1989: 27)

Technology innovations, however, never occur in a vacuum, but affect a way of life for people, and their values, philosophy, goals and almost every conceivable component of society. If we are to equate development within a cultural context using technology, we can assume that this cannot be brought about unaccompanied by problems and challenges. Current discussions on the new international economic order have focused a lot of attention on the role technology can play in transforming the economies of the less developed countries. The belief that technology can play such a vital role has mostly been influenced by the fact that technology developments and innovations over the past two and a half centuries have been responsible for much of the advancement in the developed countries.

Daniel Lerner, along with Wilbur Smith and Lucien Pye, in one of their studies developed an elaborate theory of development communication. Some critics have labelled it as the theory of modernization. In essence it says that, if Third World societies are to develop, they have to be wrenched out of the traditional cultural values in which they were imbedded. The consciousness of the

people has to be changed. They have to be made to want and to get. (Stonier, Jayaweera and Robertson, 1989: 27)

This explains why modern technology in developing countries is generally associated with a privileged workforce, higher skill requirements, better wages and greater stability.

However, even under the western definition of development, the main contribution of technology to development is highly specific and uneven. Only a small number of people can have access to it. Lucien Pye in a study of communication patterns points out that "in the urban areas are the media of mass communication, serving the most westernised elements of the society and most closely related to the dominant or national sphere of politics. Outside these centres, the communication process is still largely dependent upon the traditional level of technology, and in its operation it mainly serves the needs of the less Westernised people, and a more or less formally structured political process." (Wilbur Schram, 1964: 72)

For decades, the poor, particularly in the various countries of the Third World, have not been able to communicate to the modernising elite. In Zimbabwe that is still the case. This state of

affairs has led to a great deal of interest in appropriate technology. A definition of appropriate technology is given by Guhan, who says that technologies appropriate to any particular developing country are a function not only of what they can afford but also of its development strategy, income distribution objectives and factor pricing policies. Accordingly, there can be no external examination of what appropriate technology is. (Guhan, 1981: 551)

Appropriate Technology as an alternative

Appropriate broadcast technology was introduced to Zimbabwe in the form of solar television for the rural areas. Due to the fact that a large part of the rural areas in Zimbabwe has yet to receive electricity, the introduction of television there is still an illusion. In one rural village in Zimbabwe, a site was chosen to test a television set powered by a special solar-charged battery. The batteries are recharged through a 60 watt solar panel and more than enough power is generated to supply a black and white television set. (The Herald, 11/02/84)

One other low-cost television designed for the rural market was proposed by a local manufacturer. These sets would be powered by a car battery and would be cheap to buy with the aim of the rural people. The television cabinets would be manufactured

locally. (The Herald, 18/2/82)

Although the project was regarded as an experiment initially, ZBC viewed it as a worthwhile alternative. The Director of Engineering Mr. David Woodward was quoted as saying that "a lot of people particularly in the rural areas feel they are deprived of facilities like those in the urban areas. This type of tv is geared to mass education and there are great advantages to be gained from it. With our shortage of teachers, one teacher can manage to cope with a lot of students by using television as the medium." This project still has to be followed up by ZBC. However, it is obvious from the above that appropriate technologies would need less adaptation to market sizes, they would facilitate the progressive entry of developing countries in the industrial world, they would necessitate less geographical displacement of populations and they would be easier to learn and master by a low-skilled labour force.

As the correlation between telecommunications and economic development is documented by a growing number of studies, the Third World countries are beginning to recognise the urgent need to equip themselves with modern and efficient telecommunications. This means that, whatever

theoretical position we take, the impact of technology is everywhere today and no one can afford to speak of world development without reference to it. As to whether developing countries ought in addressing these new technologies opt for a passive attitude or take an active stand, Mahdi Elmandjra says that information is no longer a sector of development, it has become the key strategy for development. (Elmandjra, 1985: 5)

The identification of centers in rural areas in Zimbabwe to prepare them for the installation of communal television and radio sets was initiated in 1986. The former Director General said "the installation of radio and television sets at growth points for communal viewing is a national programme, which will enable every district to enjoy the facility". Such community viewing centres besides enabling people in rural areas to gain access to television are often good reinforcers of investment as part of a wider process of modernization. In this case, the media must reach out to the whole population.

In the case of radio, attempts have now been made to address these problems.

In Zimbabwe, Development Through Radio is a project initiated by the Federation of Africa Media

Women. This rural communication development effort is a project of Radio Four, the educational channel of the ZBC. The project seeks to provide the rural population with access to and participation in development broadcasting, by giving them the opportunity to participate actively in the preparation of development oriented radio programmes, so that they can use such programmes for the promotion of their development activities. The main thrust of the project recognises that any meaningful solution to community problems must begin with the members of the community themselves. Clubs meet weekly to discuss their most pressing problems and other issues of interest in the community and to tape, to record their deliberations. The tapes are taken to collection points, from where the coordinator listens to the recordings and arranges with appropriate experts to record their response to the problems and issues of interest expressed by the clubs.

One of the most important aspects of such community radio clubs is the promotion of national integration in its encouragement of the national language. This is where radio, as compared to television, is at its strongest. Radio is capable of meeting local language needs at low cost. In all

multilingual countries like Zimbabwe, broadcasters struggle with the dilemma caused by linguistic diversity. They recognise that broadcasts in local languages are a good means of mobilizing participation in socio-economic development by using modern scientific methods. While there is still continuing debate over the comparative effectiveness of radio versus television, little direct comparative evidence exists. At the same time radio's effectiveness for educational purposes has not been widely acknowledged as television has.

Given the chronology of the establishment of broadcasting in Zimbabwe using the BBC model it is not surprising that the model inherited in Zimbabwe is unsuitable to its socio-economic realities because the relationship between communications and social and political structures is a close one.

It is my submission that technological transfers from developed countries can only be useful if they are absorbed internally and used in the promotion of clearly set objectives that serve the majority of people in a society; and that the technological transfers that take place without the developing countries' internal effort cannot possibly lead to the reduction of dependence. The concept of a public service corporation modelled on the BBC to supplant

the colonial service model and with BBC staff members assigned as experts obviously has had its problems as evidenced from the above observations. The problems associated with the introduction of the BBC recommendations in Zimbabwe are complex. Given that the demands of television in terms of technology, experience and finance were greater than those of radio, the process of transfer involved much more reliance on foreign aid. Poor local conditions associated with terrain, electrification, climate, staffing and finance all loomed larger in the case of television. In summary, then, although the British model is still intact in the structural sense, some of the assumptions are now being questioned. These include the reliance on the metropolitan culture, the dependence on financial, technical and administrative expertise. The demands are great therefore in terms of knowledge at a higher level, combined with the sophistication of the technologies involved, the creation of greater professional skills, for decentralization to take place to localities and communities that generate a do-it-yourself communication. These demands, however hard they may be, ought to be addressed and it is in the next chapter that we look at the training of communication personnel in Zimbabwe since independence.

Chapter Four

Training as a priority for change

An important area of need that is disclosed as soon as the decision to launch a broadcasting system

is the demand for suitably qualified manpower for managerial staff, for engineers, technicians, and for production and creative staff. If, however, a broadcasting system is to reflect the aspirations of its country, it is desirable that the staffing should as soon as possible be met by local manpower resources.

African countries, like other underdeveloped nations of the world, have serious manpower problems at all levels in all sectors of society, and broadcasting systems are no exception.

Broadcasting personnel constitute a body of mass communicators with a special function in modern society which is essential to any modern nation or one that aspires to be. Until recently, broadcasting was not a particularly esteemed profession in developing countries. This is so, says J.F. Scotton, because when colonial governments opened broadcasting stations in Africa "the recruitment of both technical and production personnel continued to be from among those who had done well in their final examinations at secondary school, the British O-levels. Recruitment was carried on under civil service procedures, in many cases by the Civil Service itself. Little attention was paid to such vital qualifications as talent, aptitude, or even interest;

in consequence, individuals with imagination and creativity were rarely attracted". (Head, 1974: 282) The situation has changed, however, particularly in Zimbabwe where the government initiated a diploma course in mass communication. Nevertheless, broadcasting personnel do not just consist of radio and television announcers. Departments include engineers, researchers, planners, administrators, accountants and a host of other categories of workers who all have to be trained and helped to gain experience in order to perfect their skills and performance.

Broadcasting conditions do not exist in a vacuum. They are an integral part of the general conditions found in the countries concerned. The management is important, not only for the effective running of the organization, but also because of the political sensitivity of the management decisions made in a broadcasting organization. However, having said that, a broadcasting organization is a complex institution that demands a good understanding of the nature of communications technology, as well as an understanding of a group of people in various sectors of programming. Broadcasters are of key importance, since they decide the form and content of information reaching the public. The growing

complexity of the task, even of straightforward reporting, has created demands for new levels of professional skill and background knowledge. It has also resulted, especially in television, in great team effort, combining the skills of reporters, cameraman, sound technicians, editors and so on.

The earliest memories of broadcasting training, as outlined by UNESCO in anecdotal form, are that the broadcasting industry began in a small way. The early studio was a pleasant, friendly place where each man worked in the freest, most innovative, way. The station engineer built his own equipment. The announcer/producer formulated his own programmes, with little or nothing to serve as a model. When new staff were needed, a willing trainee was engaged and literally "sat at the master's feet" learning as an apprentice to become a craftsman. Either he liked the smells and the sounds of the studio, enjoyed the long hours, and learned everything he could about his craft, or he called quits and left. But as the decades wore on, media empires mushroomed. Staffs expanded. The craft suddenly became an industry. The man at the top was no longer a fellow explorer called "Jack", but a remote general manager called G.M. or the D.G. who, if the organisation was fortunate, had also once been a broadcaster himself.

However, in such an expanded industry today, the situation is often a pitched battle among programmers, producers, engineers, announcers, administration and in many countries, sales and advertising too. In Zimbabwe, although there is still a strong tradition of learning on the job, standards of professional training and general education have risen over the years and continue to rise. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, before Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980, the field of mass communication was largely a preserve for the ruling white minority. African participation and involvement in the production of media content and the management of media organisational structures was almost non-existent. After independence, the Government of Zimbabwe realised that the mass communication media had to be re-structured and re-oriented in order that they could play a constructive role in the new Zimbabwe. What was particularly destructive during the early 1980's at the ZBC was that media managers continued to treat low educational attainment almost as a professional badge of honour. Up until the late 1980's no encouragement was given at all to the ZBC staff to acquire professional qualification. Recruitment was done haphazardly, in most cases with no formal requirement

for academic qualifications. ZBC management soon realised that the quality of any system is largely governed by the calibre of those who operate it. With that in mind, the government considered that training in mass communication, at all levels and in all forms, was of paramount importance. This training may be regarded as fundamental to the effective operation and development of communication systems. There is also general agreement that the lack of trained personnel and defects in training schemes are among the basic reasons for deficiencies observed all round the world.

Before we go into the specifics of how the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation has initiated training programmes, given this encouragement by the BBC, we shall examine the concepts and problems of the training of media personnel as envisaged by educators of mass communicators.

Different schools of thought apparently emerge in the quest for training of journalists from developing countries like Zimbabwe. Sommerlad says that "for journalists in developing countries, training in the social sciences generally, and in the science of communication particularly, is of special significance. The mass media, everywhere, are disseminators of news and information, a vital and

essential role. But in the emerging countries, they are very much more than this, they are instruments of development." (E. Lloyd Sommerlad, Unesco, 1965: 7)

For the media to become more responsible and more aware of the problems that they unwittingly create, Mytton says that governments should "increase greatly the amount of money spent on the training of journalists and the improvement of media facilities." (Mytton, 1983: 149) This viewpoint was shared by the BBC.

Communicators Katz and Wedell caution that "a problem which arises whenever training facilities are provided is the failure to develop the imagination of trainees and to encourage the development of techniques of improvisation and problem solving". It is important to note, however, that this trend reveals a high level of regularity in the expression of concern among various experts in and outside Africa about the absence of what can best be described as a dominant guiding philosophy, and about the dominance of Western and European communications training and research philosophies. The negative effects these situations have on communication, training and research in Africa call for indigenous communication training and research philosophies in

developing countries.

For instance, Mazrui has called for the Africanisation of the curricula and syllabi of all subjects or disciplines offered in African institutions of higher learning, including communication, to be in tune with the African reality. (Mazrui, 1978: 208) Professor Luis Ramiro Beltran strongly criticised the adoption of what he called the Western or North American scientific or scholarly detachment of communication trainers and researchers in Africa, Latin America and the rest of the Third World which has made the entire discipline out of touch with the social realities of their countries. (Beltran, 1976: 107) He says that communication training and research cannot be culturally or even ideologically neutral as most Western researchers and trainers often try to show, pointing out that this is why Third World countries like Nigeria should take communication research as part and parcel of their socio-economic situations and fashion their guiding philosophies in these areas along these lines.

Other experts who have researched and written extensively on this issue of communication training philosophy include Frank Barton who has criticised what he saw as a clash between African communications

training, research and practice and the African ideal. (Barton, 1969: 42) David Barry believes that the best way to train the African communicator for the modern information age is to train as a "development agent" instead of training him as a journalist. (Barry, 1983: 20) As well, Frank Ugboajah has lamented that communication research and training has suffered from "erratic conclusions, wild generalizations and foreign dominance". (Ugboajah, 1986: 8)

It is important to observe, however, that the literature also reveals that, in spite of the above stated concerns and recommendations, there is not yet a single model or philosophy of communication training and research that can be adopted and applied by different developing countries as an alternative to the dominant Western and European models or philosophies.

A joint Nordic-Unesco training seminar in broadcasting manpower development was hosted in Harare in 1982. The former Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Mr. Shamuyarira, informed the participants, that at independence, Zimbabwe had three sources of manpower in broadcasting. These were a small core of guerillas in two political parties who had been in broadcasting;

exiles interested or involved in the media all over the world; and the personnel who had served under the previous regime. "Having started with this three-cornered base, it was not enough to sustain mass media institutions, hence the formation of the Institute of Mass Communication".

The former Minister noted, however, that this institute had been formed and staffed "in a great hurry" to prevent a breakdown in the flow of news. In a foreword written for the book Reporting in Africa, Mr. Shamuyarira says that "Africa is not seeking to match the high technology, but we do insist on our basic inalienable right to communicate among ourselves, and to communicate effectively and positively". He went on to say that "we must be good communicators through our own expertise and practical experience". The Division of Mass Communication (formerly the Zimbabwe Institute of Mass Communication, ZIMCO) provides training for a number of distinctly different careers within the field of communication. These include print journalism, radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, public relations and government information service. Students select a number of course modules which constitute a tailor-made course, meeting the specific training requirements for career objectives. The

awarding body for the National Diploma in Mass Communication is the Higher Education Examinations Council, of the Directorate of Vocational and Technical Training of the Ministry of Higher Education in Zimbabwe. The Head of the Division of Mass Communication, Mr. Gerald Siwela, says that, besides concentrating on print journalism and broadcasting, students are given a solid of knowledge of science and political science aimed at helping them to grasp the nature of the messages which they transmit, the communications processes in which they are involved and the orientation, problems and aspirations of the socio-economic system in which they operate.

The courses also include a fortnight's workshop in rural reporting or rural communication message design and an internship with the main media organizations lasting three months. At present, there is no provision in the syllabus for a hands-on training in the maintenance of communications equipment although there are two technical engineers employed by the Division to supervise students in practical course assignments.

This problem of maintenance training was addressed when the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation appointed an Executive Engineering Training Officer

and launched an in-service training scheme for technical staff. However, a number of problems inevitably accompanied the introduction of ZBC's in-service training programme. At the launch and for some time afterwards, training facilities were inadequate. A viewing theatre was used as a lecture room, training aids were hardly available or non-existent. Trainees had to be taught on studio transmission equipment. (Makondo, 1986)

Besides the shortage of necessary equipment, this kind of in-service training obviously had some limitations. In an interview with Makondo, he admitted that technology is advancing rapidly to the extent that maintenance technicians may find it difficult to cope. Engineering topics such as digital electronics, micro-processors, etc. are taught at higher educational level, often beyond the technician's level. Such topics cannot therefore be fully covered through in-service training. Although, as mentioned in the previous chapter, expatriates hold in-service training for local technicians, the period covered is not enough for full comprehension of the equipment. This training on the job without formal or supplementary education formally prescribed, learning by doing is likely to impose on the students' intellectual development.

Universities are encouraged to be involved in communications training, and provide all the practical training which professionals need. Thus various specialised training centres and mass media organisations also play an important role. They organise training, refresher and in-service courses for professionals regardless of the qualifications acquired or not at university. Their role is to provide specific courses of technical and occupational instruction suitably adapted to the circumstances and demands of their work. Apart from ZBC's own in-service technical training programme, the Corporation has signed several agreements with a number of overseas organisations to conduct broadcast training locally. One such organisation is the Thomson Foundation of Britain, which has assisted ZBC in conducting training courses locally in the following areas: broadcast engineering, broadcast technical operations, radio and television production, news and current affairs and broadcast management.

Ainslie warns of 'bogus' aid organisations which purportedly train African journalists and she mentions in particular a West German venture, privately sponsored by "The Berlin Institute for Mass Communications in Developing Countries". Started in

1964, and claiming to be the first training school for African journalists outside the continent, the new school offers two four-month courses annually, for fifteen journalists. An eight-page broadsheet produced by students at the end of the course suggests that West German policies will receive sympathetic treatment from them on their return to their newspapers. The stories would themselves do credit to the Federal German Information Office. (Ainslie, 1966)

Another organisation with which the ZBC has an agreement that includes training is the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) of West Germany. This organisation came in mainly to support ZBC's educational channel, Radio 4. The training of staff of this service is part and parcel of FES's presence in the country. Various courses and workshops have been mounted jointly by ZBC and the FES to upgrade the technical and production skills of the staff of Radio Four. Several countries in the North offer assistance in different types of mass communication training. These countries include Japan, Britain, U.S.A., the Netherlands, and Germany.

A report from UNESCO says, however, that Western organisations should stop thinking in terms of assisting the Third World, that 'horizontal' and

cooperation' is more appropriate. Certainly, not all programmes have worked on the principle of encouraging self-sufficiency, or on the basis of a clear understanding of the conditions in which journalists in some countries have to work. For instance, the late British journalist, Harford Thomas, reports that when he had finished lecturing a group of African journalists on the need to get out of their metropolitan offices and down to the villages, one of the group turned to him: "How?" he asked. (Richter, 1978: 241)

This fact has been acknowledged by Head that "some overseas training programmes put the trainee at the mercy of instructors no more advanced in broadcasting expertise than the trainee's own colleagues at home. He goes on to say that the training of people, not only for competence at their assigned tasks but above all as intelligent improvisers and innovators, has been neglected. Trainees all too often return home from their course discouraged by the gap between the amplitude of resources in their place of training and the poverty of resources available on the spot. Having, as they see it, no hope of achieving the standards set during their training, they often give up altogether and do not even try to apply their experience within the

limitations of the resources at their disposal." (Gerbner, 359)

In Zimbabwean television, all the staff are young and at a fairly rudimentary level of training. They require training from technical assistance particularly on the maintenance and repair of equipment.

A problem arises over the adaptation of younger members of staff who have received overseas training in well-equipped studios to the local conditions. They must exhibit professional respect for those who have been largely trained on the job and thus have not accumulated much theoretical knowledge on technical matters. Such problems are not peculiar to the production of television programmes either. Part of the problem in Zimbabwe lies in the difficulty of finding adequate teachers. It is argued that not every teacher of journalism has previously proved himself a journalist, and not every crack journalist is a skilful teacher. It is easy to draw up desirable qualifications for teachers of journalism, but difficult to find available people who measure up to such qualifications.

Due to the urgent shortage of skilled manpower, ZBC introduced in-service production seminars for producers mainly sponsored by UNESCO, Training

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NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

Foundation and the Frederick Ebert Foundation. These seminars last for a period of from two weeks to three months. Although they are highly encouraged by BBC management, Eggleston is critical of such methods. He says a drawback is that, as an accurate and objective reporter of surface facts, someone with in-service training may go a long way, but when the events and situations to be reported become more complex, he may find himself against a wall which has no door, or before a door to which he possesses no key. He says that "the apprentice who left school at fourteen may have been able to continue his education while learning on the job, but is there any vocation which makes heavier demands on the time and nervous energy of the individual than that of television journalism and how many such craftsmen are likely to acquire a wide and deep education in their spare time?" (Eggleston, 1958: 41)

It seems, therefore, that universities in the Third World have a double task to perform in undertaking mass media studies. The rapid growth of mass media has created, or will soon create, a critical shortage of trained media professionals, particularly in broadcasting. This poses difficult problems in devising methods of imparting skills quickly and effectively to as many students as

possible. At the same time, if national mass media systems are to meet national needs and become the effective instruments of social change that they are expected to be, future media professionals must be given more than technical training. It is not easy for educators in the Third World to overcome these problems. This is especially the case in countries where media industries still doubt the utility of specialized university courses and are reluctant to cooperate with universities in establishing internships for students, or in countries where there is great pressure from governments to make courses as short as possible so that staff with even a modicum of training may be recruited to media institutions. Zimbabwe still has yet to introduce a university degree in mass communication after a dozen years of discussion.

No matter how satisfactory the training programme may appear to be up to the point of graduation, it still fails if the graduate is rejected by the mass communication employers, the newspaper, radio, television or film world. The graduate of a school or department of journalism is not yet a trained journalist, and he cannot become such until he has spent years in the profession. By introducing the Division of Mass Communication in

Zimbabwe, the government hoped to meet the urgent need of staffing various media institutions.

In an effort to find out what former students of the Division of Mass Communication (DIMCO) in 1988 of the Harare Polytechnic, previously the Zimbabwean Institute of Mass Communication (ZIMCO), are presently doing, and how they are performing, and also how the syllabus can be improved, a questionnaire was sent to 52 students who graduated between 1986 and 1987.

Thirty-nine of these students replied to the questionnaire, six of whom were from abroad, whilst five others were reached by the researcher by telephone. The rest (8) did not reply, however, the researcher knew them personally and could therefore give out the information concerning their present occupation. Of the 52 students, 15 did the two-year National Diploma course (1985-1987), while the remaining 37 did the one-year (1985-1986) Intermediate Diploma Course.

Of the total intake number of students, approximately ten percent dropped out before graduation for various reasons, e.g. some changed to another field of study and some found a position and started work to earn a living. Moreover, only two students failed their exams and then re-sat them.

Obviously, these two did not work in the media as their whereabouts are unknown and could therefore not be contacted.

Nationality and Present Occupation

Ten of the 52 students who graduated over this period were foreigners. Six of them were from Namibia, and members of SWAPO. Two were from Botswana, and two from Lesotho. Most of the SWAPO members are now in Namibia where they are working for Radio Namibia or the Namibia Press Agency, both publicity organs of SWAPO. The two Basotho are working for Radio Lesotho, whilst one of the Batswana is working for the Daily News of Botswana, and the other one for Radio Botswana.

Of the remaining 42 Zimbabweans, Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Pvt Ltd (Zimpapers) took the highest figure of 13, followed by the Ministry of Information with 12. Of Zimpapers, The Sunday Mail took six, The Herald three, The Chronicle three, and Manica Post one. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) took five, Ziana one, whilst the Army and Police Public Relations Sections took three each. Only three graduates were unemployed, or their whereabouts were unknown at the time of the investigation.

Although Ziana employs a large number of

journalists it only recruited one of the 52 graduates because it mostly recruits senior reporters as a result of its attractive salaries. At the time of conducting this research, one of the graduates was unemployed, with two employed in an unrelated field. N.B. Statistics and/or information concerning the graduates is correct upon the close of this report (March 1988). Graduates may have, in the meantime, changed their employment.

Usefulness Of Training

Thirty-two of the students who replied to the questionnaire said they found the course very useful. Some of their comments were:

"I am involved in news writing and news gathering which is what I learned during the course. And all I learned is related to what I am practising now."

"Most useful indeed, I apply the techniques I received through my training at the Polytechnic in most of my programmes."

"I found most of what I learnt very useful, especially reporting lectures we had, journalistic law and shorthand which I couldn't have survived without. Wish I had attained a higher speed while still at college."

"Through the course was short (one year), I think it was very useful. I have managed to put into practice all that I learnt during that period."

"..the time I spent at DIMCO was really worth it."

"I am owing my indebtness to the Division of Mass Communication (Harare Polytechnic) for preparing me to reach my present stage of work. I am very successful in my daily work."

"The course has been of great use, I was able to publish a Brigade magazine The Elephant News without assistance from anybody."

"Although I learnt print journalism, the overall training helped me establish myself in the electronic media."

"..I am virtually putting everything I learnt at DIMCO into practice."

One said he had done print journalism but ended up in the electronic media, thus he found the course he had done, not so relevant. Another student said he though there was need for the course to be more practical in the newsroom. Two students mentioned that they found themselves without the opportunity to practise the photography they had learnt at college.

Most of the students who were released from

their employment to follow the course were integrated successfully upon their return. As one representative from the Zimbabwe National Army aptly remarked:

(The Course was) "very useful in my field and has helped initiate my promotion from Sergeant to Lieutenant. After our course I was the first army officer to introduce a Brigade house journal which is self supported through advertisements."

For the few who have studied something after completing the course, five have attended seminars or workshops, whilst three have attended a specialised short-term course (three months) abroad. A further two have studied some subjects at 'A' Level by correspondence and one is presently studying law at the University of Zimbabwe.

However all former students are interested in further training, although aspirations differ. Some wish they could get specialised training in a particular field e.g. Economic Reporting, Public Relations, Political Science etc. Sixteen students wish to obtain degrees in journalism, would like to see a degree programme established immediately, either at the Harare Polytechnic or at the University. There are others who still wish to be attached to institutions similar to theirs but bigger

so that they can learn more skills.

Career Aspirations

Some of the former students including those in electronic media wish to end up in public relations whilst the majority would like to climb the ladder within the media. Public Relations is by no means more exciting than proper journalism but the salaries are usually much higher there than in the media.

Some of the students with the Ministry of Information aspire to become provincial information officers, whilst others wish to end up as press attaches with Zimbabwe embassies in other countries.

"You may have to wait for someone to die in order to get promoted to what you want," joked one former student in a telephone interview.

A study of the different institutions shows that most of the former students, particularly those who did the two-year diploma course, get promoted to senior reporters within a period of two years. Thereafter, it normally takes quite a long time to rise further, e.g. to sub-editor or news editor. With the Ministry of Information's rural services, chances of promotion from district information officer to provincial officer are not very bright:

"..understandably, because there are only eight provinces in the country." said one of the graduates employed by the ministry.

On the whole, however, the former students found that the course at DIMCO helped them to do well in their profession.

As one former student stated:

"It (the course) is very relevant. What I learnt at DIMCO is priceless. Promotion is just around the corner, thanks to DIMCO."

Contacts with DIMCO

On co-operation between the Division of Mass Communication and former students, most graduated (10) suggest the formation of a student association. Others suggest establishment of a regular newsletter through which they could share their experiences with current students, and probably also air their views on how the syllabus could be improved. Others suggest that current students would benefit if former students were invited to give talks on their experiences or if they were simply invited to the Division's functions and get a chance to talk to some of the students informally. Some of the graduates also believe that this would give them a chance to get a counselling from lectures on some of the problems they may be facing in their professions.

Some graduates even wish to help current students when they join their institutions during attachment. One graduate actually said she was in a position to offer current students air-time on her radio programme if they produce worthwhile material for broadcasting.

Prospects For New Graduates

The media is certainly not expanding at a rate corresponding to the number of graduates being produced by the Division of Mass Communication as well as some private colleges. Therefore prospects for employment are naturally getting slimmer, as are chances of getting promoted when one joins the media. However, there is hope for new graduates if plans to establish rural newspapers materialise. Naturally also, a few posts are created in the media as some of the personnel retire or divert into public relations, but this alone cannot be a solution to the ever increasing number of graduates who are entering the job market, unless there is a corresponding expansion of the media.

The ZBC does get its share of the graduates of ZIMCO but on a somewhat smaller scale. ZBC maintains the position that if there are vacancies within the corporation, ZIMCO graduates will get the first preference.

Third World politicians and journalists sometimes warn that the real confrontation will come in the next decade, when the men at the top are no longer those who were largely educated within the colonial system, or in the West itself. They, it is said, "will be determined, and able, to break the umbilical cord of history and culture and free their countries from the dependence inherent in the transmission of the ideas, and the values of their former imperial masters". (Righter, 1978)

Appendix A

Director General

Executive Secretary

Director of Engineering	Director of News & Current Affairs	Director of Admin. & Personnel	Director of Programmes	Director of Finance
Heads of Services i.e. Sound, TV & Transmitters	Head of Services i.e. Current Affairs News (radio & TV) Reporters	Heads of Services Admin. & Personnel Mulawayo & Mbare studios recruitment & training	Heads of Services Radios 1,2,3,4 TV Production TV Services	Heads of Services Finances Licensing Commercial Services
C.Os STOs Techs Asst. techs Shift techs Riggers, etc.	Snr reporters Snr editors Snr announcers Reporters Sub-editors Announcers, etc.	Admin. officers (snr) Admin. officers (jnr) Services manual, etc.	Announcers Producers Prod. Directors Asst. Producers VTR operators VCR operators Master Controllers Researchers, etc.	Asst. heads Accountants Sales reps. Clerks L. inspectors, etc.

The organisation of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation / Voice of Zimbabwe

Conclusion

The foregoing chapters have sought to describe the development and implementation of media policy in Zimbabwe at independence and its adoption of the BBC model. Although most recommendations have not come to fruition, I believe that with well-trained and lettered managers at ZBC, these recommendations could be studied afresh and a workable solution for a developing country like Zimbabwe found. It has become

obvious through this study that it is now time to do some thinking about the purposes and directions at ZBC.

So how then can we summarise the lessons which arise from these experiences? The following lessons are offered tentatively for the following reasons.

Since the adoption of the ZBC, management has been beset with numerous problems. The management of the ZBC has changed frequently, and is, at the time of writing this thesis, in a process of change.

Since 1980, there has been a change of Director Generals three times. In such a short period of 13 years, this has meant that, between them, they have served an average of three years. There is no Director General at present and the Corporation is run by an Acting Director General who was appointed in 1991. The Directors of other services within the corporation have been changed many times over and this has had a negative trickle-down effect on the Heads of Services and ultimately the lower ranks.

When the BBC came to restructure the services of the ZBC, at the invitation of the government of Zimbabwe, the management appointed to head the ZBC had just come home from the war zones and was therefore inexperienced in running such an institution like the Rhodesia Broadcasting

Corporation. Although they had been broadcasting quite effectively from the war zones, this was nothing compared to the real thing where there were matters of administration, finance, training and all that goes with running a national broadcasting organisation.

Thus both the BBC and the ZBC management from the start were talking to each other from different perspectives.

The management is a very important component of a broadcasting institution like the ZBC, not only for the effective running of the organization, but also because of the political sensitivity of the management decisions made in a broadcasting organization. For this reason, Kadz and Wedell note that "it is not unknown for persons to be appointed to management posts in broadcasting whose political reliability exceeds their managerial competence". Although the results of such appointments are serious, the political nature of the appointments may well make it more difficult to rectify the mistakes that are often made in terms of programming and overall performance.

This was the case at ZBC at independence. Critics have made observations that, had the BBC worked with trained policy makers at the ZBC,

problems outlined in the preceding chapters would have been avoided. This would have meant a close working relationship with an exchange of ideas from both sides.

In this case, the recommendations came solely from the BBC with little, if any, input from the ZBC. The objectives of information reaching all the people of Zimbabwe was of course agreed upon, but the mechanics of achieving those recommendations were not that simple. However, some of the problems outlined in this thesis would have been avoided with clear comprehension from both sides on what was possible and what was not. For instance, the role played by governments in the interaction between broadcasting structures and the political institutions of the developing countries is a fact of life. Rosalyne Ainslie says that this fact has been overlooked by the BBC in their missions.

Also, as I have shown, the western models were copied in the introduction of broadcasting systems in the African countries because these models were regarded as the only ways in which a modern communication system could be structured. Although the intentions were good, important considerations were not given prominence.

At a seminar on National Communication held at

the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, former Federal Information Minister Prince Tony Momoh said, "A communication policy involves a complete mobilization of all structures in the society for the propagation of the national goals and objective, such that every part of the system will be able to identify itself, as a part of the system-chain and not as the chain itself. A communication policy seeks to evolve a rational and systematic packaging of all communication media and resources for the achievement of national goals. A creative, coherent, comprehensive communication policy should reflect the social, economic, political, educational, technological and scientific goals and objectives of the nation". (Domareb, Jika and Nwosy, 1987)

The socio-political economic factors were not taken into consideration as regards the training and most importantly the purchase of hardware. I have stated that "whereas in most European and North American countries, the broadcasting organizations were established in countries with well tried representative political systems, the establishment of broadcasting organizations in the new nations often preceded the establishment of similar systems, or was effectively concurrent with them".

The dependence on the West as a source of supply

for television programming has often been commented upon and has, too often perhaps, been oversimplified. Some analysts argue that the use of American, British, or French television programmes in the developing countries is further evidence of the neo-colonialism that has replaced the classical relationship between the metropolitan nations and their former wards. (Schiller, 1969)

In this view, Western television programmes are imposed by a combination of aggressive salesmanship on the part of the production companies and seductive offers of tied aid and assistance from exporting countries. They are part of the same package, it is said, that brings the technology and organisational skills of the West to the developing world only to create further dependence. It is through this same network of relationships, so it is alleged, that television programmes and films are diffused, complete with their messages of materialism and the legitimacy of things-as-they-are.

However, having said that, this literal transfer of institutions and practices has had certain positive results. It has set standards of quality and of professional performance that have been recognized as normative, even if it is not possible to achieve them. It has provided working relationships for

broadcasters from new nations with their more experienced colleagues from the metropolitan countries, which have often been useful. But the main influence has been inhibiting, since the existence of metropolitan models has prevented the development of norms more closely related to the wholly different socio-political circumstances in the developing countries.

The failure to bring a more analytical and imaginative approach to the design of relevant broadcasting models has caused unnecessary difficulty and instability for most broadcasting organizations in the nation building process. The BBC taskforce members were vague in their recommendations in terms of programming policy. They did recommend, however, programmes that reflect the national identity.

The importance of radio, as I mentioned in this paper, has not been widely acknowledged by African governments.

Zimbabwe has made a positive start by introducing Radio Four, the educational channel. It is there that most of the problems outlined above could be overcome. I mentioned the radio listeners' club project which, with capable producers and management, could play a positive role in the dissemination of information. Radios 1,2 and 3, with their stated

objectives, could also play their role in introducing more programmes that reflect local content, something which is already being done at Radio One and Two. Radio Three, a music station, has often come under heavy criticism for disk jockeys who promote western type of music to the detriment of the local artists. This too has to change if ZBC wishes to maintain a national outlook. Although I have outlined in my thesis that problems of equipment hindered the production of these programmes, there are examples of programmes in the West through radio that would not be expensive to produce.

For example here in Canada, a short stint with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation proves that such programmes are possible. A programme which is aired on CBC Ottawa five times a week, "All In A Day" is a popular programme in the community. The programme's objectives are to inform in as simple a way as possible using very meagre resources. The language is simple and issues are drawn from human interaction and everyday events. All In A Day combines intelligent conversation with relaxed fun. The show brings its listeners the sounds and sights of the city, live reports, and lively comment.

There is a tendency at the ZBC to produce serious programmes in which people quickly lose

interest. There seems to lack a sense of humour in programme making and often the language is too stiff for the ordinary ear to discern. In contrast, the columns about Comrade Bonzo, written by Kapelwa Musonda in The Times of Zambia in the 1970s, they punctuated the pomposity of Lusaka life. It is perhaps through simple, easy-to-produce radio programmes that ZBC could have a positive impact on its national goals.

It is a general agreement by scholars that, to function in the best possible way as communicators, reporters must be properly skilled in their craft and this in Africa requires of them a wide degree of experience and expertise. They must be able to cover many different types of reporting assignments, usually with limited resources, and must rely heavily on their own initiative, imagination and resourcefulness.

In view of my comments above, I believe that:

- (a) Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation should re-evaluate its present broadcast structure and draw up new policies in line with today's developmental needs and aspirations.
- (b) A monitoring process should be evolved for feedback and general assessment of the performances by radio and television stations.

MONDAY 3 AUGUST

TV1	TV2
0 Programme Line Up	5.00 Programme Line Up
1 1992 Olympic Games	5.01 Musical Interlude
0 The Froozies (Repeat Series) (End of Series)	5.04 Storybook World (Repeat Series)
2 Kitty Cats	
7 The Adventures Of Super Mario (Repeat Series)	5.14 USSR Programme A Bag Of Apples
7 Chicken Minute Love Sick	5.34 Jimmy's Patients, doctors and nurses in an actual hospital
2 Disco Rally (End of Series)	
0 Beachcombers Hot Stuff	6.00 CNN World Report
0 Nhau/Indaba	
Programme Line Up	7.00 Nhau Indaba
6 Surf Have A Go Show	7.15 Programme Line Up
0 Women Of The World	7.16 Art Media Leather (Repeat Series)
0 Local Drama	
0 Programme Line Up	7.35 Pilgrim Pilgrimage
0 News At Eight	
5 Weather Report	
0 1992 Olympic Games	
New Series	
0 Mini Series The Heroes A tense World War II adventure drama	8.00 NBA Basketball 1988/89 LA Lakers vs Chicago Bulls
20 Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer Mike Gets Married	9.00 News At Nine
10 Epilogue/National Anthem	9.30 Outsiders Ambush
	10.25 Epilogue/National Anthem

TUESDAY 4 AUGUST

TV1	TV2
1.30 Programme Line Up	5.00 Programme Line Up
1.31 1992 Olympic Games	5.01 Musical Interlude
3.30 The Piglet Files	
4.19 Spiderman And His Amazing Friends The Education Superhero	5.12 Bobobobs (Repeat Series)
4.43 Masters Of Animation (Repeat Series)	5.38 Socratic Street (End of Series)
5.11 Voltron	6.36 People And Dogs
5.35 Wilderness Eagle	
6.00 Nhau/Indaba	7.00 Nhau/Indaba
6.15 Programme Line Up	7.15 Programme Line Up
6.16 Children's Programme Booker (Repeat Series)	7.16 Gestes & Mouvement
6.50 Tonight Show (Live)	
7.50 Programme Line Up	7.21 Crime Prevention The Case Of The Neighbourhood Watch (Repeat Series)
8.00 News At Eight	
8.35 Weather Report	7.36 Our Africa The House Of Ubu
8.40 Bulawayo Must Live	
8.45 1992 Olympic Games	8.08 Travels Journey To Cool Man (End of Series)
9.45 Agatha Christie's Poirot Starring David Suchet	9.00 News At Nine
10.33 Feature Red King, White Knight A political thriller about a post-Soviet Russia (No Persons Under 16)	9.30 Dispossessed
12.20 Epilogue/National Anthem	10.30 Epilogue/National Anthem

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