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Report

James Putzel and Joost van der Zwan

Why templates for media development do not work in crisis states : defining and understanding media development strategies in post-war and crisis states

Why Templates for Media Development do not work in Crisis States

Defining and Understanding Media Development Strategies in Post-War and Crisis States

Principal Authors
James Putzel and **Joost van der Zwan**

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

This report is based on the outcome of discussions at a workshop organised by the LSE Crisis States Research Centre, the Stanhope Centre for Communications and the Annenberg School for Communication. Our objective was to examine how media policy can be adapted to developing countries affected by crises and war.

Democratisation and privatisation were central elements of the liberalisation programmes adopted in the debt-ridden countries of the developing world during the last two decades of the 20th Century. From the media perspective, this entailed a call for the creation and strengthening of independent and privatised media organisations that were believed to form a crucial element for the advancement of democratic values and economic growth. There are, however, serious problems when relying on media freedom to build national consensus in fragile states, especially those recently emerging from periods of violent conflict and war. In situations where national cohesion and consensus is lacking, state or public involvement in the media can, as part of the equation, actually be a constructive force for the social, economic and political reconstruction and development of a country.

The first session of the workshop analysed the issue of strong-state versus weak-state, by looking at Ministries of Information. The discussion that followed was dominated by three key issues: the implications of the reinvention of Ministries of Information as licensing agencies for private media organisations; the enduring need for governments of any political stripe to be concerned with public opinion and public support; and the tension between control by government and control by religious authorities of media content in the Arabic speaking world and the implications for democracy. Participants drew on the experience of East Africa, especially Uganda and Kenya, as well as on Nigeria and Zimbabwe and on Western Asia, touching on Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, and finally on Russia and the Balkans.

The discussion in the second session focused on the various ways in which the media was transforming public authority and the practice of politics. It analysed a range of issues, including: the role of technological change in the media and its impact on democratic possibilities; the role the media can play in both destabilising politics and in promoting national integration; and the effect of Western media's behaviour, during recent military interventions, on attitudes towards prescriptions for media reform. The discussion considered the experience of a wide range of countries from Italy and Peru to the Philippines and South and Central Asia, focusing on Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Panel three aimed to explore arguments for and against regulation of the media in fragile states. Debate centred on the role of censorship and whether, even in post-war states, it can ever be justified. Most agreed that some constraints on hate speech and other abuses of media must be adopted. International laws are needed both to protect information flows from being excessively manipulated for cynical political purposes by elites and to constrain hate speech. The adherence to such laws would have to be overseen by an existing UN agency capable of preventing information abuse. Participants also considered: the role of public broadcasting in post-war reconstruction; liberal approaches to media in the context of insecurity; and problems of open media while peace remains elusive. Participants drew on the experience of Rwanda, Uganda, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Balkans.

The last panel provided an opportunity to discuss the implications of these debates for developing media strategies in fragile, crisis and post-war states. The report takes off from these discussions to suggest a 'Diagnostic Approach' that donors should consider employing when designing strategies for media intervention in these situations. This is followed by the suggestion of a set of prescriptive choices that illustrate the diversity of objectives which external intervention might encompass, given the particular characteristics of the states involved. Proposals concerning support for media training and a future research agenda are advanced.

The workshop was based on the proposition that attention to the role of the media needs to be at the heart of efforts to consolidate security, effective government and development in the wake of crises and war. In situations where the state is fragile, however, and where the political process is unstable and de-legitimated, the primary objective of donor assistance should be supporting the formation of a functioning state.[i] In such a scenario, unsophisticated liberalisation of the media can potentially undermine the state building project. The creation and sustaining of independent media is central to theories of democratisation. However, in the case of fragile states, it may also be misguided and potentially dangerous to assume that encouraging the creation of free and independent media will automatically strengthen civil society, or help establish a democratic system that will hold governments accountable. This approach underestimates the complexity of the contexts of fragile states.

Recommendations to policymakers:

1) Customise the media development strategies to context. Undertake a detailed diagnostic analysis of the complex political, economic and social background of the country, as well as of the nature of conflict, and the structures of government and citizens' participation before and after a war, or period of violent conflict;

2) Recognise that the development of an open and free media environment, like other liberal projects, requires the presence of a strong state which includes, among other features, a well functioning legal and judicial environment that is able to apply checks and balances;

3) Where appropriate, allow and encourage judicious state regulation of the media during the initial phases of state building in order to minimise the potential for divisive violent conflict and maximise the potential for building national cohesion;

4) Where there exist credible organisations on the ground, donors should judiciously support media activities designed to provide balanced information in zones of violent conflict, but obviously this should be done with extreme care in situations of acute tension;

5) Encourage national and local media initiatives not simply as a check on the state, but rather with the aim of contributing to the establishment of effective state organisations where they have collapsed;

6) Consider supporting the establishment of a national broadcasting corporation with a national reach and detached from vested interests, where this can be governed by an independent board according to principles of journalistic integrity and public service provision. Such support needs to be long-term since, in fragile states and particularly post-war environments, it may be decades before such organisations can realistically be locally funded;

7) Support media training programmes among journalists and members of political parties, that provide education about the ways media can be used in the political arena and can consolidate a credible political system, as well as providing training skills for journalists to analyse political, economic and social trends. Programmes that promote greater reflection on the part of media practitioners themselves should be encouraged;

'In situations where the state is fragile and the political process is unstable and de-legitimated, the primary objective of donor assistance should be supporting the formation of a functioning state.'

8) Support the establishment of professional associations of journalists that are committed to an ethos of journalistic integrity and investigative journalism, which can eventually serve as the conscience within media sectors based on public and private ownership;

9) Support research that examines the role of media in both state unravelling and state reconstruction, as well as the specific historical evolution of media in fragile states including particular experiences of violent conflict and war, and encourage the development of regional networks of local media researchers;

10) Support the evolution of domestic and international laws that protect information flows and constrain hate speech; implementation would need to be overseen by a neutral organisation, such as a regional grouping (like the OSCE) or an existing UN agency, to ensure against abuse or manipulation;

11) Support dialogue (through conferences and workshops) among international and local actors that examines the complex ways media is interconnected to broader development and reconstruction efforts;

12) Support efforts within the UN to establish systemic crisis intervention approaches, fully authorised and capable of acting expeditiously and mindful of the appropriate roles of the state and media in post-war environments.

Two background papers are included as appendices to the report, along with suggestions for further reading.

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Text Boxes

Definitions of Fragile, Crisis and Failed States used by the Crisis States Research Centre

Fragile State – A 'fragile state' is a state significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its sub-systems. It is a state that is particularly vulnerable to internal and external shocks and domestic and international conflicts. In a fragile state, institutional arrangements embody and perhaps preserve the conditions of crisis: in economic terms, this could be institutions (importantly, property rights) that reinforce stagnation or low growth rates, or embody extreme inequality (in wealth, in access to land, in access to the means to make a living); in social terms institutions may embody extreme inequality or lack of access altogether to health or education; in political terms, institutions may entrench exclusionary coalitions in power (in ethnic, religious, or perhaps regional terms), or extreme factionalism or significantly fragmented security organisations. Drawing on insights related to 'institutional multiplicity' – ubiquitous in our research so far: In fragile states, statutory institutional arrangements are vulnerable to challenges by rival institutional systems be they derived from traditional authorities, devised by communities under conditions of stress that see little of the state (in terms of security, development or welfare), or be they derived from warlords, or other non-state power brokers. The opposite of a 'fragile state' is a 'stable state' – one where dominant or statutory institutional arrangements appear able to withstand internal and external shocks and contestation remains within the boundaries of reigning institutional arrangements.

Crisis State – A 'crisis state' is a state under acute stress, where reigning institutions face serious contestation and are potentially unable to manage conflict and shocks. There is a danger of state collapse. This is not an absolute condition, but a condition at a given point of time, so a state can reach a 'crisis condition' and recover from it, or can remain in crisis over relatively long periods of time, or a crisis state can unravel and collapse. Such a process could lead, as we have always argued, to the formation of new states, to war and chaos, or to the consolidation of the 'ancien régime'. Specific 'crises' within the subsystems of the state can also exist – an economic crisis, a public health crisis like HIV/AIDS, a public order crisis, a constitutional crisis, for instance – with each on its own not amounting to a generalised condition of a crisis state although a subsystem crisis can be sufficiently severe and/or protracted that it gives rise to the generalised condition of a crisis state. The opposite of a crisis state is a 'resilient state', where institutions are generally able to cope with conflict, to manage sub-state crises, to respond to contestation, wherever the state sits between fragility and stability.

Failed State – We define a 'failed state' as a condition of 'state collapse' – eg a state that can no longer perform its basic security, and development functions and that has no effective control over its territory and borders. This term is used in very contradictory ways in the policy community (for instance, there is a tendency to label a 'poorly performing' state as 'failed' – a tendency we reject). The opposite of a 'failed state' is an 'enduring state' and the absolute dividing line between these two conditions is difficult to ascertain at the margins. Even in a failed state, some elements of the state, such as local state organisations, might continue to exist.

Crisis States Research Centre Workshop, March 2006.

Part I – Exploring the Debate

The role of media and communications in development and in fragile states needs to be understood against changes in thinking since the 1980s. The shift in development thinking in the 1980s was heavily influenced by neo-liberal ideologies that regarded the advance of markets as the vital driver for political, economic and social change. Rolling back the influence of the state and pushing the privatisation of state services and state-owned enterprises were high on the international development agenda. For the media this meant a reduction in state control over media functions and the belief that the growth of private media is central to developing a media structure that advances democratic values and development.[ii] Mainstream development organisations took it upon themselves to call for the dismantling of state-controlled media and encouraged privatisation. The World Bank has been a major driver of change in this respect and has argued that there exists a positive correlation between the existence of a liberal media and income growth in developing countries.[iii] In essence, the argument put forward by the Bank suggests that a 'free press' leads to economic development by serving as a check on corruption. The causal relationships here are tenuous in many respects,[iv] particularly in fragile states, where laws governing both corruption and independent media are poor, non-existent or weakly enforced. Generalised policy decisions based on such findings may be inappropriate, especially in fragile states.

The Role of the Media in Fragile States

The neo-liberal ideologies, which came to dominate development discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, also had an impact on the debate about the role of the media in developing countries. Democratisation and privatisation were central elements of the liberalisation programmes adopted in the debt-ridden countries of the developing world during this period. From the media perspective, this entailed a call for the creation and strengthening of independent and privatised media organisations that were believed to form a crucial element for the advancement of democratic values and economic growth. State control over the media became one of the many faux-pas in the eyes of the donor community.

This belief in a correlation between a free and competitive media and economic growth continues to hold sway in the 21st Century. Major development actors such as the World Bank, and some bilateral donors like the United States, continue to recommend the privatisation of state-owned media in transition countries, including 'post-war' states. There are, however, serious problems when relying on media freedom to build national consensus in fragile states, especially those recently emerging from periods of violent conflict and war. It was this issue that formed the basis of debate at the Media and Crisis States Workshop held in London in 2005. At the workshop there were strong views expressed over the issues of media freedom and regulation, censorship and licence, as participants considered whether media freedom always serves the cause of peace, reconstruction and development, or whether it is justified to place limits on media freedom to achieve these objectives. This report aims to present both sides of this debate and to expand, beyond the bounds of the Workshop, to offer a series of recommendations to policymakers concerning improvements they can make in their media development policies in fragile, crisis and post-war states.

Context Counts: Why mainstream media development templates do not work in fragile or 'post-war' states.

In the West there are institutionalised mechanisms that can regulate and restrain the media where necessary, but these mechanisms rarely exist or function properly in fragile states. In post-war states, which may have experienced a significant breakdown of organisations within the public authority, the capacity to reconstruct is often completely lacking. The mainstream media development templates emerged out of the political and economic transitions of the former states of the Soviet Union since the early 1990s. There, Western donor governments and multilateral institutions were keen to speed up the transition from centralised, state-led economic and political organisations to market capitalism and democratisation. In some cases this entailed privatisation and liberalisation of almost all sectors, including the media, with an aim to create free and open societies.

Box 1: Do Privately Owned Media Contribute to Democratic Development in Crisis and Post-War States?

In the 1980s, it became a standard prescription in post-war states that the proliferation of privately-owned media would contribute to the construction of more democratic and accountable states. The US promoted a mix of private broadcasters with a small role for public service broadcasters as a formula in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq. This approach is based on the experience of established liberal democracies in the developed world, where privately-owned newspapers and television and radio stations and networks can act as a check on government. However, privately owned media organisations, particularly when there is a trend in the concentration of ownership in the sector, may contribute little to democratic deepening as they advance the interests of their owners and can come to manipulate the news for private benefit.

Two conditions are necessary to shore up the role that private media can play in fostering democracy. The first is a state strong enough to enforce laws against abusive practices by the private media (hate speech and libel). The second is a civil society developed enough to allow for the emergence of professional associations of journalists and publishers based on *an ethos of journalistic integrity*. Historically, institutions governing standards of journalism have emerged in relatively developed states in the expanded space of civil society, where publishers and journalists come together to establish professional journalistic standards.

The constricted space of civil society in many fragile and post-war states means that there are few if any barriers to the abuse of private media power. There are examples in the developing world of courageous journalists fighting to establish principles of press freedom and objective reporting and carrying these standards into the privately owned media. In the Philippines, the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) plays such a role. Relying on sources of charitable donations from domestic and international donors CIJ has campaigned to root out corruption in government and the private sector and conduct hard-hitting investigative journalism. Support for independent organisations of this type should accompany any policy intervention aimed at expanding the role of the private sector in media. In doing so, however, external actors need to have first-hand knowledge of which organisations are seen as credible locally and not merely established to attract international funds.

The consequences were not always what would be expected, and today it is important to evaluate where the efforts were too rash or hasty and where they were appropriate to achieving stated objectives. When we move to consideration of fragile states and those that are emerging from war, promoting media regulation and press freedom should be understood as part and parcel of building or strengthening the capacities of the state to govern. In situations where national cohesion and consensus is lacking, state or public involvement in the media can, as part of the equation, actually be a constructive force for the social, economic and political reconstruction and development of a country. Given the financial realities of operating an 'independent' media outlet, it is often only the government media that can be relied upon to convey important news in a timely manner – particularly on development and social issues.

International donors have on several occasions funded the communication strategies of opposition movements in an effort to ensure that varied perspectives were made available to the population. The external interventions are based on the premise that a multiplicity of viewpoints and voices will promote peace, understanding and liberal democracy. At times, political concerns and beliefs of external (Western) actors take priority over the realities that are present on the ground. When supporting opposition movements or enforcing media freedom occurs without an understanding of the existing complexities, development actors need to be aware that they can do more harm than good.

'The neo-liberal ideologies, which came to dominate development discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, also had an impact on the debate about the role of the media in developing countries.'

part II

Part II – Workshop Summary

Objectives

This report is based on the outcome of discussions at the workshop and seeks to clarify why uniform templates for media development do not work in crisis states. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To take a critical look at the dominant approach towards media development and at ways in which the current media discourse constrains alternative approaches to media development in post-war situations;

- To achieve a greater understanding of the instances in which the 'enabling environment' is not entirely conducive to a free and independent media or when the elements that can improve that environment are not easily at hand;

- To achieve a better understanding of the transforming functions of the state in media development. Rather than focusing on the state as an antagonist of 'free' media, the workshop explored the potential of state involvement as an essential or, at least in the interim, a possibly constructive actor;

- To determine whether media freedoms should be an essential part of state building, or whether state building necessitates the restriction of dissent;

- While there has been substantial research on the role of hate speech in igniting violence, a more nuanced approach to the media of destabilisation is required, particularly with respect to the role of new technology;

- To examine unexplored influences in the space of media reconstruction and state stability including informal media. The workshop aimed to address new trends in the role of the state in information management.

Introduction

The decade of the 1990s was one where media development and media assistance strategies gained increased prominence. It was a decade of focus on those countries in the post-Soviet sphere that were undergoing dramatic transitions from authoritarian to more democratic societies. Western assistance in these contexts was primarily aimed at the liberalisation of markets as well as democratisation and the creation of open societies. However, after the break-up of Yugoslavia, media assistance took a new turn towards the reinvention of identities and construction (or reconstruction) of the state itself. In light of the political and economic instability that marked a number of developing countries in the 1990s, a new concern emerged focusing on 'failing states' or 'crisis states'.

The LSE Crisis States Research Centre, the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research and the Annenberg School for Communication decided to examine the consequences of this shift in the context of international media policy concerns. Not surprisingly, we conclude that these different demands for intervention require a differentiated set of responses. A crucial problem with current media assistance, media interventions and the design of media policies is that they are almost always in furtherance of other goals and other major policy objectives. It is important to understand these primary objectives and the means for achieving them, when designing the architecture of information and communication approaches. It is also necessary to recognise that the kinds of strategies that may be beneficial in some sectors, such as trade policy, may be counterproductive in others. In particular, a liberalised media requires certain constraints, ideally located in an independent and functional judiciary.

Format of the Workshop

The workshop brought together a variety of scholars, policy makers and journalists who had not worked together before. The format of the workshop was an informal roundtable with designated participants giving ten-minute presentations. Interventions throughout the sessions were welcome. The format was intended to allow for discussion and debate rather than more formal presentations. Rather than holding a conference based merely on positive stories about the media's role in development, the organisers sought to explore the impact and motivations of assistance initiatives, as well as the potentially destabilising effect of the media. Emphasis was placed on the lines of inquiry that future research should take, the possible elaboration of theoretical ideas and fresh perspectives on the relationship between the media and democratisation, as well as state reconstruction.

Panel I – The State Shaping the Media

Dr Tim Allen (Chair), Professor Monroe Price, Charles Obbo, William Allen, Dr Saad Al Ajmi, Professor Andrei Richter

The first session analysed the issue of strong-state versus weak-state, by looking at Ministries of Information The first talk, entitled **'The State and the Shaping of the Media'**, argued that Ministries of Information engage a variety of techniques to influence the press, sometimes in terms of hindering or blighting its freedom to operate, sometimes as a means of encouraging it. These ministries aim to defend states from internal and external influences in order to discourage secessionist tendencies. Variations in ministries of information are most often seen in the differences between authoritarian and accountable governments, where, in the former case, the ministry of information is 'part of an autocratic governing scheme that places more interest on maintenance,' while in the latter case 'the ministry is in some way accountable, either in its connections to a democratic government or through a feedback circuit with the people.'

The discussion that followed was dominated by three key issues: the implications of the reinvention of ministries of information as licensing agencies for private media organisations; the enduring need for governments of any political stripe to be concerned with public opinion and public support; and the tension between control by government and control by religious authorities of media content in the Arabic speaking world and the implications for democracy. Participants drew on the experience of East Africa, especially Uganda and Kenya, as well as on Nigeria and Zimbabwe and on Western Asia, touching on Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, and finally on Russia and the Balkans.

Box 2: Ministries of Information

In the developing world, Ministries of Information were often set up to promote nation-building and development and to enhance the flow of information about government activities and policies to the general public. However, in many cases, these government agencies became tools of politicians and served their particular interests instead of those of the state.

Advantages:

- Can unite the population;
- Can supply the population with important information (news, development initiatives, public health and education programmes);
- Can provide information other media outlets may not be financially able to (including supporting a network of journalists in remote regional areas that independent media may not be able to afford).

Disadvantages:

- Potential for abuse by politicians and elites;
- Often unchecked by judiciary or civil society representatives;
- Used for propaganda purposes instead of information purposes (ie agenda to influence rather than inform).

'Far from eliminating the influence of state leaders, the power to grant licences, commonly involving lucrative income streams, has often given heads of state more discretionary and informal control over media outlets.'

In many countries, powers that once rested in Ministries of Information have been devolved to a range of other government ministries. In every case the pattern of this devolution is different and requires a careful analysis to understand where power rests in relation to the media and the circulation of information. Ubiquitous are the new sites of public authority involved in the granting of licences to private media organisations. Far from eliminating the influence of state leaders, the power to grant licences, commonly involving lucrative income streams, has often given heads of state more discretionary and informal control over media outlets. Supporters and clients of a regime receive access to wealth-generating media and telecommunications operations and in turn do the bidding of political authorities. One speaker called this the 'commercialisation of censorship.'

This pattern was as prevalent in East Africa as in Russia. In the latter, the cancellation of federal subsidies to media organisations led to the closure of many newspapers and broadcast operations. At the same time, the type of media that remains has had difficulty winning hearts and minds; one survey showed that only 7 per cent of the Russian population trust the media, while 34 per cent trust the Government and 65 per cent trust the President.

In the Arabic speaking world, one speaker suggested, there are struggles between both the new and old generations and between 'Religionists' and 'Civilists', with the latter committed to liberal ideas about information. The confrontation between religionists and civilists permeates government and especially agencies with power over information circulation. Regardless of the formal status of Ministries of Information, regimes tend to control all media. Developing 'good governance' in this region is about establishing media independence. What is needed in the region is 'actually changing the mentality and giving freedom to the people'. Religious authorities oppose Ministries of Information and only want information that is sanctioned by religious leaders. However, it is not possible to stop the flow of information – technology, it was argued, is on the side of the civilists.

Box 3: Radio in Tanzania

Following an army mutiny in 1964, the government of Tanzania assumed control over the country's radio broadcasting facilities, in order to construct a national public space that addressed men and woman, old and young, and the urban and the rural. One of President Nyerere's government's first concerns was to ensure the continuation of widespread support for the government in the turbulent transition period from colonial rule to independence in order to build a sense of national identity. This was especially important after Nyerere's decision to create a single-party Republic dedicated to overcoming poverty, illiteracy and disease through economic development along socialist lines. According to the government, radio broadcasts needed to portray an image of national unity in order to amalgamate the different identities and ethnicities into one Tanzanian identity. The government regarded the radio as a unique medium that could assist in promoting national inclusion, an ideological revolution as well as sustained socio-economic development. Radio services were extended into rural areas and efforts were made to increase the spread of radio receivers throughout the country. While the Tanzanian government's economic policies largely failed to lift the population out of poverty and create sustainable economic development, its drive for national consciousness and unity was very successful and managed to ensure that the crises, wars and divisive politics that plagued neighbouring countries were prevented from occurring in Tanzania.

Conclusions from the session:

• Old patterns of behaviour in the handling of information tend to endure despite regime change and cannot be expected to be transformed simply by a change in formal rules;

• It is necessary to analyse where the powers that once rested with ministries of information are now located – within both state and private sectors – as a basis for prescribing programmes of reform;

• A new vocabulary is needed to articulate and explain, both descriptively and normatively, the role of state organisations consistent with the development of free and independent media;

• In crisis and post-war states, there is a very strong argument for the state playing a central role in regulating the media. Indeed, the question is how that role can be adapted to become a positive force in overcoming constraints in nation building.

The reason why Ministries of Information exist in the first place is that governments have always understood that power depends on public opinion. Even in the UK there are more than 1,000 government media officers and many government organisations constantly monitor public opinion. It is necessary to examine the relationship of demand-side and supply-side in media. The supply-side is dominated by the state and reconstructing political authority, which includes the role of the media in forming national identity. It is a vehicle to move beyond conflict and create a sense of community- in a sense peace building. This includes regulatory assistance and public service – a state that is delivering services needs good information communication. Legitimacy is central to the supply-side. At the same time though, the demand-side is also strong and the question that therefore needs to be asked is how can one create a functioning state that is responsive to the needs of its citizens? There must be a good information flow. A proper Ministry of Information needs to take care of the supply-side but must also be responsible: the media can also help to promote competent citizenship and to be successful must also have legitimacy and pluralism.

'New forms of media allow individuals to appeal to society over the heads of traditional intermediaries, often undermining long established political parties or pre-empting the formation of political parties where none exist.'

Box 4: The South African Broadcasting Corporation

Under apartheid, South Africa's media industry reflected the concentration of power and ownership in the hands of the white minority government. Radio and television broadcasts were aimed at specific races or ethnic groups, and at no point during apartheid did the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) have national coverage for its television and radio broadcasts. Historically, SABC's broadcasting under apartheid served to reinforce the notion of distinct races and populations. The SABC and other media outlets were strictly regulated and controlled by representatives of the National Party. Emergency regulations were used to imprison journalists and editors who reported on issues relating to 'state security', which included banned political parties and demonstrations. This all changed with the political reforms that were carried through before the 1994 elections, which radically altered the communications media in the country, brought in a democratically elected board and greatly reduced the government's direct control over the SABC. This change brought in a new era for the SABC, marked by independence, autonomy and impartiality. Despite the end of apartheid and the liberalisation of the media in South Africa, the SABC has remained state-owned. In the last decade it has on several occasions attracted criticism for being a mouthpiece of the current ANC government and failing to take a critical stance against the latter.

Panel II – Media Challenging the State: Anti-politics and Agents of Destabilisation

Professor Monroe Price (Chair), Dr James Putzel,
Dr Francisco Gutierrez, Hameed Haroon,
Professor Brian McNair, Naomi Sakr, Philip Taylor

The discussion in this panel centred on the various ways in which the media can transform public authority and the practice of politics. It considered: the role of technological change in the media and its impact on democratic possibilities; the role the media can play in both destabilising politics and in promoting national integration; and the effect of the Western media's behaviour in recent military interventions on attitudes towards prescriptions for media reform. The discussion considered the experience of a wide range of countries from Italy and Peru to the Philippines and South and Central Asia, focusing on Pakistan and Afghanistan. The session began with the presentation of a paper on **'Anti-Politics and the Role of the Media'** (see Annex 1), which argued that technological changes in the media have profoundly changed politics in both developed and developing countries. New forms of media allow individuals to appeal to society over the heads of traditional intermediaries, often undermining long established political parties or pre-empting the formation of political parties where none exist. These developments are hardly taken into account by domestic and international actors in efforts to consolidate representative and democratic political systems in post-war states. The question that needs to be answered here is whether this trend will encourage new means for the exercise of power by civil society or, conversely, will promote semi-democratic, semi-authoritarian executive powers?

The media is seen in two ways, either as a protector of liberty and freedom, and therefore at risk of persecution by the state, or as a political actor that destroys political parties with noxious consequences, as seen in Italy, Peru, Venezuela and the United States. In what is often thought of as the 'golden era' of politics 'the newspaper was the 'scaffold' of party organizations,' but technological changes have seen the role of the media change through the ages of radio and TV, when utilising the media has become much more expensive for politicians. The effects of these changes have been multiple, beginning with a decline in the power of political parties. First, they 'have increasingly been forced to appeal to a more general 'public interest' and this has placed them on the terrain of media organisations.'

Newsreader in the DRC
– courtesy of Fondation
Hirondelle

Box 5: Anti-Politics in Peru

Alberto Fujimori's victory in the 1990 Peruvian elections surprised both his friends and foes. Previously an academic and talk-show host, Fujimori founded a political party in 1989 to participate in the presidential elections the next year. Despite having no political background and an ambiguous agenda, Fujimori was able to win the elections, exemplifying the paradigm of anti-politics. His election indicated a rejection of the established political parties by sections of the Peruvian population, which viewed the political system to be dominated by the oligarchic political elite. The population did not feel that the established political parties represented their interests and felt deceived by the political leaders. Fujimori played on this sentiment by denouncing politics and the political system. Fujimori was not hampered by ideological principles and beliefs, opting instead to avoid political confrontations and appeal to the disgruntled masses without too much political rhetoric. When Fujimori subsequently dissolved Congress and suspended the Constitution in 1992, his move to increase the executive power was supported by more than 80 per cent of the population. During the presidential elections in 1995, Fujimori's anti-politics drive had resulted in only 7 per cent of votes going to the older, established political parties. He presented himself as an anti-political statesman, intent only on administration, thereby restating governance in terms of management instead of politics.

Second, there has been dissolution of strong hierarchies within political parties whereby, through the media, politicians now have the ability to jump over the heads of cadres and interest groups to appeal directly to citizens. Third, there has also been 'a trend among politicians and statesmen to imitate and behave more like media stars.' While there was a separation, and perhaps even a hostility between the media and government in the past, today media players are politicians and vice-versa. It is crucial to 'understand both the possibilities and the problems associated with these shifts.'

One participant, linking the discussion back to Session 1, emphasised that despite regime change in Pakistan and despite war and violent conflict, fundamental patterns related to media and the circulation of information have not changed. Technological change has had a great impact on creating economic opportunities for a new media elite, but much less impact on attitudes to information in society. He went on to argue that there is 'a complete lack of faith in public opinion in the western media's independence' after their performance around the recent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Attitudes towards information take a long time to change. Formal changes in government structures do not automatically bring about a change in the way both powerful and ordinary people engage with their society.

Continuing the debate on the impact of technology, one participant suggested that in Afghanistan the proliferation of radio has taken place with the 'support' of the government, or perhaps its total laissez-faire attitude. Licences were not refused to anyone wanting to establish a radio station. Unlike in other cases, there are no commercial interests of significance yet in Afghanistan. There, media is potentially playing the role of national integration and in this sense extending the authority of the Karzai government. This is the other side of technological change in the media, which is constitutive of the state.

In discussing the ways in which media may be 'destabilising politics', one speaker argued there are two standard propaganda models, namely the authoritarian and democratic models. He argued that the assumption that democracies like the UK do not conduct propaganda in peace-time is, of course, wrong, especially since the advent of terrorism means that the difference between peacetime and wartime has become blurred: in the US there is a clear perception that the nation is at war while in Europe there is not, even though armed forces from both sides of the Atlantic are engaged in conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It was argued that scholars must examine the justification for media, ie whether justification is universal or not. Media is often seen as instrumental in the Western tradition, and thus many liberal thinkers believe that the only model for good media coverage is a public service broadcaster.

Conclusions from the session:

- The role of the media, even in the most advanced countries, is not uniformly to deepen democratic practices and some evidence demonstrates a hollowing out of democracy with the expansion of mass media, propelled by technological change;

- It is necessary to analyse the nature of conflict and the structure of government and participation before and after a war or period of violent conflict, before prescribing forms of media organisation and regulation;

- Media can still play a 'nation building' role, particularly when it is not dominated by media elites and/or large private commercial interests;

- The behaviour of Western media during recent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq has weakened faith in Western models of media independence, particularly in the Islamic world.

## Panel III – The Media and the Making of the Post-War State: Rethinking Prevalent Strategies

Dr James Putzel (Chair), Professor Monroe Price, Dr Tim Allen, Bheki Khumalo, Dr Pierre Heuer and Shanthi Kalathil

One of the main objectives of the workshop was to begin the process of review of media assistance strategies in war-related or crisis state environments. A background note prepared by Monroe Price suggested that there were several historical narratives that could be drawn from. These included the 'occupation stories' (Germany and Japan), the 'transition stories' (the former Yugoslavia: Bosnia- Herzegovina and Kosovo) the 'crisis-state and conflict stories' (Liberia and Rwanda) and the 'invasion and reconstruction stories' (Afghanistan and Iraq). All of these examples were discussed by participants in this panel.

An issue of particular controversy was censorship, and there were some strong points of disagreement between participants. Those who have been working on the dilemmas of state-building tended to argue that a considerable degree of constraint over freedom of speech was usually necessary, both to contain violence and to promote a degree of social integration. In contrast, those who have worked as journalists or have been active in supporting media organisations tended to view censorship as counterproductive, even when it is well-intentioned. There was, however, agreement that some kinds of constraint are essential. These should protect information flows from being excessively manipulated for cynical political purposes by powerful government officials, and should constrain hate speech. Such protection should be instituted in laws, and where the judiciary is inadequate, it should be strengthened – although how this might be done in some circumstances raises difficult questions, notably relating to sovereignty and to accountability. One model for allowing media to operate freely within socially acceptable constraints is that of a public broadcaster, like the BBC. Participants gave various examples of this approach in practice, mostly focussing on the constraints of making it work without a well-established institutional framework.

Discussion from the table at the start of the panel focused primarily on the Iraqi experience, drawing comparisons with other narratives. The points made picked up on the debates that had occurred at a previous Crisis States conference on 'Media, the Law and Peace-building: from Bosnia and Kosovo to Iraq' (see Recommended Readings). The central question was how to construct political authorities, including

Electoral debate broadcast on Radio Okapi – courtesy of Fondation Hirondelle
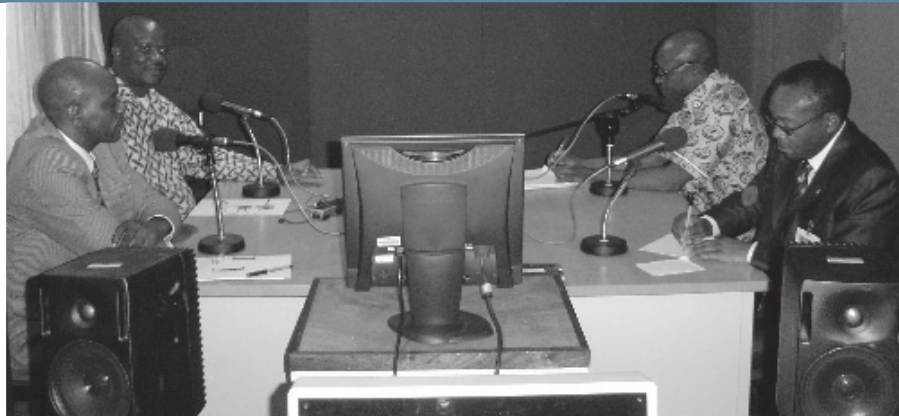
a regulatory agency and public service broadcaster. In Iraq, the British-sponsored media development team had to fight to create a public service broadcaster in a context that was not entirely appropriate or receptive and often without full support of its major Coalition partner, the USA. It was also stressed that a factor that differentiates Iraq from some of the other large-scale international interventions, for example those in Afghanistan and Kosovo, was the lack of partner NGOs. International NGOs, which often have a significant role in media assistance and media intervention, were unable to participate for security reasons. This was problematic since civil society in Iraq prior to 2003 was essentially non-existent, thus providing few local partners to work with and later, few organisations to hand over the infrastructure to or collaborate with. There was also a clear gap between the involvement of the emerging Iraqi political structure and the construction of the political authority.

Box 6: The Media in Rwanda

Rwanda is a key example of a fragile state where the government took decisive action to ensure state control over the media following the 1994 genocide during which almost one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. The role of hate media has been analysed extensively and has been found to have played a significant part in causing and aggravating the 1994 genocide. The private radio station, Radio Tele Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) was the most notorious outlet of hate media, and went as far as broadcasting the exact locations where people were hiding. RTLM was set up independently by some individuals in the Hutu dominated government to circumvent the ban imposed on harmful radio propaganda to which the Rwandan government had committed itself in the 1993 peace talks, along with rapid liberalisation of the media. Ever since the victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front in 1994, the government has maintained a tight reign on the media and the circulation of information as part of a general effort to consolidate peace and unite the divided country. Despite the criticisms of the restrictions on the media from inside and outside the country, the Rwandan government took a logical decision to impose constraints on the media in the decade after the genocide when the psychological and emotional wounds of the nation still ran so deep. While it is still too early to tell in what direction the media environment is moving, recently a number of private newspapers have emerged in Kigali. There remains an uneasy relationship between the government and the press. Some believe it is time for the government to consider easing its control of the country's media and explore the creation of an independent regulatory body to take over these duties.

From the focus on difficulties of working with a public broadcasting model, discussion then turned to the sensitive issue of censorship and other forms of constraint on the media. A paper on **Media Policy, Peace and State Reconstruction** (see Annex 2) was presented. The argument was put forward that it is important to locate media policy in a broader political context. In situations of insecurity and instability, media organisations have become heavily involved in promoting extreme or socially damaging views and these have, in some circumstances, contributed to the exacerbation of racial or ethnic conflict. No one can seriously dispute that this has happened; yet, the paper argued, media policy remains sometimes wedded to a liberal paradigm, which insists, even in the most fragile states, that a free media will hold the government to account.

The paper challenged the conventional idea about what is appropriate in fragile states suggesting that it is remarkably naïve to think that peace resolves conflict in that it ends violence. Rather the reality for peace for most people is that it involves violence, though it is institutionalised and structural. Peace requires the acceptance of certain hierarchies, something many post war governments struggle to construct. The paper also highlighted the problems associated with the proliferation of voices in situations of war and its immediate aftermath. It argued that a critical aspect of government media policy should be the ability to constrain what is said. Therefore the question is not whether there is state censorship but rather how it can be institutionalised and regulated, and how laws can be promulgated and enforced.

'In situations of insecurity and instability, media organisations have become heavily involved in promoting extreme or socially damaging views and these have, in some circumstances, contributed to the exacerbation of racial or ethnic conflict.'

Box 7: Radio Okapi's Role in the Transition of the DRC

The example of Radio Okapi shows how international organisations can contribute to the stability and development of countries experiencing violent conflict. Radio Okapi's goal was to make a lasting contribution to media development and peace through the dissemination of reliable and credible information from an independent radio station. Radio Okapi, financed by the UN and several bilateral donors through Fondation Hirondelle, has been able to provide the Congolese people with trustworthy information during times of heightened instability and violent conflict. It is the only media outlet in the DRC that covers the whole country. The Congolese Ministry of Information has even recognised its importance and has said it does not want to take control of the radio because it does not have the capacity either to keep it going or to guarantee its independence.

In the course of the vigorous debate that followed these presentations, numerous illustrations were given of the various points that had been made. It was noted, for example, that the situation in Iraq can no longer be adequately monitored. There are more than 180 daily newspapers, and countless radio stations. Whilst it is recognised that these outlets might not always be promoting peaceful coexistence among Iraqis, there is an expectation that most of them will fade away over time. In the end, it will be the quality of what is on offer that will make the difference. Those media organisations that cannot compete will eventually disappear. However, this naively assumes that Iraq will become more stable over time. As one locally experienced participant put it, 'you cannot just talk theoretically about what should happen and say we should not worry about regulation. The country is on the verge of chaos and, God forbid, civil war.'

Another participant commented on the way in which a human rights organisations or NGO discourse acts as a way of 'hiding the incompetence of policies pursued by organisations ostensibly with good aims but with bad results, because the results cannot be challenged.' Others agreed that controls were essential, and regardless of arguments about censorship, it is hard to dispute that hate

radio stations in Bosnia or Rwanda should have been forcibly closed down. On the other hand, there were participants who were very sceptical of arguments about controls. In practice, it was suggested, they are co-opted by powerful groups for their own purposes or they simply don't work. As one participant who had been on the receiving end of censorship controls observed, 'censorship is countered and counter-manipulated, and fails to have the kinds of results it set out to achieve.' Some participants were also keen to defend the roles of human rights activists and NGO workers, and to emphasise that if courageous journalists are unable to tell the truth, then the conjunction between lies and power is never threatened.

Another line of discussion concentrated on the public broadcaster model, noting that it does offer an alternative to state regulated controls on press freedoms, if it can be adequately regulated. One participant noted that where the legal system is inadequate, it might be done internationally. An example of this was given from the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, this approach raised concerns about state sovereignty. It was felt that the only organisation that might at some point be able to take on such a role on a permanent basis is the United Nations. There was a consensus that such a development would be positive, but was currently unlikely.

Local journalists reporting in Goma – courtesy of Fondation Hirondelle

Box 8: The Media in Uganda

In 1986 Museveni took control of the country after two decades of instability in which more than half a million people were killed in state-sponsored violence during the regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin. Following his victory, Museveni maintained the repressive colonial and post-colonial media laws that limited the freedom of the media at the judicial level. His government claimed that the restrictions were necessary in order to minimise the potential for divisive violent conflict and allow the active promotion of unification through the state-controlled media. With the return of relative stability to the country, the media was allowed considerably more freedom of expression by the government. In the 1990s, the legislative restrictions on the media were relaxed and regulatory power was transferred to an independent Media Council. By allowing a significant degree of media freedom whilst at the same time suppressing political freedom in a one-party state, Museveni gave the opportunity for public discontent to be expressed in the media instead, in an effort to reduce resentment and tension. Because people could not organise in political parties, the media was the primary channel through which people could express their political opinions. However, at times when the government feels threatened by the information coming out of the media, it resorts to restrictive measures aimed at controlling the media indirectly through court injunctions, occasional arrests of journalists and the temporary suspension of media outlets.

Conclusions from the session:

- There is an ongoing debate between those that argue that state censorship and media restraints are essential in fragile and post-war states and those that argue that censorship is counterproductive;

- It is necessary for donors to rethink their media strategies and interventions in fragile and post-war states, as too often these are based on misinformed templates and mediocre analysis of the states in question;

- Radio Okapi demonstrates that the construction of a functioning media in a non-functioning state like the DRC can be an important element in helping to bring a functioning state into being;

- International laws are needed, both to protect information flows from being excessively manipulated for cynical political purposes by elites and to constrain hate speech.

Panel IV – Implications for Post-War Media Development Strategies

Dr Francisco Gutierrez (Chair), Charles Firestone, Stefaan Verhulst, Dr James Putzel and Professor Monroe Price

The workshop objective was to re-examine current thinking and strategies for media assistance in fragile states and states experiencing, or emerging out of, periods of violent conflict and war. We aimed to outline the potential implications for those funding and crafting a response to the challenges of developing sustainable and responsible media structures in these crisis areas.

Here we sum up thinking about the existing template for media assistance, discuss the need for novel approaches in fragile states, outline a diagnostic and prescriptive framework that donors might adopt and describe the kind of training programmes and research that could be undertaken in the future as part of a new thrust in media assistance.

The Default Template of Media Assistance

Do the particular contexts described demand a shift in the way media assistance donors – especially entities such as DFID and USAID – think about the deployment and allocation of assets during the next five years? And consequently, if there is a need for change, what shape should it take and how should it be implemented?

Box 9: Why Post-War States are Often Different from Transitional States

One of the fundamental mistakes that has been made by the donor agencies promoting media development strategies since the end of the Cold War has been the belief that post-war states could be approached in the same ways as transition states. The key difference between these two types of states is that transition states were generally moving from autocracy to democracy where a functioning state apparatus was already in place. On the other hand, states emerging out of war or periods of breakdown often lacked the fundamental foundations and organisational systems required for a state to function. Therefore development programmes, including those for the media, cannot be implemented in the same way.

The conclusion is that a shift in thinking is necessary. At a minimum, a complementary strand of strategies and tactical interventions is required to address the unique characteristics of crisis states vis-à-vis transitional political systems (see Box 9).

The default template for media assistance assumes the existence of a functioning state and government. What happens to this strategy when the state, as the determining actor, is absent? In these cases the principal development focus becomes assuring that there is a state capable of performing basic functions. Media can be both part of the process of bringing a functioning state into being and, as well, a checking power against potential state abuses, but both aspects must be kept in mind. Moreover, it is essential to understand when and how media can contribute to advancing security and stability, what activities must be supported by outside funding, and at what point in time.

Two problems in the way that some donors see the role of media need to be addressed. First, there is an increasing tendency among some donors to rely on rankings of countries as having 'free' or 'unfree' media systems, which is often counter-productive if not inaccurate. A more nuanced system should be developed that takes into account the complex political and economic systems, which many states emerging from war face, and the progress they have been making or not making in light of these constraints.

Second, international organisations need to be realistic about the role media can play in post-war situations. While there is an agenda being driven by both media practitioners and the media development industry to use the media as a tool to achieve Millennium Development Goals, the media should be understood, discussed and appreciated in its own right. Serious conferences and dialogues among international and local actors that look at the way the media is interconnected to broader development and reconstruction efforts should be encouraged.

Novel Media Strategies for Fragile States

In the complex contexts of fragile states where the very political process is destabilised and de-legitimised, novel strategies must be undertaken. In these circumstances, the international donor community has to focus on the over-riding objectives of helping to achieve stability and security, whilst on a secondary level examining how the media can support the realisation of these objectives. Put differently, a functioning state must be formed and fostered before the idealised role of the independent and competing media can be fostered.

Diagnosing Crisis and Prescribing Assistance

This analysis, then, suggests two things: the diagnostic and the prescriptive.

The discussions in the workshop outlined the need for a new diagnostic, one that provides a far more complex understanding of the role of the media in the evolving effort to shape an effective and legitimate state with a chance of a democratic future. It is on the basis of such a diagnostic analysis that it becomes possible to devise an appropriate media policy.

'The discussions in the workshop outlined the need for a new diagnostic, one that provides a far more complex understanding of the role of the media in the evolving effort to shape an effective and legitimate state with a chance of a democratic future.'

Diagnosis of Crisis

What would a diagnostic approach look like? What kinds of questions need to be answered before understanding the role that media assistance can play?

A   Assessing the Root Causes of Crisis

What arose, primarily from the LSE Crisis States scholars, was the paramount need to understand the particular dynamics of crisis:

- What were the root causes and contributing factors?

- What are the elements of the state that have survived?

- What potential is there for the rehabilitation of state organisations or for establishing new ones?

B   Mitigating Crisis

The second part of the diagnostic relates to the functions or objective part of the strategy of mitigating crisis. It is clear that development objectives can be grouped into various categories: conflict mitigation, state building, encouragement of stability, economic growth, poverty reduction and achievement of other millennium development goals.

In short, the question is what interventions and strategies will contribute to rebuilding and consolidating a functioning state (and further, allow adherence to appropriate international standards and observance of human rights principles)?

Among other factors to be considered:

1   Analyse geopolitical shifts and relationships. Crisis or failure must be seen in their regional and multilateral context. Who are the participants in determining the continued pressure to destabilize or the potential for functioning?

2   Recognise processes of de-legitimisation of established organisations, including media organisations. In the areas that are the focus of discussion here, there is a substantial underlying problem of a struggle for de-legitimisation that undermines the possibility for stability and the development of democratic systems. Governments de-legitimise the press, whilst broadcasters and media organisations, in addition to being 'critics' of government, have their own strategies of de-legitimisation.

3   Pay attention to the relationship between media development and strengthening the capacity of governments to function in fragile states.
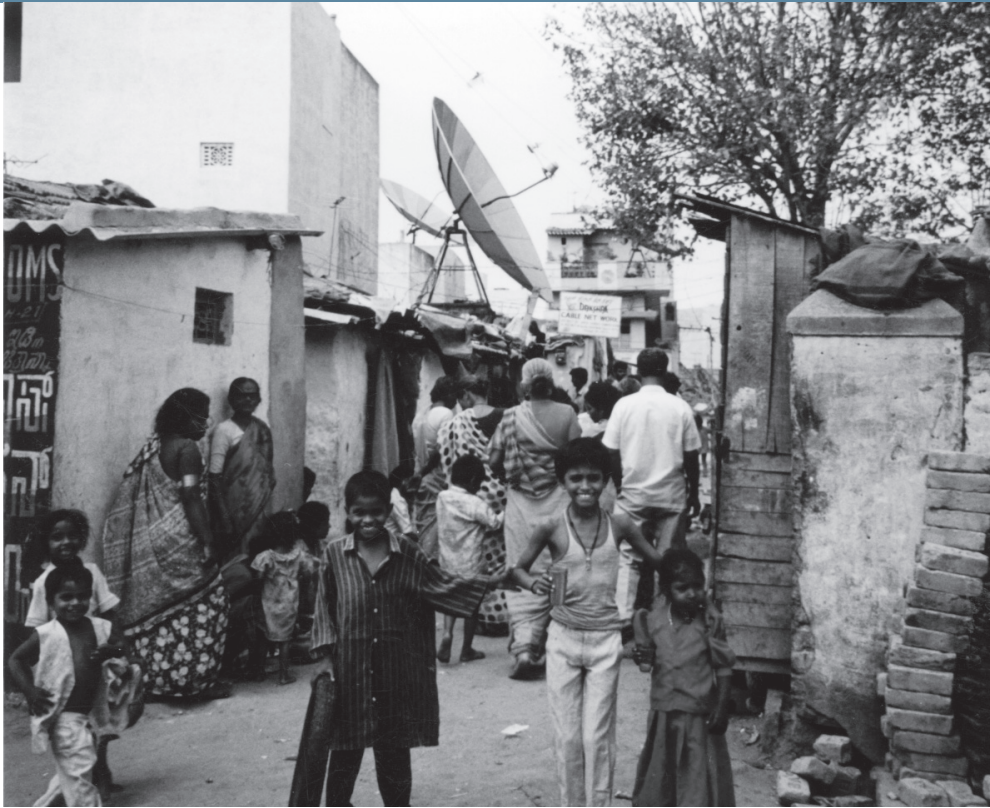
Satellite dish in
an Indian slum
– courtesy of Jo Beall

4　Map the variety of organisations and forces that could be characterised as 'media' in the sense of opinion formation, building a civil society, acting as a check on government and contributing to national identity.

5　Ask in what ways media assistance can be directed to programmes that will contribute to specific aspects of state formation: delivery of services, reduction of violence, enhancement of economic activities and opportunities, strengthened accountability, and increased legitimacy of the political process.

6　How and with what activities can media assistance encourage greater dialogue between human rights organizations, media-specific NGOs and governments concerning appropriate roles for government regulation in encouraging and developing a healthy and critical media system?

7　What are the regional dimensions of media activity that donors can promote?

Prescriptive

There are different styles of media assistance that can be outlined from an instrumental perspective. Donors will want to consider a number of different approaches to assistance given the condition of any given state:

A　Media that supports electoral processes or provides legitimacy to the political process, as well as media and civic education activities that explain political processes up to and beyond an election cycle and why they are important;

B　Media actions such as Search for Common Ground that bring dissenting or seceding groups into constructive dialogue;

C　Media actions that respond to a growing anti-politics or process of de-legitimisation. This could involve training political parties in the use of the media as well as training media actors in roles that contribute to consolidating a credible political system (eg polling; organising debates; balanced reporting);[v]

D　Media actions that restore a sense of balance among diverse ethnic and other groups in political societies;

E　Media actions such as the interventions of Fondation Hirondelle designed to provide more objective information in zones of violent conflict;

F　Creation of a strong public service broadcaster to add to notions of national identity and solidarity.

Box 10: How relevant is Public Broadcasting today?

Public broadcasting has been around for more than a century. It involves the transfer of public funds to media outlets, most commonly through state subsidies. The main characteristics of a public broadcaster are that:

• Its broadcasts are available countrywide;

• It caters for all interests and tastes;

• It is detached from vested interests and government.

Advantages of Public Broadcasting:

• Trusted source of news as it is deemed to be independent;

• Addresses a range of issues (not only those that are commercially attractive).

Disadvantages of Public Broadcasting:

• Can be expensive to fund;

• Government can still impede or manipulate its functioning.

Training Journalists as One Way Forward

There is a need to develop greater reflection on the part of media practitioners themselves, breaking from a tendency that often focuses only on the government and sees journalists as 'victims'. Greater self-reflection among the media as to how it is performing and either helping or hindering the current situation should be encouraged. Not only should donors and international organizations be careful to ask media practitioners and citizens what they need or want before intervening but local dialogues that offer a critical debate and force journalists to reflect on how they in fact may be partly contributing to an adverse state-independent media relationship or polarising political environment should be facilitated.

In an activity closely related to the workshop, The Stanhope Centre and the Crisis States Research Centre, with funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, organised a training programme for journalists from East Africa (see Box 11). Unlike many such programmes, which focus primarily on technical dimensions of the media, this one brought together academic researchers and accomplished independent minded journalists to provide a programme of lectures and discussions aimed at developing analytical skills to better understand economic, political and development issues. Such training is essential for fostering 'beat journalism'. In particularly poor crisis states it is difficult to find journalists who have an understanding of the issues they are covering, whether it be politics, economics or legal issues. Short training courses focused on narrow issues, as in the trend for encouraging reporting on human rights, HIV/AIDS and the like, often have mixed track records and sometimes appear to be little more than an organisation's extensive press briefing. They do not address the underlying fundamental problem of improving the capacity of journalists to conduct informed reporting and constructive debate. Encouraging 'beat journalism' (when journalists regularly follow a subject or topic, such as following parliament, reporting on business developments etc) or even a better understanding of the basics for general reporters helps to mediate conspiracy theories and sensational reporting.

The Crisis States-Stanhope programme contributed to advancing higher standards in journalism in the region and fostered links and mutual understanding among journalists. The Stanhope Centre is pursuing the development of a regional network of journalists in East Africa that brings together academics and independent researchers from countries in the region to share national research agendas and develop comparative and collaborative media research projects. In many instances there is a dearth of research from local researchers. These are the kinds of innovative interventions that the donor community could pursue in the future.

Box 11: East African Journalist Fellowship Programme

In January 2005, the Stanhope Centre and the Crisis States Research Centre organised a 6-week programme for 14 young East African journalists. The second part of the programme involved a follow-up in Addis Ababa in July 2005. The main aim of the fellowship programme was to build a greater understanding of economics, politics and development issues and encourage balanced and critical thinking about these topics. Another vital aspect of the programme was for the different journalists to learn from one another's experience and gain better understanding of the region's political and economic environment as well as of the media. There were several important outcomes of this unique programme. Fellows have begun reporting on events in one another's country and they have also improved their analytic abilities, which is so important for the media's role in agenda setting. The establishment of the East African Professional Journalist Association with an ethical code of conduct that the members strive to adhere to has also been an important development. Through extensive dialogue with and between the Fellows it became clear to the Stanhope and LSE researchers, not only how little understanding of one another's media environments there is between regional neighbours, but also the complex and nuanced ways in which experienced journalists think about their role in society, which is often divergent from Western media practitioners. In an effort to shed greater insight into how these individuals perceive their role and that of a media outlet, an outcome of the Fellowship programme has been a book project that is compiling the oral histories of some of Eastern Africa's most influential editors. The contributions are partially biographical but also seek to reflect on what such things as objectivity and ethics mean in crisis states.

An Agenda for Research

If international intervention strategies for media development are to be effective a great deal more research needs to be undertaken. More work is needed to understand the particular cases where the media has contributed to the unravelling of states. While books like *The Media of Conflict* by Tim Allen and Jean Seaton have addressed news that is circulated during war, there are many more issues that need to be investigated. For instance, we need to examine the role of media in dispute resolution mechanisms and more knowledge is needed about how to build on local initiatives. More understanding is required concerning the role of the media in places with a positive track record – what impact has it had on political formation, what were the successes or failures? It is important to understand these processes, in order to be able to provide clearer recommendations to the policy community when addressing media development in fragile states.

It is quite clear, yet often ignored, that media systems are in fact a reflection of particular historical contexts. There is greater need for comparative research to provide insight into why press or media systems have developed the way they have in different contexts. In the past half-century, researchers have made little headway in addressing the famous challenge posed by Siebert, Peterson and Shramm in their popular yet controversial text, *Four Theories of the Press* (1954), in which they ask, 'In the simplest terms, the question behind this book is, why is the press as it is? Why does it apparently serve different purposes and appear in widely different forms in different countries?' Any media development strategy must first take into consideration the media system that has existed in the past and the ways in which it has evolved or, in the case of many crisis states, been significantly altered by periods of violence or war. To effectively address current issues there must be greater understanding of the cultural and social context in which any intervention occurs, which requires serious research prior to taking action. The media development industry is often very nearsighted and focused on the immediate situation and tends to draw broad regional generalisations (or even global ones, lumping the entire developing world together). It is evident in the region of Eastern Africa that while many countries share some historical similarities, the media has evolved and plays very different roles in each country often with, among many other factors, the influence of religion or the political nature of previous regimes.

Research that is policy oriented and linked with the training of media practitioners is also needed. This is the type of work that the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research has pursued and can involve training on complex issues, such as globalisation, state-building and pluralism, to contribute to media practices that play a constructive role in post-war and crisis state contexts. This practical engagement of media policy is an important contributor, not only to enhancing research, but also vice versa. Research into how the elements of an enabling environment for media development can best be understood to function in complex fragile states is also needed. The media development industry needs to focus more realistically on what the media is capable of contributing at particular times in a country's history and to support those initiatives that often lie in the legal sphere and also require substantial research before engagement.

Part III – Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

The workshop was based on the proposition that attention to the role of the media needs to be at the heart of efforts to consolidate security, effective government and development in the wake of crises and war. However, in situations where the state is fragile and the political process is unstable and de-legitimated, the primary objective of donor assistance should be supporting the formation of a functioning state. In such a scenario, unsophisticated liberalisation of the media can potentially undermine the state building project. The creation and sustaining of independent media is central to theories of democratisation. However, in the case of fragile states, it may also be misguided and potentially dangerous to assume that encouraging the creation of free and independent media will automatically strengthen civil society, or help establish a democratic system that will hold governments accountable. This approach underestimates the complexity of the contexts of fragile states.

Recommendations to policymakers:

1) Customise the media development strategies to context. Undertake a detailed diagnostic analysis of the complex political, economic and social background of the country, as well as of the nature of conflict, and the structures of government and citizens' participation before and after a war, or period of violent conflict;

2) Recognise that the development of an open and free media environment, like other liberal projects, requires the presence of a strong state which includes, among other features, a well functioning legal and judicial environment that is able to apply checks and balances;

3) Where appropriate, allow and encourage judicious state regulation of the media during the initial phases of state building in order to minimise the potential for divisive violent conflict and maximise the potential for building national cohesion;

4) Where there exist credible organisations on the ground, donors should judiciously support media activities designed to provide balanced information in zones of violent conflict, but obviously this should be done with extreme care in situations of acute tension;

5) Encourage national and local media initiatives not simply as a check on the state, but rather with the aim of contributing to the establishment of effective state organisations where they have collapsed;

6) Consider supporting the establishment of a national broadcasting corporation with a national reach and detached from vested interests, where this can be governed by an independent board according to principles of journalistic integrity and public service provision. Such support needs to be long-term since, in fragile states and particularly post-war environments, it may be decades before such organisations can realistically be locally funded;

7) Support media training programmes among journalists as well as members of political parties, that provide education about the ways media can be used in the political arena, the ways media can consolidate a credible political system and that provide skills for journalists to analyse political, economic and social trends. Programmes that promote greater reflection on the part of media practitioners themselves should be encouraged;

8) Support the establishment of professional associations of journalists that are committed to an ethos of journalistic integrity and investigative journalism which can eventually serve as the conscience within media sectors based on public and private ownership;

9) Support research that examines the role of media in both state unravelling and state reconstruction, as well as the specific historical evolution of media in fragile states including particular experiences of violent conflict and war, and encourage the development of regional networks of local media researchers;

10) Support the evolution of domestic and international laws that protect information flows and constrain hate speech; implementation would need to be overseen by a neutral organisation, such as a regional grouping (like the OSCE) or an existing UN agency to ensure against abuse or manipulation;

11) Support dialogue (through conferences and workshops) among international and local actors that examine the complex ways media is interconnected to broader development and reconstruction efforts;

12) Support efforts within the UN to establish systemic crisis intervention approaches, fully authorised and capable of acting expeditiously and mindful of the appropriate roles of the state and media in post-war environments.[vi]

Endnotes

i   This is in line with OECD, Development Cooperation
    Directorate, 'Principles for Good International
    Engagement in Fragile States: Learning and Advisory
    Process on Difficult Partnerships (LAP)' 7-Apr-2005
    DCD(2005)8/REV2.

ii   Price and Krug (2000) *An Enabling Environment for
     Free and Independent Media*, Oxford University, p 7

iii World Bank (2002) *The Right to Tell: The Role of the
     Mass Media in Economic Development*, Washington,

iv See Mushtaq Khan and Jomo K S, ed, *Rents, Rent-
    Seeking and Economic Development* (Cambridge, 2000)

v   See Box 11 on Training for East African Journalists.

vi See the Brahimi Report on Post-Conflict Peacekeeping
    Reform **www.globalpolicy.org/security/peacekpg/
    reform/index.htm**

Further reading on Media and State Reconstruction:

'Media, the Law and Peacebuilding: From Bosnia and Kosovo to Iraq'

Alistair Berkley Memorial Seminar, May 2004

In May 2004, the LSE hosted the Alistair Berkley Memorial
Seminar on 'Media, the Law and Peacebuilding: From Bosnia
and Kosovo to Iraq.' This event discussed the role of media
policy in extreme situations of war, state reconstruction
and peace-making. The primary focus was on the controls
imposed on the activities of journalists and the role of
free speech in such situations. A number of country cases
were debated, including a wide-ranging discussion on
the role of the media in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel and the
Occupied Palestinian Territories as well as the dangers of
self-censorship by the media in the United States. More
information on this event and the debates can be found
on the CSRC website:**www.crisisstates.com/News/
berkley.htm**

'Media Policy, Peace and State Reconstruction'

Tim Allen and Nicole Stremlau, March 2005

This paper identifies and contests the current prevailing
liberal policy towards the media's role in 'peace-making' and
'peace-building'. It then proceeds to assess whether this has
been an effective or ineffective approach, and concludes
by suggesting ways in which the debate can be reframed
or expanded. In brief, it is argued that laissez-faire policies
towards media development in societies that are in the
process of resolving violent conflicts are unlikely to be the
best option. While recognising that proposing censorship
is problematic and controversial, the paper argues that
there have to be restrictions on material that is divisive and
inflammatory – although this inevitably raises questions of
who should decide what is unacceptable and on what basis.
It can be found at: **www.crisisstates.com/download/
dp/dp08.pdf**

Part IV – Annexes

Annex 1

Background Paper: Politics, Anti-politics and the Media*

Francisco Gutíerrez and James Putzel

Introduction

As we consider the role that media may play in processes of state collapse and reconstruction, it is important to examine its changing role in the wider arena of democratic and party politics. In this paper, we interrogate the changing role of media in the context of what we have observed as a growing trend of 'anti-politics'. We define 'anti-politics' as a trend within democratic systems across rich countries and poor countries alike that has seen 'political outsiders' (or insiders reinventing themselves as outsiders) contesting public office, employing a rhetoric that tends to denigrate the realm of politics and appealing to electorates above the heads of traditional intermediaries, particularly political parties.[1]

The practitioners of anti-politics who gain executive authority tend to attack legislative and judicial organisations within the state and strengthen executive power. In this paper we suggest that changes in the technology of information circulation have been important within this transformation of 'democratic politics', but only insofar as they interact with other social and economic changes. The new role of media in the political realm cuts in several different directions, offering some possibilities for strengthening democracy but simultaneously raising new avenues for weakening democratic processes. While this phenomenon may be much more widespread in the polities of rich developed countries, it has nevertheless affected middle-income and even poor countries, as well as countries emerging out of prolonged periods of war and violence.

How has electronic media influenced political life? We are still far away from a proper understanding of the role of technological change in politics. There have been rather strident denunciations against the growing de-structuration of political discourse caused by television and the internet (see for example Sartori's *Homo Videns*, 1998), but on the other hand it is argued that both are powerful tools for democratisation and participation. It may be the case, however, that all this debate is misguided, as it is focused on the mechanical effects of electronic media on politics. The media has a more oblique, but perhaps more powerful, impact through the way it moulds the processes of political organisation and socialisation. The study of such impacts is clearly caught by the tension between continuity and change. What is new, what is old? Is there something new after all? We claim there is, and that the impacts are felt differentially throughout the world (there is an association between relative strength of state and party systems and those impacts, controlling for level of development and with the caveat that this relation is not monotonical).[2]

We first look at the impact of changes in the media on the structure of politics and then on the character of political personnel. The next section looks at the variant role of the media suggesting that the conditions required for media to play a role in strengthening democratic practices are seldom present in developing countries and where conditions are present there are inbuilt tendencies for the media to set itself up as adversary to government. We then look at how it is actually the battle over what constitutes legitimacy that determines the relative power of media and government or political organisations, rather than technological change per se and this takes on particular characteristics in fragile and post-war states. Finally, we conclude with a brief reflection on what this means in terms of trends projected into the future.

Impact of changes in media on the structure of politics

For those prone to complain about the increasing 'mediatic' character of politics, it is important to remember that politics was always deeply connected to media. For the party builders of the golden era, the newspaper was the 'scaffold' of the party organisation (Lenin, 1902); Duverger (1954), and certainly Gramsci (1959), spoke of the newspaper as a 'state within a state'.[3] Why was the newspaper so powerful? Basically, two factors came into play. First, newspapers were associated with physical distribution webs and, thus, with organisation building. The newspaper had to be written, printed, and (mainly) distributed by party members; thus, it was based on the formula 'ideology plus voluntary work'. That is why the daily played such a fundamental role (in this sense Lenin was only the most systematic of party organisers world-wide). Selling the daily linked 'organically' the party members with its constituency, and cemented organisational structures. Second, it conferred prestige to ideologues (Michels, 1962), ie, people who produced or propagated articulated arguments in explicit debates with others. In this sense, the newspaper is quite different from the electronic media.

The radio represented a first wave of attack against the 'newspaper model' of making politics. It replaced the formula of ideology plus organisation by the formula of identity plus emotion. Television is more radical yet. As has been analysed widely, the typical techniques of politicians to arouse intense emotions simply do not work for the TV. Television is an eminently anti-epic medium (shall we have to go back to McLuhan, 1987, and his hot and cold media?). It is not generally fit for long and passionate political discourse (as the radio was), but geared more towards sound bites.[4] Additionally, as happened with the radio, party leaders can 'jump' over the heads of the party machinery through the media. At the same time, the cost of television production is much higher than that of radio: thus, the sequence is voluntary work plus organisation (newspaper party) – identity plus emotional mobilisation (the radio party) – casting plus capital (the television party). It must be remembered that none of these models is intrinsically superior to the others; each one poses different challenges to the polities in which they exist.

The rise of a new type of political personnel

The formula of capital plus casting transforms deeply the composition of political personnel. There are four important ways that these technological changes in media affect the type of personnel engaged in politics:

- Politics becomes increasingly dominated by people with high visibility through television assets – as individuals – that enable them to participate in an electoral race without the support of any kind of organisation;

- These individuals are remembered by even the most a-political sectors of the population (perhaps our strongest memory is visual memory);

- They tend to speak in the name of 'all the nation'(see next section); and

- They have easy access to capital providers.

This has triggered all around the world (not only in the developing world) what Putzel (1995) called 'cinematic politics'. Cinematic politics has many variants. In some countries (Philippines, USA) actors can step down to the political arena and win the big prizes[5]. In other countries, actors and television stars invade the congress and municipal councils in the name of ephemeral tags (Ecuador, Perú). In Italy, Berlusconi, a media tycoon, created a virtual (Pasquino, 2004) association (at least at the start, after which it had a complex evolution), Forza Italia, inspired by sports-like nationalism. Typically, Forza Italia was a party 'with voters but without structure'.

This has prompted several politicians – especially where 'anti-politics' gets the upper hand – to try and reinvent themselves as media figures. In Perú, Fujimori invented –while he was president – a character, El Chinito (The Little Chinese), which he incarnated whenever necessary to the delight of the populace that followed him. 'I have become popular with him, I even quote him in my speeches' (Fujimori quoted in Jochamowitz, 1993, page 15).[6] In Venezuela, Hugo Chávez has mastered the use of television and radio – not coincidentally the latter is his main tool, as it allows him to get to the poorest households with his message, and to evade the time limits[7] television imposes on him.

Understanding the variant role of media in political life

The notion of an independent media as a pillar of democratic life has today become ubiquitous. However, there is a clear tension inherent in the role of media in democratic politics. In the era of modern democracy, media (via the right to free expression) generally is seen to be the watchdog or guardian of transparency and the 'public interest'. In the absence of the evolution of a tradition of *independent* public information services (of the calibre of public broadcasting in the UK – a very rare phenomenon), this independent role can only be played by privately owned media organisations. However, privately owned media organisations are as likely to be instruments of particularist private interests as they are to be guardians of the public interest.

The extent to which media can play credibly the latter role depends on the interplay of two factors: (1) the evolution of a professional ethos of journalistic integrity, which historically has been intimately related to the expansion of civil society and the professional associations of which it is composed; and (2) the existence of competition in the field of private ownership, which gives professional journalists who are advocates of such an ethos the leverage to impose it on privately owned media organisations. An expansive civil society requires a strong state capable of law-based rule that guarantees associational space and competitive media ownership is a product of an extensive development of markets. Thus, we can expect that in many parts of the developing world the conditions for the establishment of an enduring *independent* media capable of pursuing guardianship of the public interest are only partially present. Analysing this landscape is the first step in understanding the role that media can play in politics.

Where the conditions exist for media to become the watchdog of the public interest, its role is seen to be above political parties, demanding of them attachment to some of the basic rules of good administration. This has created a 'special relationship' between the media and governments, which in democracy can be characterised as a relation of mutual but bounded hostility. From the media side, increased technological power has meant a growing demand for transparency, but since the government has also increasing technological means the relation is quite similar to the development of 'means of destruction' and defence in military industry: an infinite spiral of successive steps that progressively improves the situation of each part but that leaves their relative power identical.

Shifting grounds of political legitimacy

What has shifted the 'balance of power' between media organisations and government has therefore not been primarily technological change, but rather other changes in political life, related to the grounds on which governments, and the political parties that compete to control them, base their *legitimacy*. We would suggest that understanding the grounds of political legitimacy in any given country is essential to understanding the relationship between government and the media, the role of media in politics and the balance of power between government, political parties and media organisations.

One of the most important changes in political life has been the eclipse of class-based politics that has accompanied changes in the structure of production and distribution and processes of globalisation.[8] This has led to the decline of political parties, which once secured their legitimacy based on their association with particular class or group-based agendas, the pre-emption of the formation of such parties where they have not existed before, or a movement away from such agendas by parties that once pursued them as they strive to remain relevant in a changing environment. Political parties have increasingly been forced to appeal to a more general 'public interest' and this has placed them on the terrain occupied by media organisations.

In many countries the legitimacy of governments and political parties has come to be defined by notions of 'good governance qua proper administration'. The 'original sin' of party life in liberal democracies – parties were created as 'formally voluntary' associations (Weber, 1978, 284-89) of private interests but had to govern in the name of the nation, above any type of particularism[9] – seems to have been resolved finally in the name of the 'general interest', at least in many of the rich countries. This is not necessarily as desirable as it sounds (Przeworski, 1986), but now we focus on a different aspect of the problem. The rebuke of any kind of particularism had an immediate consequence: politics yielded to good administration as the main source of legitimacy for governments and, certainly, for political parties. This in turn implied the adoption by governments and parties of the professional ideology of the media, with its focus on transparency and scandal mongering.

Where this has occurred, several consequences have followed. First of all, as media – parties and government are no longer orthogonal to each other (that is, with independent existence and objectives) but instead are moving in the same plane, so to say, of public life, and the media are activated as direct political competitors. Thus, not only do we have 'cinematic politics' as seen in section two, but media as firms participating directly in political life (Italy is indeed the most obvious case, followed at short distance by Venezuela and the Philippines).

Second, governments and parties have very strong incentives to try to downsize the increasing power of the media through administrative means, or through corruption – this is a function of the similarity of their discourses and their sources of legitimacy, but also of the success the given state has had until now in building an independent civil service. Where this has not been achieved, says the standard hypothesis, levels of corruption are much higher (Piattoni, 2001). If governments have very high levels of corruption, but their main source of legitimacy is transparent and efficient administration, they will have very powerful incentives to try to restrict the media (said in other terms, the professional ideology of the media puts the issue of corruption very high on the political agenda –or still differently, the agenda setting powers of the media are not counterbalanced by any other forces, because all share the media professional ideology).

In many countries anti-media laws and enactments have been discussed 'to save the people from the overwhelming power' of the gatekeepers (here Venezuela and Colombia constitute quite interesting cases; increasingly also Ecuador). In Perú under Fujimori the media were at first restricted through repression, but this proved to be both insufficient and counterproductive. In a second stage media directors were simply bought off, through embezzlement and blackmailing operations that involved millions of dollars[10]. A little bit more interestingly, governments in any states that engage in big scale operations contrary to responsiveness find themselves in a precarious situation.

Third, and less encouraging for constructive politics, has been a trend among politicians and statesmen to imitate and behave more like media stars. Competitors on the political scene speak in sound bites (knowing that media organisations themselves can choose which sound bites to project). Messages of politics are simplified and in the appeal to 'public interest' begin to sound alike – reinforcing a trend in the public to view all politicians as 'the same'. There is a convergence in language, if not in substantive objectives, among contenders on the political scene and a shift in the centre of politics towards the right. This trend is even visible where polarisation around particular agenda points has become pronounced as in the United States over the last five years. One of the reasons this happens is the shift brought with television politics. Newspaper and radio politics rarely trespassed the divide between politics and everyday life, but television does this as a matter of course, thus its messages, and consequently the language of politics, is simplified often to the point of banalities.[11] This means that the public is less likely to be exposed to argumentative politics. The upside is that this makes polarised politics of the type promoted by the Nazi Party in Germany before WWII much less likely to emerge, but at a price of a general watering down of the contest between opposing agendas for social and economic policy.

Of course, where political organisations are still based in newspaper and radio politics, or where they can credibly claim legitimacy on grounds other than 'good governance', very different patterns of power exist between political and media organisations. In Malaysia, since the ethnic riots of 1969, the United Malay Nationalist Organisation (UMNO) has successfully dominated national politics and significantly curbed the independent media by appeals to ethnic peace. In crisis states, while one can see tendencies to imitate the trends described above (especially when donors are promoting democratic models of governance derived from stable polities), it is more likely that political leaders can successfully curb media organisations in the name of buying peace. In fact, in such weak states, which by definition preside over weakly consolidated civil society (if anything resembling civil society can even be said to exist) media organisations are more likely to be little more than the instruments of particularist private interests, rather than guardians of the public interest. Media may well be exploited by, or captured by, groups promoting ethnic hatred or violence, or potentially so exploited (which then makes actions to curb their independence, like Kagame's in Rwanda, perhaps more understandable). Thus, understanding the grounds of legitimacy in a particular political context is crucial to seeing what role media organisations are likely to play as well as what prescriptions might be appropriate.

Conclusions

We need to analyse these trends in order to understand how modern politics is changing. Rather than objecting to the 'mediatisation' of politics and longing after the 'good ol' days', we need to understand both the possibilities and the problems associated with these shifts. It could well be that in many parts of the developing world 'radio parties' are still the order of the day and local political contests remain relatively unaffected by these trends.

In countries emerging out of war, both the character of private media in the absence of the development of civil society and a professional ethos of journalistic integrity and the very real disintegrative pressures that may arise with an 'excess' of free speech need to be considered when passing judgement on political authorities that are wary of giving free reign to media organisations.

Nevertheless, even in these states, television politics has an impact on old and new elites, while donor organisations provide external funding to media organisations as they promote models of good governance. So the trends that we observe in more stable and established polities may quickly secure a foothold in fragile states with very complex consequences.

Endnotes

* This is a slightly revised version of a paper prepared for the workshop, 'Defining and Understanding Media Development Strategies in Post-War and Crisis States', London School of Economics, 21-22 March 2005.

[1] We therefore distinguish our use of the term 'anti-politics' from the way it is employed by James Ferguson in his fascinating book, The Anti-Politics Machine (London, 1994), to analyse trends that attempt to de-politicise development processes.

[2] Meaning it does not work in the following fashion: the weaker the state and the party system, the more virulent the effects.

[3] Ben Anderson (1991) traced the role that print media played in the formation of modern nation-states.

[4] Of course there have been examples of leaders, particularly where television has been state-owned, using television for 'long and passionate discourse', but where choice is available people generally 'switch off'.

[5] A specificity of the US is the capacity of the Republican Party to harness cinematic politics; indeed, this may be one of the great sources of strength of the Republicans. Although Bill Clinton also used his skills before the camera to great effect, the Democrats have been less prone to fielding movie stars as candidates.

[6] While some Peruvian analysts argue that the potency of the El Chinito character was due to its representation of all those marginalised and socially excluded, it is more likely that its potency was due to the ability to make politics funny.

[7] And the hostility of the channel owners, who are direct political players in Venezuela´s conflict – see next section.

[8] See International Political Science Review, vol 26, no 1 (January 2005), special collection of Crisis States research on the political impact of liberalization.

[9] This is one of the main reasons for which many of the classics of political thought saw the formation of parties within the polity as a positive disgrace. See Sartori, 1976.

[10] Curiously, the regime also promoted yellow newspaper ('prensa chicha'), and felt that its type of depiction of the World fitted it well.

[11] The 'Homer Simpson effect'.

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Annex 2

Background Paper: Media Policy, Peace and State Reconstruction

Tim Allen and Nicole Stremlau

The full version of this paper can be found on the Crisis States Website: **www.crisisstates.com/Publications/ dp/dp08.htm**

Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the 'international community' (ie the vague entity which is primarily made up of rich-country governments, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and the United Nations (UN) system), have tended to stress accountable governance as a centrepiece of both peace-building initiatives and programmes for social and economic development. Much of their activities in post conflict environments start with a paradigm of independent media. There is, of course, a great deal of rhetoric and hypocrisy in this. We think it is useful, as part of the background for the Workshop to interrogate this paradigm. We also take the opportunity to broaden discussion to provide a focus on Africa. Should media freedoms be an essential aspect of peace building, or does peace building necessitate the restriction of dissent – in other words, censorship? And to what extent should the state be involved in setting the pace and trajectory for media liberalisation, particularly in instances where there is not significant international involvement or resources committed (ie as in comparison to Iraq)?

Establishing a political framework is vital to peace building, and the crucial underlying aspect of this is the issue of security. Peace requires the acceptance of certain hierarchies and the prevention of violence, based on some semblance of the rule of law. Many post-war governments struggle with the capacity to effectively (re)construct the state in the way

in which the current consensus prescribes. In the aftermath of social upheaval, the crucial short-term issue is not how to promote freedom of speech but rather how controls on expressing dissent should be exercised. We agree that the goal of a free media is the right one, but wish interrogate what the best ways to get there and whether it is possible to proceed in varying paths.

Most of the literature explores how the 'international community' can use media policy to simultaneously promote 'market democracy' and peace.[12] The assumption is that these projects are interlinked or even synonymous with one another. But in violently disturbed zones in Africa, for example, market democracy is not likely to be a possibility for a long time. Similarly, it is extremely difficult to implement the prescribed 'ideal' marketplace of ideas' as quickly as the international players suggest. The lack of significant and substantial resources from the international community is not the only hurdle- the reality is that local capacity takes time to build.

Staff at the World Bank would probably accept that a free and vibrant media, as with all liberal programmes, requires a relatively strong state including, for example, a well-functioning legal system to protect individuals against libel or racist abuse. Yet, when it comes to war zones, the 'received wisdom' seems to be primarily focused on arguing that the only way to counter divisive speech is to allow for more speech, rather than to impose restrictions.

Much of this thinking has been constrained by the way in which the state is regarded as an actor (or rather is omitted as an actor) in media reform. USAID is indicative of this thinking. Their assessment of 'key actors' in media reform generally refer to: consumers, individual producers, content provider companies, training

institutes, universities, independent regulators, media monitors, professional organisations and new technology gatekeepers.[13] The list, however, lacks any real reference to the possibly important role of the state in media reform. While there are many reasons for this, much of it can be attributed to how mainstream thinking in the international community regards the role of the state in transitions.

After the end of the Cold War, the development discourse in the 1990s suggested that what transitioning states in Africa (and elsewhere) needed was not more government but less which then soon morphed into the famous 'good governance' agenda. While this thinking has been recently shifting to talk of building 'capacity' there has still been little discussion of a state's 'capacity' to have a role as an actor in media development. Discourse continues to be centred on the media as 'opposition', or on 'transparency' during a transition. Much of the literature on media assistance has been centred around the experiences of the former communist Eastern European countries, which clearly have a different infrastructure, demand and history of media than a country like Ethiopia.

Not surprisingly, feelings run particularly high on the issue of media freedom among many journalists. But it is worth bearing in mind that like other actors in the peace industry journalists themselves are not immune to conflicts of interest. After all, whatever the integrity of their staff, global media networks obviously have self-serving motives. Press freedom in poor countries is a market into which they can expand and increase the use of their services. US economist R H Coase, amongst others, has drawn attention to these kinds of ulterior motives.

The press is, of course, the most stalwart defender of the doctrine of freedom of press, an act of public service to the performance of which it has been led,

as it were, by an invisible hand. If we examine the actions and views of the press, they are consistent in only one respect: they are always consistent with the self-interest of the press.[14]

Media freedom and responsibility in post war environments arise in what Roland Paris describes as an enormous experiment in social engineering that seeks to transplant specific economic, political and social models in war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalisation.[15] Experience has shown that this is highly problematic.

States emerging from violent conflict tend to lack institutional mechanisms for any kind of sudden transition to market democracy. Attempts to develop these institutions quickly during a peacekeeping mission by individuals and organisations that may not be entirely familiar with local dynamics can actually hinder attempts towards long-term peace. In the wake of the genocide in Rwanda some international organisations, notably Human Rights Watch, continued to promote democratic accountability and take the position that a free media could have helped avoid the tragedy. Yet Snyder and Ballentine argue that it was 'precisely the threat of such accountability that provoked the slaughter' in the first place.[16] In retrospect, most now agree that it would have been appropriate to clamp down on the hate speech of the Milles Collines radio station.

Such concerns are a reason why there have been initiatives by groups such as BBC Monitoring to establish systems to identify warning signs of impending violence, based on media content analysis. This inevitably has methodological limitations but it is an important development. The same kinds of extreme or misleading

statements may be widely dismissed by one population as nonsense, but widely accepted by another as 'facts'. It all depends on the specific political processes at work. Media monitoring of this kind is surely a positive development. At the very least it may highlight circumstances that require closer investigation, and it makes it a little more difficult for strategically unimportant parts of the world to be simply ignored.

Overall, there has yet to be a consensus on what should comprise best practice in peace-building media policy. The ideal of press freedom continues to be promoted in a simplistic way, but on the ground there is a great deal of 'hand-to-mouth' improvisation and often there are manifestly contradictory strategies. There is as much evidence that internationally supported initiatives have exacerbated local circumstances as that that they have contributed to political stability. The record, in so far as one has been kept, is very mixed. Old formulas, such as the US example or even the British public broadcasting model, may be largely irrelevant. At the very least, circumstances are very different from one country to another.

The Media and State Reconstruction in Africa

In the second part of our article we discuss efforts that have been made in some African countries to move beyond the simplistic free/unfree dichotomy of so much of the debate, and where local governments have sought out alternative ways of conceptualising relationships between the media and state during complex transitions. We comment on the development that have occurred in Uganda and Ethiopia, where governments have allowed a considerable degree of press freedom within certain constraints. We argue

that in both countries a surprising amount of democratic space has been opened up, without political systems that could be called democratic in any conventional sense. Since writing the paper, in both countries, the limits to this new kind of democratic space have been made very apparent by aggressive state-sponsored interventions against domestic critics in the latter part of 2005 and in 2006. Nevertheless, once a population becomes accustomed to certain kinds of pressures being exerted on the government, it is not so easy to reassert state controls.

In Ethiopia, while radio and television has remained largely impenetrable to independent voices, private printed press was extremely important in the recent elections and the post-election environment of 2005. The press was allowed considerable freedom of expression, and was very vibrant (though not necessarily of good quality). This lent credibility to the political process, and certainly bolstered the voice of the opposition party (which made record electoral gains). Arguably it also played a less productive role in polarizing social divisions and contributing to the various tensions that followed the election. The response of the government has been to back-peddle in its arrangements with print media. For the time being it has almost entirely eliminated opposing voices through the imprisonment of dozens of journalists. It is not clear, however, if this is to be an indefinite change in policy. Possibly it has been necessary to restore order, but the government's 'democratic' credentials and desire for international credibility may lead to an easing of such measures. This is what has tended to happen in Uganda. Here too there have been oppressive government actions against certain journalists and media outlets. However, having opened up a broad but constrained space for independent media in the mid 1980s, has now

become difficult to reverse the policy, even if the government really wanted to do so. During and after the election, news media (including the global news media which is widely accessed through the internet, satellite television, radio and mobile phones) arguably remains a more effective means of holding government officials to account than the deeply flawed formal political process. We do not have space to explore these developments in detail here but instead focus on the other African case discussed in our paper, where media freedoms and media constraints have been exercised in combination: South Africa.

In South Africa the use of news media by politicians has had almost the opposite effects to those that occurred in Rwanda. The media was critical on details of government actions and policies – often very critical indeed – but was broadly supportive of the national reconciliation and state-building project. What has occurred in South Africa illustrates how a government's media policies may clash with the 'global justice' movement, and be bitterly opposed by many journalists, yet contribute substantially to essential political processes. At the time of the transition from apartheid to democracy there was the distinct possibility of the country being engulfed by civil war and political turmoil. Astute use of the available news media resources helped stop this from happening. One decisive example occurred after Chris Hani, a charismatic black leader who was popular in the townships, was gunned down in his driveway. President Mandela appealed for calm through the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), pointing out that the woman who identified the perpetrators was a white Afrikaner woman. His action

is widely assessed to have played a key role in diffusing a potentially explosive situation.

The relationship between government and news media has not been an easy one, however. After coming to power the ANC attempted to influence the SABC for its own purposes, prompting fierce debate within the country as to what the relationship between the new government and the public broadcaster should be. The SABC has had to fiercely defend its relative independence. A particular arena of tension has been a consequence of the government's determination to eradicate all forms of hate-speech, including subtle racial biases. For obvious reasons there has been a determination to push this policy to the limit, and systematic efforts have been made to ensure that all established media organisations are accountable on the issue. The South African Human Rights Commission even went so far as to subpoena editors of some of the most liberal and progressive newspapers, an action which was hugely controversial with journalists and human rights organisations. What ensued was a year-long investigation into identifying and defining racism in the media, and a great deal of debate about what should be done to prevent it.[17]

At one level the inquiry failed, in that it was unable to carry out the task it assigned itself (i.e. identifying subtle racism), but it facilitated an important discussion across society. It forced journalists and editors to step back and reflect upon the role they should play during the important transition period, and helped create a situation in which they became acutely aware of the unconscious ways in which they might be promoting counterproductive stereotypes. It has led to a considerable amount of unregulated self-censorship:

there are many things now that just cannot be said. In the fragile circumstances of post-apartheid South Africa, this has surely been valuable – even if it has limited a journalist's capacity to tell the truth as she or he sees it.

It is also important to note that these pressures and constraints have not incapacitated the South African news media. Far from it, if anything it has increased their importance and made them more of a voice for the population as a whole than they ever were in the past. By and large, they have been vigorously outspoken, frequently launching exposés of politicians and sometimes even the government itself. Given the relative weakness of opposition parties in the country, the press has to a large extent taken on the role of holding the ANC to account.

In this respect, it must be recognised that the post-apartheid media in South Africa were still operating in an established and recognised legal system – the broader structural institutions were in place to provide recourse when due. This marks a critical difference from many other countries. In short, there were courts to turn to if someone had to sue for libel, there was a judiciary that remained strong, and executive leadership that worked within the legal framework. There were, of course, also entrenched hierarchies associated with these broader structural institutions. The Human Rights Commission challenged some of these, but only up to a point. In general, the ANC government has sought to guarantee the rights and safety of political and economic elites. This has been very unpopular with many political activists, not only in South Africa itself; but it is the case that functioning state systems require such hierarchies. As Mandela accepted,

to change them overnight would have been catastrophic. Elsewhere, peace-building governments may not inherit similarly institutionalised social stratification. Ideally, this could be avoided – but that is not the way things work. Effectively hierarchies have to be established as part of the state construction process. This is one of the most difficult things for human rights organisations and development agencies to come to terms with, and lies behind much of the criticism levelled at other countries going through post-war transitions.

Summary: a case for media manipulation?

First, it is important to note the impact liberal ideology has had on ways in which media policy is constructed and the need to re-conceptualise the role of the state in media development. In the 1960s, Samuel Huntington suggested that open institutions such as a free press were 'luxuries' transitioning states could ill afford. In short, he argued that the potential disruption of mass public participation was simply a risk that countries struggling to modernise need not take. Such ideas were always controversial, and were understandably seen as discredited by the militarised autocracies of the 1970s. The promise, however, of political and economic liberalisation has proved almost as fruitless in most parts of the world. As this paper has illustrated, the prevailing approach to media development is indicative of the broader ideological liberal approach to political development and is thus vulnerable to similar criticisms. Developing an open media environment, like other liberal projects, requires the presence of a strong state that includes, among other features, a well functioning legal and judicial environment.

Second, the prevailing approach towards the media in transitioning countries is structured around the experience and impressions of rich countries rather than local realities. While almost everyone is beginning to accept that markets have to be regulated, and that state institutions have to be strong for them to work effectively, the need for checks and balances in transitioning countries continues to be under-emphasised. This is partly because a free media continues to be considered by many journalists and NGOs as a human right. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, however, is about individual and collective rights and liberties, not about the independence of media organisations.[18] Additionally, there is a tendency in rich countries for domestic media environments to be seen as something of an ideal, exemplifying the population's openness and freedoms. As most readers are well aware, the reality is more complicated. Rich countries do not have perfectly competitive marketplaces of ideas. While formal state censorship may be minimal, there are nevertheless mechanisms and codes of conduct that serve a similar role. In the UK, for example, simply by looking at who owns newspapers and funds TV stations one can see that the media market is constrained. Along a similar vein, many in the US media have made clear that they recognise their negligence and failure in the run-up to the war in Iraq when certain ideas that challenged the rational behind the war were not given a 'fair' and 'equal' voice.

The third argument we have made is that the tendency of journalists and human rights organisations to ignore the local realities and rather push their own 'international justice' agenda may be counter productive. While the media and human rights organisations have effectively lobbied, particularly

in weaker states, against the use of state constraint they have similarly divorced issues of media liberalisation from the political context. Given the asymmetrical power relations between large human rights organisations with substantial lobbying power in rich countries, and poorer countries with leadership that is regarded as weak and semi-autocratic at best, it is easy to see how local initiatives or arguments for slower media liberalisation fall on deaf ears. Thus, foreign 'experts', often in line with rich countries, are increasingly defining and dominating processes such as 'truth' and 'justice'. As John Lunn describes, this approach is unfortunately something we are all familiar with:

During the colonial period, Africans (and other colonised) were often viewed as children who were not ready yet for self-government. In the modern world, a similar characterisation is creeping back in. Locals are seen as lacking the capacity or maturity to govern themselves. ... new forms of trusteeship are justified on the basis that reactionary and opportunistic local political leaders cannot be trusted to rule justly and fairly.[19]

Given the complexity of political transitions and state reconstruction it would be unfortunate if viable local alternatives were not explored or tolerated because they may possibly contradict some of the expectations or standards of rich countries. As we described in this chapter, the controversial approach taken by Africa's 'New Leaders' may present one of these alternative strategies. Accepting such approaches, however, will necessitate some degree of systematic assessment on the nature and intentions of the current government. While such analysis is often difficult, it does clearly warrant further exploration and study.

Fourth, whatever the rhetoric about promoting freedom of expression, the situation on the ground is often muddled, contradictory and sometimes hypocritical. In places like Iraq this has been at least partly because US and other occupying troops from rich countries are themselves vulnerable to attack and have thus been inclined to shut down media outlets. But more generally, concerns about hate speech are supplanted in initiatives to create a space for promoting news manipulation, ideally without enforcement procedures or explicit controls. In many respects this is, of course, how news media in particular is effectively restrained in rich countries, including the UK and US. Also in Iraq and other war zones, while some international organisations are promoting multiple voices and freedom of speech, others are experimenting with mechanisms to manipulate the marketplace of ideas including efforts to promote peace by funding particular media outlets. This kind of 'peace media' approach has become popular with some donor agencies, such as Oxfam, and also with some large media organisations, such as the BBC. The intention is to make the content of the programmes more interesting and just generally better than the alternatives available. Results have so far been mixed, but such experiments are interesting and clearly have possibilities for development.[20] While peace media is certainly an important initiative that is gaining momentum and popularity, the general approach to media development continues to be dominated by the 'one size fits all' laissez faire project. As this strategy is not likely to be entirely abandoned, there is, however, the potential for slowing it down and concentrating on rebuilding institutions. Doing so would also suggest greater understanding from rich countries of the challenges faced by transitioning governments. It

would also reduce charges of hypocrisy – such as those that emerged from Iraq – as it would demonstrate that it is not only rich countries that can be trusted to impose censorship and shape developing media environments.

Fifth, in instances when more institutionalised mechanisms that may exist in rich countries are either not present or functioning properly, explicit constraint may be required. When this is necessary, a crucial issue is by whom? Just as developing countries have successfully argued at the WTO that they are willing to buy into liberal market economics but they want concessions and safeguards – there are parallel lessons for the media as well. But giving the state too much control may also be a risky proposition as a long line of African autocrats has clearly taught. An alternative strategy will clearly require some degree of international or regional oversight as well as greater transparency and accountability.

One possibility is the establishment of a United Nations global media watchdog that could serve as a central component to ensure standards and procedures are adhered to and to prevent abuse. Monitoring, however, must be done according to certain accepted principles and undertaken in such a way that is not seen as simply reflecting the values and interests of the world's rich states. The proliferation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) offers a possible analogy for establishing a media oversight body with both local and international credentials. In Sierra Leone, for example, the TRC is a hybrid of local and international jurists. Independent Media Commissions might adopt this hybrid structure thus allowing for the participation of both local and international media bodies. These Commissions would also serve as an important mechanism for facilitating local dialogue about past media abuses as well as discussions about responsible peace-building reporting.

In the case of Africa, another option may be found within the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM),[21] a central component of Africa's new development initiative – the New Partnership for African Development (NePAD).[22] Everyone would feel more comfortable with limitations on media freedoms if states had to request permission to impose them. Perhaps a system could be established similar to how law enforcement officers must request a search warrant from a court. For example, if states subscribed to the APRM and agreed to be held accountable to prevent abuse, in return they would be allowed greater scope for restricting the media during precarious transitions and more time in which to develop the infrastructure for a free media.

These initiatives, however, will require further re-evaluation of the overall peace building agenda as well as some degree of compromise from the NGOs and human rights advocates that so passionately hold to their own perspective. While it is premature to propose a new approach to media in peace-building environments, we hope this paper has succeeded in questioning the underlying assumptions of the liberal approach. There is much research to be had in continuing to sketch out alternative frameworks for thinking about the media's role in transitions. It is our hope that future initiatives will be characterised by a greater focus on holding local strategies to account rather than the continued imposition of rich country strategies.

Endnotes

[12] Market democracy is a term that eludes exact definition but it evokes a combination of liberal economic policies with systems of accountable governance emphasising individual freedom, constraints on state power, human rights and some form of democracy.

[13] See for example, USAID's Centre for Global Governance Report 'The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach' 1999.

[14] R H Coase, 'The Market for Goods and the Market for Ideas', The American Economic Review, 64:2 (May 1974), p 386.

[15] Roland Paris, 'Peace building and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism', International Security, 22:2 (Autumn 1997), p 56.

[16] Snyder & Ballentine (1996), p 33.

[17] While the SAHRC is 'independent' of the government there are clear and strong links including between Barney Pityana, the former Chairperson of the SAHRC and the current leadership in the ANC.

[18] The text of Article 19 is as follows: 'Everyone has the right to the freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'. We do note, however, that some of the world's most progressive constitutions, such as South Africa, have provisions for providing for the right to an open media. In addition, as certain norms have been accepted as 'standards', we recognise that this may be contested terrain, however, and conflating one with the other can be profoundly misleading. It may well be that there are good reasons for a government to want to control media organisations and to put limits on what they can say and

how it can be said in order to protect the human rights of their citizens including their right to development.

[19] Lunn (2003).

[20] Oxfam-Quebec, for example, has sponsored a very successful peace programme in Somalia – Radio Galkayo. This programme tackles a variety of issues such as de-mining, concerns of women and peace and reconciliation. It is produced by some young journalists in the area and has been successful at spearheading community projects that have brought together various factions. Not all attempts at peace media are successful, and a recent attempt in Somalia by BBC Trust is indicative of just how problematic it may be. The BBC Somali service hosted a drama series to discuss conflict resolution. They however made a grievous error in selecting the choice of actors, and one clan regarded the drama as a plot by another clan to attack them (Gordan Adam & Lina Holguin, 'The Media's Role in Peace building: Asset or Liability?', Our Media 3 Conference, Barranquilla, Columbia (19-23 May 2003), p 10).

[21] The APRM is an instrument that is used for self-monitoring by the participating countries. Both Uganda and Ethiopia are currently on the fifteen-member steering committee. Countries that have agreed to join the APRM submit to periodical peer reviews whose primary purpose is to foster the adoption of certain policies, standards and practices with the intention of achieving political stability and cooperation. For more information visit the African Union's website or the reports from the 2002 meeting where the APRM was established. See, for example. **www.au2002.gov.za/docs/ summit_council/aprm.htm**

For more information on NePAD, see the official website at: **www.nepad.org**

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LSE

Crisis States Research Centre,
LSE,
Houghton Street,
London WC2A 2AE,
UK

Tel: +44 (0)20 7849 4631
Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 6421
email: csp@lse.ac.uk

www.crisisstates.com

**crisis states
research centre**

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